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**“Hope is passion for what is possible”: A Case Study of the  
Development Program with a Territorial-based Focus (DPTF) in  
Tolima, Colombia**

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## List of acronyms and words in Spanish

### Acronyms

**ART** – Agencia de Renovación del Territorio or also known as the Territorial Renovation Agency

**DPTF** – Development Programs with a Territorial-Based Focus, also known as Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial (PDET) in Spanish

**ELN** – Spanish acronym for The National Liberation Army, or Ejército de Liberación Nacional

**FARC** – Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, also known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

**PATR** – Action Plan for Regional Transformation

### Words in Spanish

**Corregimiento** – Subdivision of a Colombian municipality with a population core

**Junta de Acción Comunal** – Association composed of the neighbors in a place, that unite their efforts and resources to find solutions to the needs in their community

**Resguardo** – Legal and socio-politic institution which is composed of one or more indigenous communities and considered collective property

**Vereda** – Rural settlement

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## Abstract

This study is a qualitative case analysis based on fieldwork and multiple semi-structured interviews in Tolima, Colombia. It investigates the community level of the Development Program with a Territorial-based Focus (DPTF) in the south of the department. The program is a result of the peace agreement that was signed between the Colombian government and the guerrilla group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2016. The DPTF specifically aims to improve the well-being of the communities that were most affected by the conflict through a participatory process where they become the protagonists of their future development. In this study the participation at the community level is analyzed by considering the four powers: power 'over', power 'to', power 'with' and power 'within'.

**Keywords: DPTF, peace agreement, participatory development, power**

## Resumen

Este estudio es un análisis de caso cualitativo basado en trabajo de campo y múltiples entrevistas semiestructuradas en Tolima, Colombia. Se investiga la fase veredal del Programa de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial (PDET) en el sur del departamento. El programa es el resultado del acuerdo de paz que se firmó entre el gobierno colombiano y la guerrilla las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) en 2016. Su objetivo es mejorar el bienestar de las comunidades más afectadas por el conflicto a través de un proceso participativo donde se convierten en protagonistas de su futuro desarrollo. En este estudio, la participación en la fase veredal se analiza considerando los cuatro poderes: poder 'sobre', poder 'para', poder 'con' y poder 'dentro'.

**Palabras claves: PDET, acuerdo de paz, desarrollo participativo, poder**

*“The people are the only ones capable of transforming society”* (Menchu, 1984:289)

## 1. Introduction

In 2016, the Government of Colombia and the guerrilla group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) came to a historic agreement about a peace deal that would end more than five decades of conflict in the country. The ambitious peace agreement includes a whole first chapter on various reforms aimed to transform the countryside and tackle the root causes of the conflict. This is known as “the Comprehensive Rural Reform” (Republic of Colombia & FARC, 2016). It focuses on improving the well-being of the rural population through different measures such as land restitution, eradication of poverty, improved provision of public goods, increased state presence and the promotion of gender equality (Ibid., 2016). By improving the social and economic development in these regions it is hoped that the foundation for a long-lasting peace in Colombia can be built.

Essential for such a peace-building is the inclusion of the marginalized rural communities in the process. The agreement thus speaks of building peace from the regions upwards. This has been termed the idea of “territorial peace” (Jaramillo, 2014; Pfeiffer, 2015). The peace deal emphasizes that the involvement of all Colombians is necessary. It particularly inscribes that “the territorial-based approach of the Agreement (...) involves implementing the various measures comprehensively and in a coordinated way, with the active participation of all citizens” (Republic of Colombia & FARC, 2016:6-7). This is highlighted all throughout the text. When mentioning participation, the agreement refers specifically to “involvement in the *planning, execution* and *monitoring* of territorial-based plans and programmes” (Ibid., 2016:7, made cursive by author).

One instrument through which this will be guaranteed is the creation of Development Programmes with a Territorial-Based Focus (DPTF). Their function is to contribute to the implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Reform in the territories (Ibid., 2016). The 16 areas where DPTFs are being implemented (presented below on the map) have been chosen based on four criteria: the level of poverty, the degree to which they were affected by the armed conflict, institutional debility and the existence of cultivation of illicit crops or other illegal economies (ART, 2017a). The Territorial

Renovation Agency (ART) has been appointed as the responsible agency. The task of the ART is to plan, execute and monitor these DPTFs through a participatory process with the communities. This participatory mechanism, which serves as the basis for their creation, aims to “strengthen participation by citizens in decisions that affect them” (Ibid., 2017a).

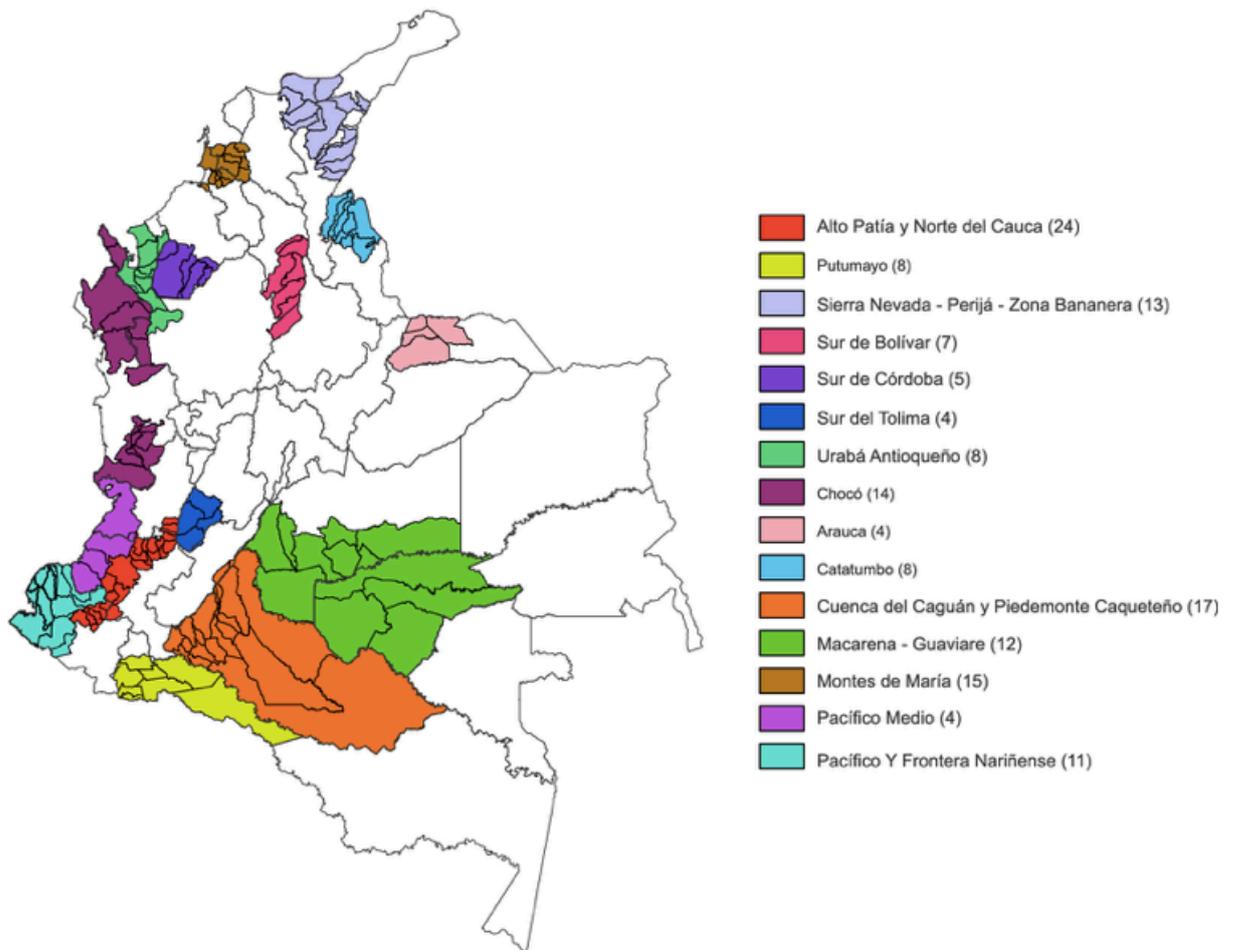


Figure 1. Map of prioritized regions in Colombia<sup>1</sup>

Various actors have criticized the DPTFs and their Action Plans for not enabling the effective participation of the communities (FIP, 2017; Kroc Institute, 2018). Some of the critiques relate to the lack of time for preparation in the communities as well as limited time for constructive debate (Kroc Institute, 2016) and the lack of information given to the participants beforehand (FIP, 2017). The following project aims to study precisely this. By focusing on the DPTF in one prioritized area namely Sur del Tolima

<sup>1</sup> (Presidencia, 2019)

the research will explore in-depth what the participation in this process looked like. The participation of the communities in the planning takes place at three levels: the community level, municipal level and regional level of which this study will analyze only the community level. The planning with the communities in Sur del Tolima finished on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2018 (ART, 2018a:1).

## 2. Aim, purpose and research question

It is possible to find substantial academic research on the Colombian peace agreement, particularly in regards to how inclusive and ambitious it was. There is, however, much less research done about the comprehensive rural reform and even less about the development programmes with a territorial-based focus. Due to that this is such a new topic there is so far very little academic research conducted. The few academic papers up to this day treat DPTFs in other regions of Colombia such as in Sucre (Mancera Cortes, 2018), the Caribbean coast (Rosero et al., 2018) and the Pacific Coast (Ramos, 2018).

There are also various academic internship reports on the matter from the region of Sucre (Salazar Botero, 2018; Rojas, 2018) and Nariño (Peña, 2018). None of these papers relate to Tolima nor do they focus on the issue of substantial participation. A few organizations working with peace issues in Colombia have followed the processes surrounding the DPTFs and evaluated the participation (FIP, 2017; MOE). These are however neither extensive for any of the regions nor are they academic papers with theory. The need exists to fill this research gap.

The participation of the local communities is key to achieving a sustainable peace in Colombia as emphasized by the Government and FARC. Conducting this research could contribute to monitoring the implementation of the agreement specifically by looking at its participatory elements. It could also serve as constructive feedback for future participatory processes, perhaps even for a future peace agreement with the National Liberation Army (ELN), which is another active guerrilla group in the country. For this purpose, the following study will concentrate on the participation in Sur del Tolima with the following research question and its two sub-questions:

**What were some of the challenges and opportunities of the participation at the community phase of the DPTF in Sur del Tolima?**

1. *How did they facilitate and/or impede a broad participation?*
2. *How did they facilitate and/or impede an active participation?*

### 3. Literature review

This thesis is based on an initiative for community participation in a development program within the Colombian peace accords. Before I delve further into this, I find it important to first highlight the link between peace and development, even though this paper is more concerned with the latter. It can be said that “there is no peace without development, there is no development without peace” (Eliasson, 2001:5). The two concepts are thus interlinked. Within the Colombian peace agreement, it is the territorial approach that ties peace and development together. The Republic of Colombia together with FARC have recognized that for peace to be sustainable and long-lasting in Colombia, the huge gap between the rural and urban areas in terms of poverty, opportunities and inequalities need to be solved (2016). The idea that peace must be inclusive and as such involve the relevant actors, not only in the definition but also in the actual peacebuilding, for it to be sustainable is emphasized in the academic research and by policy actors (McDonald, 1998; Mouly, 2011; Paffenholz, 2015). Building peace from the affected societies bottom-up is one way to ensure that the peace is inclusive and more sustainable.

#### **3.1. The history of participatory development**

To include communities in the planning, monitoring and execution of development programs, such as has been inscribed by the Colombian peace accords, is not a new idea. Likewise, the participatory development approach argues that the stakeholders should be given the opportunity to be involved in the planning, design and implementation of the development projects that concern them (Cornwall, 2002). This approach grew out of a critique against the traditionally top-down development projects that disregarded the local populations and their needs (Ibid., 2002). This new approach sought to include the people who were benefitting from the projects and recognized that local people have immense knowledge about their own circumstances. It thus involves going from a top-down approach to a more bottom-up perspective (Chambers, 2008).

How to best access this local knowledge has been a point of discussion. The Brazilian pedagogist Paulo Freire is one of the forefathers to participatory development. He is well-known for his work on conscientization which essentially means the liberation of people from their oppression through informed political action. The essence is to shift the traditional pattern of knowledge production, such as in the relationship between a teacher and a student to name an example, that “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 2005:72). Instead he speaks about the importance of dialogue and claims that “it is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another (Freire, 2005:89).

These ideas are resonated in other streams of participatory research like action research which emphasizes mutual learning processes between the local stakeholders and the researchers to encourage democratic social change (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Another important name to mention here would be Robert Chambers who has developed various participatory research methods of which the most well-known are Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Within PRA the outsider experts are “conveners and facilitators, the insiders actors and analysts” (Chambers, 1994:1263). Various government agencies, NGOs and other types of development actors have since then made use of these methods. So much so that Cornwall argues that participation in development has become a new “orthodoxy” (2002:15). In the 1990’s participation had become part of “almost every field development activity and became a preoccupation on a global scale” (Chambers, 2005: 101).

Central to participatory development is also the recognition of local knowledge and particularly indigenous knowledge. Chambers for example problematizes new development that is often top-down technology from the scientist to the farmers and not the other way around while the scientist is in a laboratory and the farmer out on the field (2008). The point here is that knowledge often is centralized. While the indigenous communities might have other traditions, cultures and methods more adapted to their own living conditions the Western knowledge has and continues to be the dominant source (Briggs, 2014). This might clash with the indigenous people’s right to define their own development. The International Labour Organization’s convention 169 stipulates that the indigenous people have the right to choose their own development

priorities. They also have a right to be consulted before any project is implemented on their territory (ILO, 1989).

### **3.2. Participation in development programs**

The degree to which locals have been encouraged to participate in development projects has depended on the language that has been used in mainstream development. Cornwall differentiates between three ways of looking at participation: whether it is done *for* people, *by* the people, or *with* people (Cornwall, 2002:22). With the change of discourse beneficiaries have over time been included to a greater extent in various stages of the development process such as defining the projects, appraisal stages, implementation and evaluation. While they were previously seen as passive recipients, development actors nowadays emphasize that beneficiaries are active participants and should be referred to as stakeholders or even partners (Ibid., 2002).

One of the real benefits of participatory development is argued to be its transformative power. Particularly in the way that it has the potential to give people the opportunity to bargain political power relations (Milabyo Kyamusugulwa, 2013). Whether the participation has this transformative power depends on if it is viewed as a means to an end or an end in itself (Nelson & Wright, 2007). The former is a more pragmatic way to view participation. People are encouraged to participate “to achieve cost-effectiveness, compliance and sustainability” (Cornwall, 2002:24). The latter prescribes that the participation should lead to more self-reliant development. A concrete example would be the facilitator who wants to rush the task and get it done while the latter who sees it more as an end in itself is more concerned with the participants and having a constant dialogue with them (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).

Other than the intent of the ‘developer’, there are various factors that affect the quality of the participation. Among these are strong relationships within the community and “the degree of local people’s perceptions of the program” (Milabyo Kyamusugulwa, 2013:1269). Other factors are time and power relations, both those that are local within the community and those between the outsiders and the insiders. Regarding time, participatory development has been criticized for being too hasty. Some development actors are more interested in the credential of the participation rather than the genuine process itself (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). Participatory processes

are complex and costly and thus finding the right balance between the top-down and bottom-up approach to it has been emphasized as important.

Mohan & Stokke (2000) argue that one should be careful in overly romanticizing the local. The danger according to them lies partially in viewing the local as a harmonious entity where people/the community simply agree with each other (Ibid., 2000). On the contrary, there are local power relations which might affect the outcome of the participation. Elite capture has been deemed as one of such risks (Milabyo Kyamusugulwa, 2013). One of the strongest criticisms against participatory techniques is precisely that they disregard local power relations. Participatory development places its attention on the insider/outsider division as the central problem, which might ignore other local aspects of importance (Mohan & Stokke, 2000). Despite various criticisms community participation is still being used in many development projects. Botes & van Rensburg argue that participatory development is a “complex and difficult, though essential and challenging endeavor” (2000:41).

### **3.3. Participatory processes in Colombia**

Various development programs have been introduced in Colombia over the course of half a century, not the least from the state. Despite this “there are still pending indispensable transformations, sustained and effective actions and necessary public investments” (Samper & González, 2016:179, author’s translation). Without the presence of the state in many parts of the country it has been difficult to make the necessary improvements. The former High Commissioner for Peace in Colombia mentions the following about the centralist model that was used previously:

*“The Colombian state has tried all types of programs to bring development to the remote regions. Without denying their successes, I think that the centralist model, in which a few civil servants land like some Martians in the communities to ‘bring the state’, ran out of air. I have made part of these efforts and I know their merits and limitations”* (Jaramillo, 2014:5, author’s translation).

Over time the programs have instead become more participatory and the need for bottom-up approaches have been highlighted not the least in the peace agreement.

One of the earlier projects initiated by the state was the PDRIET, the program for integral rural development with a territorial focus.<sup>2</sup> Sur del Tolima was chosen for the pilot project. There were few advances registered during its course. One major issue here was the lack of information about politics, programs and projects offered by government institutions at various levels which made the participation of communities difficult (Universidad de Ibagué, 2016). It was particularly stated that “(...) a reformulation of the strategy PDRIET is necessary, of which it is fundamental to complete planning from bottom-up so that there exists an empowerment of local actors and in this way a guarantee that the investments in development are future visions that were constructed collectively” (Ibid., 2016:21, author’s translation). Other programs have been considered more or less successful depending on, amongst other things, the accessibility to the community members in terms of if the project was too technical and thus difficult to comprehend and/or the extent to how much the most marginalized communities were actually involved and their participation facilitated (Barreto Henriques, 2014).

Indigenous peoples “have historically been the poorest and most excluded social sectors in Latin America” (Davis, 2002:227) and they naturally make up an evident part of the research as participatory development focuses on marginalized communities. A considerable amount of research on participatory processes in South America is thus dedicated to this issue and specifically in relation to extraction of natural resources or other environmental concerns (Lopez & Riveros, 2000; Mistry et al., 2015; Bockstael et al., 2016; Flemmer & Schilling-Vacaflor, 2016; McNeish, 2017; Zaremborg & Wong, 2018). Some of these articles are concerned with the failure to consult indigenous groups prior to extractive policies being implemented on their territory (Flemmer & Schilling-Vacaflor, 2016; Zaremborg & Wong, 2018).

Colombia has ratified the ILO Convention 169 and thus has an obligation to apply prior consultation. However, in Colombia it has been framed as an obstacle to national development and this is generating conflicts between the indigenous interests and those of the state (Amparo Rodríguez, 2017). There are several articles that focus on the numerous challenges of securing the rights of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants and materializing prior consultation in Colombia (Sierra-Camargo, 2017;

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<sup>2</sup> These plans should not be mixed up with the DPTFs (the focus of this research) despite the resemblance. The PDRIET was a predecessor.

Machado et al., 2017; Urteaga-Crovetto, 2018; Valero, 2018; Góngora-Mera, 2019). It appears as though indigenous and tribal groups, despite their certain status within participatory processes, have been denied this in practical cases. Previous state-led programs that focus on rural development have tended to ignore the inequalities and historic exclusions in the territory (Samper & González, 2016).

## 4. Context and the case

### 4.1. Conflict between FARC and the Colombian government

The initiation of the conflict in Colombia can be traced back to the time period between 1948 – 1958 known as “La Violencia” or the “Era of Violence” in English. This 10-year period was characterized by violent clashes between Liberals and Conservatives. The violence was particularly intense on the countryside where peasant groups fought against neighboring villages (UCDP, 2019). During this conflict several rural self-defense groups formed. Among these were armed groups with a communist political vision (Orlando Melo, 2017). The Colombian government viewed communism as a threat and started targeting the self-defense groups in the 1950’s, both non-violently and violently (UCDP, 2019). This sparked the conviction within the groups that they could only defend themselves with more violence. The number of people who sympathized with guerrilla tactics thus grew within the Colombian Communist party (Orlando Melo, 2017).

In 1964, the Colombian government received US support to stop the advancement of communism and launch an attack in Marquetalia, Tolima (Guaraca, 2015). This event gave rise to the guerrilla movement, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the conflict that would go on for many decades from that moment onwards. The violent attacks by the military against the communist guerrillas between 1955 and 1965 gave FARC the credibility that they were formed as a response to the aggressions by the state (Orlando Melo, 2017). One of FARC’s founders, Jaime Guaraca, describes the attack against Marquetalia as an event that “transformed Colombia into a scene of the most brutal war of extermination, demolition, eviction, displacement, disappearances, torture and death of peasants, indigenous people and workers (2015:8, author’s translation). In 1966, FARC was officially launched as a movement with the backing of the Colombian Communist party. Their aim was to

defend the peasants (“campesinos”) and to take over power with violent means (Orlando Melo, 2017).

Between 1978 and 2002 the guerilla groups were on the rise. Orlando Melo argues that specifically two factors can explain this: 1) the inadequate public response and 2) the more effective use of criminal funding (2017:260). In the 1970’s the cultivation of the coca leaf became increasingly popular (UCDP, 2019). FARC was one of the guerillas to make use of this. They collected money from the protection of coca cultivations and revenues at other stages of the production of drugs (Orlando Melo, 2017). The violence started spreading into urban areas because of the lucrative business and the many actors that saw an interest in the profits that could be gained. There were also direct clashes between the Colombian army and guerrilla groups. The violence related to FARC grew substantially in the 1980’s and they subsequently had to end their cooperation with the former Communist party, “Unión Patriótica” (UP). It was around this time that the government started to seek non-violent solutions, however, these would be unsuccessful until a new effort was made in 2012.

#### **4.2. The peace agreement**

In 2012 the president at the time, Juan Manuel Santos, started peace negotiations with FARC. Over the coming four years, violence continued from both sides but despite this the parties managed to come to an agreement in 2016. In August the peace deal was signed by the Colombian government and FARC in Cartagena. Nonetheless, after the population was invited to have their say in a referendum on the peace deal the no-votes won by a small margin. The government thus had to renegotiate parts of the agreement. The final version was signed in November 2016. It includes six different chapters: 1) The Comprehensive Rural Reform; 2) Political Participation; 3) End of the Conflict; 4) Solution to the Illicit Drugs Problem; 5) Victims agreement; and 6) Implementation and Verification Mechanisms (Republic of Colombia & FARC, 2016). This thesis will only concern the first chapter.

The rural population has been the most affected by the armed conflict which is a reason for why a comprehensive rural reform that focuses particularly on the countryside was key in the negotiations (Reyes Posada, 2016). The armed conflict in Colombia has been a struggle over territories with the consequence that countless peasant and ethnic groups of rural areas have had to leave their lands and give up their

traditional life styles. In Colombia 8.376.463 people are considered direct victims of the armed conflict, approximately 85 percent of these persons have been displaced (El País, 2017). During the conflict different forms of terror against local populations were widely used including massacres and forced displacement (Cairo et al., 2018). This has led to great inequalities between the rural and urban areas that are particularly notable in terms of level of education, degree of poverty, access to water and sanitation and working opportunities amongst other things (Ocampo, 2014). It is against this background that the comprehensive rural reform has the opportunity to “settle the historical debt” with the countryside (FIP, 2017, author’s translation).

### 4.3. The DPTFs

The picture below illustrates the three different levels of a DPTF. From left to right is the community level (“veredal”), the municipal level (“municipal”) and the subregional level (“subregional”). The participation at all three levels is what eventually leads to an Action Plan for Regional Transformation (PATR), i.e. the final document of the DPTF where the work from each level is summarized and the instrument upon which the DPTFs will later be implemented in the municipalities. However, as mentioned in the introduction this thesis is only concerned with the community level. It is the first step of a longer process of the DPTF however it will in this study be investigated separately.

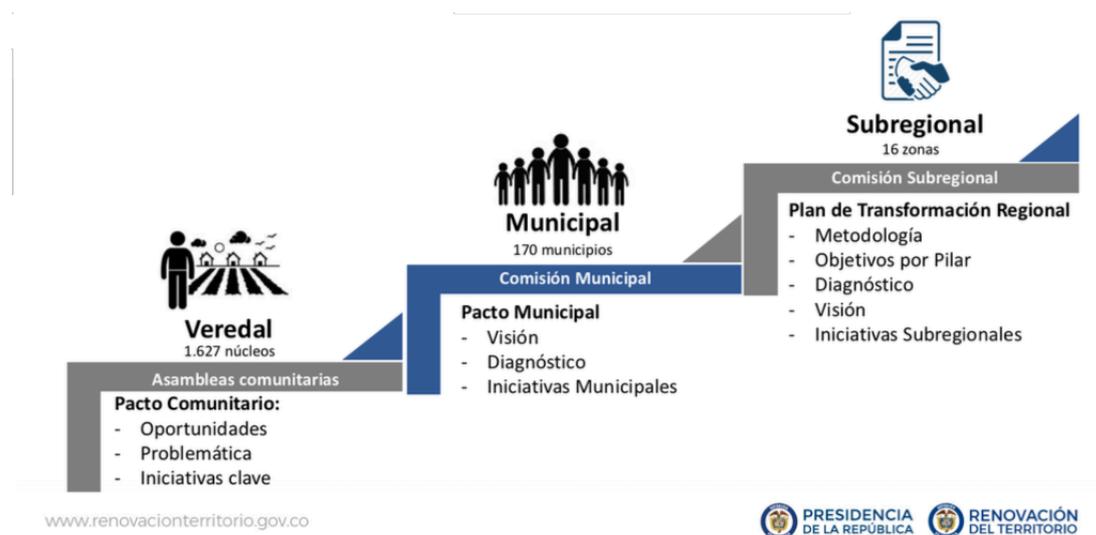


Figure 2. The different stages of a DPTF<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> (ART, 2018b)

The community level is where the rural community members of each municipality have their say in what they hope for the future and what kind of development they want to see in their villages. The importance to “see through a consistent exercise that permits [the rural communities] to reflect their ideas, aspirations, dreams, with the aim to go from visions to concrete initiatives” (ART, 2017b:35, author’s translation) is emphasized in the methodology for the community phase. The ART further acknowledges that specific groups have certain needs within the rural community and that it therefore is essential for the DPTFs to recognize the particularities of rural women and the gender focus as well as those of ethnic groups (Ibid., 2017b). Important to note here is that only the rural parts of each municipality are invited to participate at this level. Furthermore, by development the DPTF refers to 8 specific areas that are shown below in the figure. It adopts a broad understanding which is multidimensional.

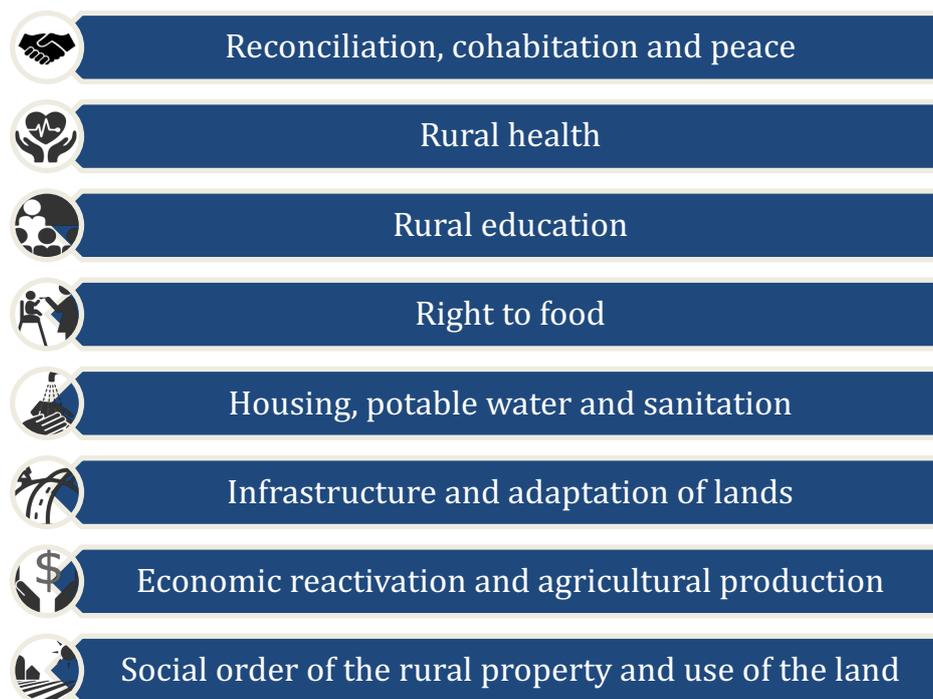


Figure 3. The eight development pillars of a DPTF<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate goal of the community level is for the participating municipalities consisting of different veredas to come to terms on specific detailed projects within each of these 8 pillars of development that they wish to be prioritized. The community

<sup>4</sup> (ART, 2018b)

level itself consists of three stages. These are: 1) Preassemblies, 2) Main groups and 3) Assemblies (Ibid., 2017b).

The first one is the “preassembly”. Here the different villages/veredas of the communities participate together in a large group. They discuss the problematics, opportunities and solutions of their community. Another aim of the meeting is to choose representatives for the next level which is the “main groups”. Here representatives from each vereda meet up to socialize and discuss their common vision. They build on what was discussed and decided in the preassemblies and try to bind everything together. In the last and final stage, the veredas meet up all again in assemblies and the representatives get to present what was decided on earlier in the main groups. The villages all discuss together until they can come to an agreement about the vision and projects they want to have in their communitarian pact. This pact is the summary of what the communities decided at the community level. It will later be brought up to the two next levels for further discussion: the municipal and the subregional level of which this study is not explicitly concerned.

#### **4.4. Historical context of Sur del Tolima**

The department Tolima is located to the center-west in Colombia. Tolima’s capital is Ibagué. The department has a strategic geographic location as it borders seven of the country’s other 32 departments: Caldas, Risaralda, Quindío, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, Huila and Cundinamarca.

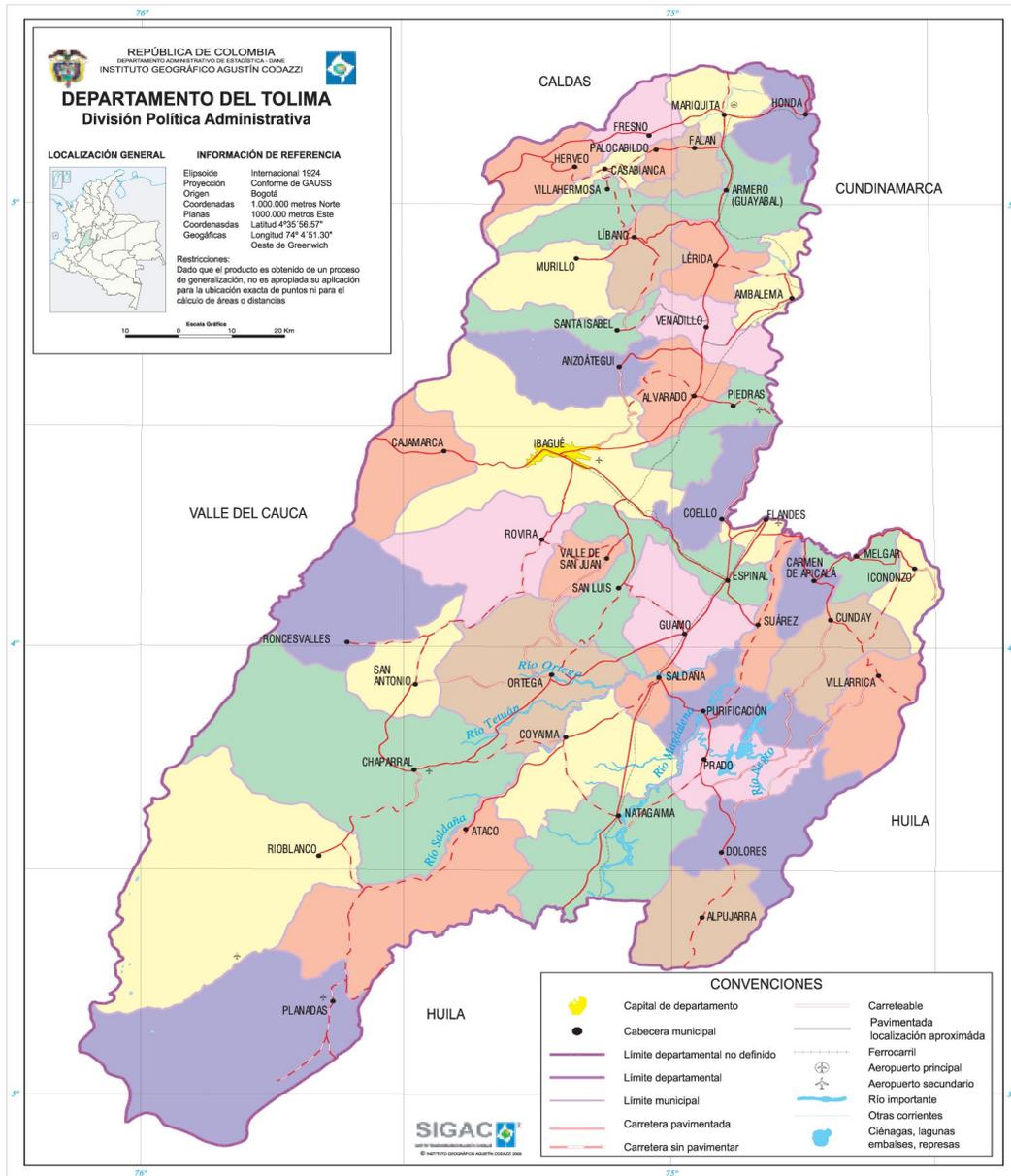


Figure 4. Map of Tolima<sup>5</sup>

Within Tolima there are six different provinces. Only Sur del Tolima was prioritized by the government for the creation of a DPTF. It is located in the south of Tolima, hence its name. The DPTF encompasses four of this province's municipalities: Ataco, Chaparral, Planadas and Rioblanco (see the table below). Other municipalities in Sur del Tolima as well as other parts in the department of Tolima were also affected by the conflict however, since the focus of the government's priority is on the above-mentioned municipalities my research will only concern these.

<sup>5</sup> (Gifex, 2003)

SUR DEL TOLIMA Departamentos: 1 Municipios: 4	TOLIMA Municipios: 4	ATACO
		CHAPARRAL
		PLANADAS
		RIOBLANCO

Figure 5. Table of municipalities concerned in the DPTF<sup>6</sup>

Sur del Tolima has historically been characterized by continuous processes of colonization, violence, limited presence of the state and scarcity of land titles (UNDP, 2015:19). During “La Violencia”, Sur del Tolima was the epicenter of the violence that occurred between the Liberals and the Conservatives. It was also there that FARC was originally formed by survivors from the attack on Marquetalia in Planadas. The region has been plagued by the presence of various paramilitary groups, FARC and the ELN since then. This is mainly due to its strategic location as well as that it provides an optimal place for shelter and supply (FIP, 2013). The lack of social development in the rural areas has allowed for the armed conflict to take place there (UNDP, 2015).

The conflict has for most part been connected to the cultivation of the opium poppy and its processing at other stages (Ibid., 2015). This began in the late 80’s when Colombia entered into a coffee cultivation crisis and lost over 72 000 of its employees. The loss of income was with time replaced with the great revenues that the poppy provided (Ibid., 2015). Furthermore, the south of Tolima, in comparison to the north, was introduced into the agricultural market much later due to extended colonization processes. This has left Sur del Tolima lagging behind in terms of poverty figures. Ataco is one of the municipalities with the highest poverty rates (Ibid., 2015).

In the early 2000’s after the peace negotiations between the Pastrana government and FARC (1999-2002) had failed, the conflict scaled up in Tolima. Particularly between 2001 and 2010 the violence and victimization increased (Ibid., 2015:8). Just in the year of 2002 in Tolima, 29.645 people were forced to leave their homes (Ibid., 2015:30). Apart from displacement, murder makes up a high number of the people who were victimized in Tolima during the conflict (Ibid., 2015). The local population was hit particularly hard by the armed groups. The indigenous groups were accused of sympathizing with FARC (Ibid., 2015). It is also possible to note a great difference between the victimization in the rural areas as compared to the urban ones.

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<sup>6</sup> (Presidencia, 2019)

The rural areas were to a much greater degree affected by forced displacement between 1980 and 2013 (Ibid., 2015). It is also worth to mention that 40% of the total victims that have been registered in the whole department of Tolima are from the four municipalities in Sur del Tolima concerned in this paper (Universidad de Ibagué, 2016).

#### 4.5. Sur del Tolima and its population today



Figure 6. Countryside in Sur del Tolima. Author's photo.

The population in this region mainly lives in rural areas (80,52% in Rioblanco, 75,99% in Ataco, 74,30% in Planadas and 43,12% in Chaparral) according to recent figures (Terridata, 2019). The main economic activity in all four municipalities is cultivation of crops such as coffee, cacao and beans (Ibid., 2019). At the time there is no cultivation of illicit crops in Tolima (UNDP, 2015). These rural areas have been characterized, and continue to be so, by structural vulnerabilities in terms of poverty, limited possibilities to buy land and limited access to healthcare (Ibid., 2015:12). As the table shows below, the percentage of people living in multidimensional poverty is in general very high in Sur del Tolima. The index used by the National Planning Department (DNP) to determine this degree of multidimensional poverty includes five dimensions: education conditions, childhood and youth conditions, health, labor and access to public utilities and living conditions (DNP, 2011).

The total ethnic population varies from municipality to municipality. There is an ethnic presence of particularly indigenous groups and Afrocolombians. The two

main indigenous groups are Pijao and Nasa. There is also a very small community of Roma people living primarily in Ataco but also to some extent in Planadas (ART, 2018c). Furthermore, Planadas is one of the 24 municipalities in Colombia that hosts a territorial space for former FARC combatants in accordance with the peace agreement. Its aim is to reintegrate the former combatants into civil society and to provide them with productive projects. This camp is called “El Oso”, “The Bear”. In 2017, there were 100 adults and 8 children living there (OACP, 2019). The ex-combatants in such territorial spaces have handed in their weapons in line with what is prescribed in the peace agreement.

<b>Municipality</b>	<i>Ataco</i>	<i>Chaparral</i>	<i>Planadas</i>	<i>Rioblanco</i>
<i>Total population in numbers</i>	22,818	47,397	30,117	24,139
<i>Percentage of people living in rural areas</i>	75,99%	43,12%	74,3%	80,52%
<i>Percentage of ethnic population</i>	18,40%	5,20%	9,24%	3,69%
<i>Percentage of indigenous population</i>	3,62%	5,07%	5,82%	2,75%
<i>Percentage of black, mulato, afro-population</i>	14,74%	0,13%	3,40%	0,93%
<i>Main economic activity</i>	Coffee cultivation, cacao, banana	Livestock production, coffee cultivation, yucca	Coffee cultivation, beans, cacao	Coffee cultivation, cacao, sugar canes
<i>Percentage of people in multidimensional poverty</i>	81%	--	81%	87%
<i>Number of indigenous resguardos</i>	2 Pijao: Beltrán & Guardalito	0	1 Nasa: We'sx	1 Nasa: Las Mercedes
<i>Number of veredas</i>	108	154	103	105

Figure 7. Table of data from Ataco, Chaparral, Rioblanco, Planadas<sup>7</sup>

## 5. Theoretical framework

<sup>7</sup> (Terridata 2019; ART, 2018c)

In this section the theoretical framework of the thesis will be discussed. Important concepts within participatory development will be explained and particular focus is placed on power. The discussions about what participation and power mean respectively will lead up to the analytical tool that is applied in the analysis.

### **5.1. How should participation be understood?**

Participation is a contested concept. This study understands it by dividing the concept into two parts. This division is made visible by taking into consideration the following definition of participation: "participation signifies people *taking part* in decision-making processes, or the *type and level of people's involvement* in development planning, projects and practices" (Milabyo Kyamusugulwa, 2013:1267, author's italicizing). What this means is that participation might thus refer only to taking part in decision-making while it also has a wider dimension. What the actual participation looks like is of interest to researchers as well as development actors. Within participatory development who participates and how they participate are therefore two important components (Cornwall, 2002). How this study makes sense of this will be discussed below.

#### *Broad participation: who participates?*

"The effectiveness, transparency and proper development of the Comprehensive Rural Reform are largely dependent on the promotion of **broad participation** on the part of communities." (Republic of Colombia & FARC, 2017:11)

The Colombian peace agreement with its territorial-based, ethnic-based and gender-based perspective aims to ensure that these groups participate to the greatest extent. The broad participation is therefore a basis not only of the Comprehensive Rural Reform (CRR) but also of the DPTFs. Going beyond the categorization of participants into homogenous groups such as 'poor people', the question of who really participates, critically assesses their participation by asking "who participates? Who is excluded? And who excludes themselves?" (Cornwall, 2002:51). Taking into consideration people's non-representation is important for it "can ultimately reproduce their subordination" (White, 1996:154).

Broad participation will thus be understood as the inclusion of as many and diverse community members as possible to guarantee their involvement. Cornwall argues that “procedures to increase the presence of more marginal actors in spaces for participation are necessary conditions for their formal involvement” (2004:84). Not the least since the costs and benefits of participation might exclude people unwillingly and they might lack the “resources for effective participation” (Cleaver, 1999:607). Considering who participates in a participatory process recognizes the heterogeneity of groups and that special mechanisms should be put in place to guarantee formal participation particularly of the disadvantaged.

*Active participation: how do they participate?*

”The **active participation** of the various communities — men and women — in conjunction with the authorities of territorial bodies, is the basis of the DPTFs.”

(Republic of Colombia & FARC, 2017:23)

The concept of active participation goes back to the idea that people should be active participants in development rather than treated as passive beneficiaries. This is expressed by the United Nation’s as an important aspect of every human’s right to development (Piovesan, 2013:103-104). Active participation can thus be contrasted with passive participation. According to Agarwal who has made a typology on participation, active participation entails people “expressing opinions, whether or not solicited, or taking initiatives of other sorts” (2001:1624). This is linked with the idea that “having a voice clearly depends on more than getting a seat at the table (Cornwall, 2004:84). The active participation desired by the ART is in the form of dialogue. The ART representatives become moderators that guide the dialogue while the rural inhabitants are the protagonists. The dialogue is particularly meant to “invite its participants on a journey towards exploration and learning” (ART, 2017:27, author’s translation).

The passive participation, on the other hand, can be understood as the opposite of active participation, where people participate but without raising any opinions or really taking part in the exercise. A situation might occur where the development actors are simply educating the beneficiaries instead of them having real influence and stake in the process (Arnstein, 1969). If considering only the broad participation this might

meet the goals for participation as long as there is an involvement of the local actors, however the beneficiaries would be participating completely on the terms of the development actors. In passive participation, the actions that the participants take part in are formed and controlled by others (Nikhhah & Redzuan, 2009). For the participation to be substantive it is necessary to consider other factors than simply formal involvement (Cornwall, 2004). It is therefore highly relevant to also analyze whether the participation is active.

## **5.2. Participation as power**

Other than taking into account who participates and how they participate it is important to consider the power structures. Power is one of the key concepts to bear in mind when studying participation and cannot be disregarded as Chambers explains: “Participation is about power relations. It is about much else, as well; but power relations are pervasive: they are always there, and they affect the quality of process and experience” (Chambers, 2005:113). Power affects participation in various ways. Not the least through power structures present in the interplay between the different actors within development.

Participatory development particularly problematizes the traditional relationship between the ‘trustee’ and the beneficiary. Trusteeship is by Cowen and Shenton defined as “the intent which is expressed, by one source of agency, to develop the capacities of another” (1996:ix). The trustee is normally the outsider expert who is in control of the knowledge production, also referred to as ‘monopoly’ of knowledge. The consequence is that the already powerful exercise some kind of ‘power over’ the already powerless (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006:123).

It is central to methodologies within participatory development to seek to reverse or change the unequal power structures. By ‘handing over the stick’ to the locals, the experts become the outsiders who sit down and listen while the local stakeholders take charge of their own development planning (Chambers, 1974). This involves also challenging the monopolies of knowledge as the participants are encouraged to create their own knowledge and become the real protagonists of the work.

Within participatory development power can thus be viewed as both positive and negative. Haugaard argues that power in the literature mainly has been viewed as

either domination or empowerment while it continues to be a highly contested concept (2012). Rowland argues in her book “Questioning Empowerment” that power cannot be viewed as a zero-sum game (1997). Power can be expressed in more ways than power over someone which generally only has negative implications. Likewise, the community is complex. It cannot be viewed as one easily identifiable unit where all people share the same values rather it is more reasonably seen as “the site of both solidarity and conflict, shifting alliances, power and social structures” (Cleaver, 1999:604).

### **5.3. Positive and negative powers**

Empowerment within participation implies “the fact of giving to somebody more control over his or her own life or the situation he or she is in” (Milabyo Kyamusugulwa, 2013:1268). This takes place at the local level which has become “the site of empowerment and hence as a locus of knowledge generation and development intervention” (Mohan & Stokke, 2000:247-248). Power is hence not only understood as an unequal relationship between a more powerful and a less powerful actor. According to this thesis’ conceptualization it is central how different actors interact but also how they perceive their own actions as individuals.

Applying participatory development as the theoretical framework thus implies taking a normative stance in the sense that increased participation of communities in the decision-making, in other words shifting the power relations, is viewed as something positive. As power is not exclusive to the unequal power relation between the trustees (in this case the functionaries) and stakeholders, this thesis will also take into account other kinds of power that can appear in the form of local power relations or even a sense of community and/or empowerment within the individual or the community.

### **5.4. The four expressions of power**

In this thesis, power will be seen as a multi-dimensional concept that should be viewed both in positive and in negative terms. For this purpose, it will be argued in line with VeneKlasen & Miller’s conceptualization of power that there are four types of power: ‘power over’, ‘power with’, ‘power to’ and ‘power within’ (2002). **Power over** refers

to domination, coercion and discrimination over another party, **power with** entails finding common ground, **power to** is the unique capabilities of the individual and **power within** concerns a person’s self-worth (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). That there are four types of powers was before discussed in Jo Rowland’s work from 1997 where she mentions these powers explicitly however, for purposes of clarity this thesis adopts VeneKlasen & Miller’s conceptualization. It forms part of a guidebook that was published particularly with the purpose to “improving the lives and participation of marginalized people and forging broad alliances for reform across society” (2002:1). As such, participation is closely connected to how they wish their framework to be used.

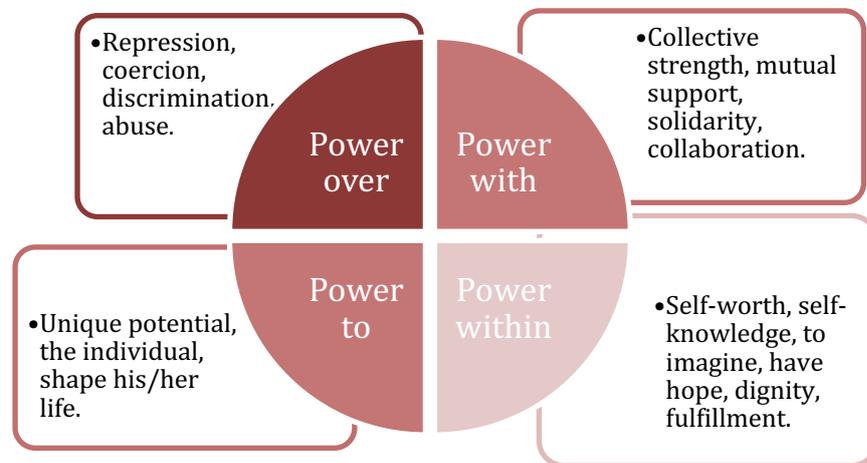


Figure 8. Powers from VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002

### 5.5 The analytical tool

In the peace agreement between the Colombian government and FARC, it is emphasized that the participation in the Comprehensive Rural Reform and particularly the DPTFs should both be broad and active. Who participates corresponds to the broad participation and the level of participation to the active participation. The analytical framework will therefore depart from these two categories and apply the four expressions of power as shown in the figure below. The four power categories that were brought up in the theoretical framework will function as the categorization of how the broad and the active participation respectively were played out in the DPTF for Sur del Tolima. The challenges and opportunities that affected if people were able to do this will thus be analyzed and categorized into the different power categories also here.

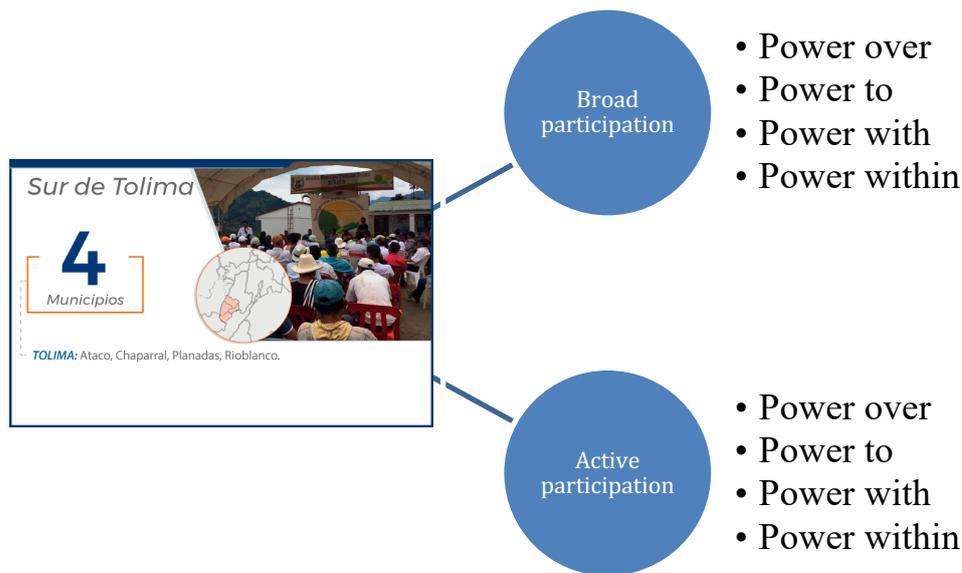


Figure 9. Analytical framework

## 7. Methodology

This thesis deploys qualitative methods. The choice was made based on my research question and what I aimed to investigate with the chosen case study design. I am interested in the views, interpretations, meanings and thoughts of the people that were participating at the community level of the DPTF in Sur del Tolima, either as a participant or as an expert or government representative of some kind. This aligns itself with the aim of qualitative research. It can be defined as follows: “the final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change” (Creswell & Poth, 2018:74). Furthermore, this research rests on an epistemological philosophical assumption meaning that knowledge can only be known “through the subjective experiences of people” (Ibid., 2018:111). Qualitative research is according with the aforementioned assumption best conducted by minimizing the distance between the researcher and the participants. Doing fieldwork is typical for qualitative studies and it constitutes a central component in this particular study (Quinn-Patton, 2001).

### 7.1. Case study design

Case studies are detailed descriptions of a contemporary issue such as an event, an individual, a group or a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study, alike the qualitative research, is interested in detail and in-depth analysis. It cares about subjective experiences and individual cases. Biba Starman argues that case studies are thus by nature more qualitative than quantitative (2013). My thesis adopts a single-case study design in which one case is studied in-depth to draw conclusions on one particular process (Bryman, 2012:66). In single-case study designs there is only one unit of analysis as compared to in multiple-case study designs. My study looks particularly at the community level of the DPTF in Sur del Tolima. The study is also “instrumental” for it looks at one particular case to illustrate a general issue, which is what the participation can look like in a DPTF (Creswell & Poth, 2018:371).

Selecting the case purposefully and thoroughly for a case study is considered important (Ibid., 2018). In my particular case I was limited by potential security risks. I thus had to do “convenience sampling” by strategically singling out the regions that were considered unsafe to travel by my own (Ibid., 2018:518). Another consideration I made by the time I was writing my thesis proposal was to pick a DPTF that was already finished. My intention was not to meddle with the participatory processes while it was still on-going, and I found it important that it had finished in order to be able to study it properly and draw any conclusions.

My viewpoint is that meeting with the participants separately after the plan has been signed will have allowed for more reflection and for them to share more freely their experiences without the pressure of for example facilitators. These considerations further limited my opportunities to select a case while I knew that the way it happened was inevitable. Furthermore, in order to be able to do a detailed enough investigation I could not pick a region where the DPTF had a broader scope than four municipalities. This was if I was to make a convincing study with the limited time that I had. In the end this left me with one option only: Sur del Tolima.

I am aware that convenience sampling is not a desirable option however my research position maintains that any of the prioritized regions constitutes an interesting case as they are all context-dependent. Any one region will be different from the other and this will affect the participation in its own peculiar way. Taking into consideration the context and/or historical background is therefore important in case study research not the least to provide the in-depth description it requires (Ibid., 2018). Context matters for participation.

In any case, it is interesting to note what makes the DPTF in Sur del Tolima unique or special. It is possible to argue that it constitutes an illuminating case that falls under intensity sampling meaning “using the logic of intensity sampling, one seeks excellent or rich examples of the phenomenon of interest, but not unusual cases” (Quinn-Patton, 2001:234). First of all, it was the third out of 16 DPTFs to finish the participatory process (ART, 2018d). It was hence one of the DPTFs that finished the quickest. Secondly, this DPTF is considered one of the more successful cases as it was able to, beyond finishing on time, conclude without major complications. Thirdly, this DPTF was one of two examples with only four municipalities concerned in the participatory process. The other prioritized regions had over five.

In a study, Penagos et al. look at the preconditions of each prioritized region for the DPTFs and group them into different categories based on factors that might complicate their implementation (2016). Sur del Tolima, as a category III is considered to have relatively little distance between the communities, higher heterogeneity within the territory, important social capital as well as local capacity in comparison with the other regions (Ibid., 2016). This could have played a role in the supposed success of the case. These circumstances just mentioned above make Sur del Tolima an important and interesting case to study.

## **7.2. Conducting fieldwork**

Fieldwork refers to conducting research in the field. The data and material for this thesis was collected during fieldwork in Colombia the spring of 2019. From the capital Bogotá I made two visits to Tolima. On the first occasion between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of March I travelled to the municipality Ataco in Sur del Tolima and then to Ibagué, the capital of the department Tolima. The second field visit, between the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, I went to the municipalities Chaparral as well as Rioblanco<sup>8</sup>. The fact that the researcher is there first-hand and collecting the data is central to fieldwork (Pole & Hillyard, 2016). Furthermore, the researcher interacts with those being researched and the distance between the two is cut. One particularity with fieldwork is hence often that it focuses on the “richness of data” (Pole & Hillyard, 2016:3) rather than on generalizing over larger populations. There are various methods that can be applied in

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<sup>8</sup> The fieldwork of this master’s thesis was made possible thanks to a Minor Field Study (MFS) scholarship granted by Sida.

fieldwork of which I chose to conduct interviews. The cross-cultural experience of immersing oneself in the context of the research, and thus also being an outsider in a new setting, raises important ethical issues.

Especially the kind of development fieldwork that focuses on collecting data from “marginalized communities or impoverished individuals” has received criticism (Bank & Scheyvens, 2014:10). The most serious critics question if there even is a point in conducting fieldwork in the first place. It could become a form of exploitation or “academic tourism” if the researcher is not careful (Ibid., 2014:5). It is also valid to question if the research only serves to legitimate the already dominating Western knowledge construction.

While it is important to critically reflect about this, the morality of doing development fieldwork will depend on *how* it is being done and if the researcher manages to critically engage with these thoughts. In the best-case, development fieldwork could potentially also serve to “decentralize Western centrism” (Briggs & Sharp, 2004:673). Afterall, cross-cultural research could be of great value, as long as the researcher is aware of the problematics. Bank & Scheyvens mentions that of particular importance is “building mutually beneficial relationships with people you meet in the field and acting in a sensitive and respectful manner” (2014:160). This was always my main objective.



**Figure 10. Nature of Ataco. Author’s photo**



**Figure 11. ART’s office in Ibagué. Author’s photo**



Figure 12. Red de Mujeres in Chaparral. Author's photo



Figure 13. Vereda "Buenos Aires" in Rioblanco. Author's photo

### 7.3. Semi-structured interviews

The benefit of the interview is that it “give[s] voice to common people, allowing them to freely present their life situations in their own words, and open for a close personal interaction between the researcher and their subjects” (Kvale, 2006:481). To answer my research question, I have used semi-structured interviewing. It is characterized by open-ended questions that are developed by the interviewer beforehand, however which leave room for revision and spontaneous questions during the course of the interviews (Ayres, 2008:811).

Realizing that “the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer” it was up to me to create a comfortable setting (Quinn-Patton, 2001:341). Despite having the interview guide with me, my aim was rather to listen and give room for my participants to share whatever they wished, over me being an active voice. I did not want to steer the conversation too much in order for the participants to describe what they genuinely felt about the process in a more natural way. What I did was that I used probes and follow-up questions to get more depth to the answers and especially in a situation where the participant would get off-topic (Ibid., 2001). The interviewing is a craft and I felt more comfortable for every interview I did. All 19 interviews were conducted face-to-face apart from one that was carried out over Skype. Each interview was conducted in Spanish which was the mother tongue of all participants in my study.

Being aware of one's positionality as a researcher and how this might affect the results of the data is crucial, and particularly as a qualitative researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In my personal case the respondents often equated me with a representative

from international cooperation, being the only white European in the territory, something which could have affected the interviews both positively and negatively. On the negative end, they might have viewed me as someone in a powerful position who could do more for them than was really the case. This happened in one of the municipalities where the respondents towards the end wanted to discuss how I, or my country, could contribute more concretely to some of their other development projects in the territory. This was a difficult situation with no easy answer.

Nonetheless, I think my positionality mostly had positive effects. The international arena in terms of the peace agreement has been viewed as an objective impartial voice. I got the feeling that my respondents were willing to share many genuine and honest reflections about their experiences with me. As I did not represent neither side of the conflict, I became a “neutral” actor in the field. People were very keen to speak with me and over again told me that they were happy to participate in my research. I think it further helped that I had already been living in Colombia for some time before I started the fieldwork, and I am fluent in Spanish which meant that I could navigate myself easily. Before the fieldwork I had done a 4-month long internship with the Swedish Embassy in Bogotá and thus already had knowledge of the Colombian context.

As noted, the power relations in an interview can be asymmetrical due to the positionality of the researcher. However, it might be wrong to assume that by default the interviewer always has the upper hand. Contrary to what might be argued, the respondents are not powerless. They can steer the conversation in a way not intended by the researcher (Bank & Scheyvens, 2014:9). The interviewer might for example struggle with the respondents insisting on bringing up topics that were not considered by the researcher. As argued by Jacobsson & Åkerström it is possible that they have and enforce their own agenda for all respondents have one and they express it “in various kinds of identity work” (2012:718).

They further describe that there are many situations that can lead to the researcher losing control of the interview due to inexperience, or the researcher feeling inferior for being a lot younger or the respondent not wanting to identify him/herself with a certain social category (Jacobsson & Åkerström, 2012). In my case I had to be aware particularly of the government representatives and how they framed the participation. There was a possibility that they would only describe the participation in positive terms and the opposite for the respondents that they would focus solely on the

challenges. My strategy was therefore to make sure that I asked critical questions to leave room for both challenges and opportunities in each interview.

#### **7.4. Ethical concerns**

One particular ethical aspect that I needed to have in mind throughout my project was the sensitive context that I was investigating in. Providing the safety of the participants is an important ethical issue (Bank & Scheyvens, 2014). It was crucial not to cause any tensions in the communities as there was until recently a conflict in the region. Making sure that the research does not have any negative implications for the participants should always be considered (Ibid., 2014). The principle of doing no harm was constantly guiding my work. One way to ensure this was to aim towards meeting with a varied group and to the least extent possible appear as if I were taking sides. This could have greatly harmed my image and was never my intention. My aim was to remain as neutral as possible in the field even though this can of course never be achieved to a 100 percent.

Another important aspect within ethics is informed consent and making sure that the participants are aware of their rights. At the beginning of each interview I informed my respondents verbally that it was completely voluntary to participate and at any time withdraw oneself from the study, asked them whether they were fine with me recording and if they wished to remain anonymous. This is in line with Lund University's ethical guidelines on conducting interviews including the guidelines for informed consent (LU, 2018). Most of my respondents were fine with not being anonymous however as the thesis treats issues that might be sensitive for them, I have decided to mask the names of all respondents. This is the recommended procedure (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality to the participants reduces the risk of causing them any harm (Bank & Scheyvens, 2014). Pole & Hillyard argue that this can be challenging in fieldwork as there is so much interaction between researcher and the ones being researched however aiming towards achieving it is desirable (2016).

#### **7.5. Sampling**

Doing research in contexts of conflict can make difficult the access to respondents (Höglund & Öberg, 2011). Not the least because their, or your own, security might be

placed at risk. In my case I was very fortunate that the areas I was visiting had been calm already for some time. Nonetheless, I experienced that it was difficult to get in touch with informants in Planadas, the municipality where the demobilized FARC combatants still had a very active presence. On an overall level, it worked out well as I used two different strategies for my sampling. These were maximum-variation as well as snowball sampling. It started off with snowball sampling as I first got a contact within the ART. She referred me to her colleagues that worked with the participation in the DPTFs. From there they referred me onwards to contacts in Sur del Tolima. Through these contacts I was able to get hold of other contacts and so it continued for the most part with the functionaries I interviewed from the ART as well as with some of the participants. The snowball sampling technique enabled me to get information-rich contacts through my participants' recommendations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

To also widen the scope of characteristics of the respondents I applied the maximum-variation sampling to get as a diverse group of participants as possible (Quinn-Patton, 2001: 235). I considered this very important since one of my research focuses was broad participation. As the ethnic category and the gender perspective are both so important for the peace agreement, I tried to incorporate these groups into my sampling. My idea was that I wanted to speak with female actors, indigenous groups and different agrarian associations in the region. In the end I managed to interview government representatives, experts who participated, local leaders, indigenous representatives, afro-colombians, peasants and some students that were helping out the government representatives in the different municipalities. The participants thus differ mainly in terms of nature of work, gender and ethnicity.

Some of the respondents I was able to find online and they were contacted through e-mail or WhatsApp. Since I, during my field study, was living in Bogotá which is a couple of hours away from Tolima I had to do what I could to find participants before actually travelling there. I also tried to get hold of people or groups that did not participate in the participatory process, but this proved impossible in the end. Finding the people who did not participate was extremely difficult, especially as many of them did not participate precisely due to the long distances to the municipality center and that they were unreachable because of bad service. This was something I aimed to do but it was not possible. In the end I did a total of 19 interviews, of which

10 were female respondents and 8 male respondents<sup>9</sup>. Down below in figure 14 you can see the geographical correspondence of my respondents.



Figure 14. Geographical correspondence of interviewees

## 7.6. Transcription and analysis of data

Transcription and analysis of the data are both lengthy processes. Data analysis of case studies can be particularly “complex and require flexibility, experience and skill” (Mills et al., 2010a:749). Without enough experience it is possible that the researcher underestimates how long this will take. Analyzing the data entails going through it over and over again, back and forth, in order to interpret the material that was generated by the sources, in my case the interviews (Ibid., 2010a). Within qualitative analysis there are specifically three processes that the researcher goes through: 1) Preparation of the data; 2) Reducing and coding the data and lastly 3) Presenting the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In my case specifically, the transcription of the interviews consumed a lot of time. Each interview took multiple hours. To avoid underestimating the time at my disposal I was advised to do the exact opposite, in other words to overestimate the time it would take and to therefore start early with the transcriptions. I transcribed each interview word by word however they were not translated into English. The quotes are taken from the Spanish text and then translated separately for the thesis. As I am fluent in both English and Spanish, I did not consider this any more difficult than if the whole process had been done in English. At times it was challenging to do the translation as there are many expressions and words in Spanish that do not exist in English however with some effort it was possible to overcome this. Constantly switching between Spanish and English in the research process and specifically in the writing of this study made me comfortable in that kind of situation.

<sup>9</sup> See Annex 1 for more detail and explanation of roles

Once the transcriptions were done it was time for the coding process. Saldaña describes a qualitative code as “most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (2013:3). My way of working with the coding and the general analysis of the data was through thematic analysis. This essentially means structuring and interpreting the data into themes or patterns (Mills et al., 2010b). My codes are thus themes. The theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:10).

The themes that I identified were structured according with the analytical framework of this thesis and organized first into the four power categories and then finally into the broad or active participation category. It thus meant I went over the transcripts at least three times. At times, it was particularly difficult to place the themes within just one of the different powers as the powers are similar. It would happen that the same codes appeared for different powers. Power ‘to’ and power ‘within’ are especially close to one another. It was therefore necessary to revisit the transcripts several times and code the data more than once. Moreover, the thematic analysis approach was theoretical (Ibid., 2006). I worked in a deductive way throughout the coding process by always considering my analytical framework and the categories as mentioned above. The thematic analysis in this study aims to provide “a rich thematic description of the entire data set” rather than focusing on one specific theme (Ibid., 2006:11).

## **7.7 Limitations**

In my thesis I have made certain limitations, some unavoidable and others for more strategic reasons. Early on in my work I decided I would only focus on the community level of the DPTF even though there are in total three different levels. The reason I chose specifically this level was that this is at the core of participatory development. The bottom-up perspective is key, and this was the most bottom-up level of them all. At the other levels the community participate but along with other actors from the region. The community level is also the first level meaning it was the one who initiated all the other levels. This was considered important as well that the people who were involved here and how they participated would have deep implications on the rest of

the process and its success as a bottom-up development program. The limitation was also made on the grounds that the DPTF is a lengthy and complex process. Within the time frame I had for this thesis it would not have been possible to investigate and compare more than one level.

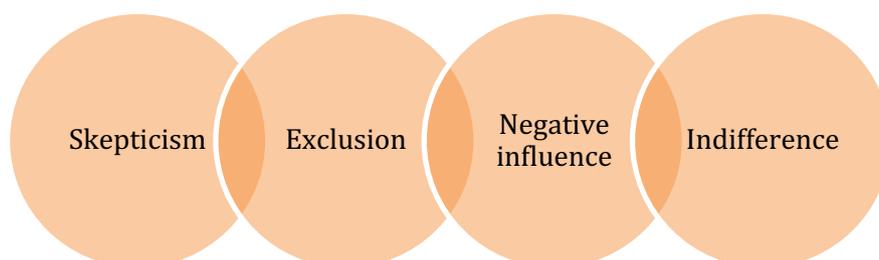
On another note, I had to make further limitations for security reasons. I was not able to reach all parts of the municipalities that I was investigating, and I never had the opportunity to visit Planadas. Going there was too risky taking into consideration the still strong influence of FARC. Despite this, I was in the end able to interview two people who were partaking in the process in Planadas and regional government representatives that also had specific knowledge about what was going on in this municipality. In either case, I would have needed to interview more people from Planadas to have a fuller picture of the process also there. Due to the bad infrastructure, going to the most rural parts of the municipalities was not possible even though I am sure it would have been extremely fruitful and important for my research.

## 9. Analysis

### 9.1. Broad participation: Participating with interest but not unproblematically

In this section the data that corresponded to who participated will be analyzed. What were some of the challenges and opportunities that facilitated or impeded the broad participation? It particularly analyzes the initial phase of the participation, in other words if people would even assist or not. The different powers will be discussed respectively around the themes that have been identified as the most striking for the material. There will be a discussion about issues that worked out well and those that limited the participation, either completely or simply in the beginning of the DPTF. This will become clearer as one proceeds to read the analysis of all four powers.

#### 9.1.1 Power ‘over’



**Figure 15. Themes for power 'over'**

There were various conditions that affected whether the community members decided to participate or not, or if it so happened that they even felt excluded from the process. At an initial level, participation was made difficult for a number of reasons and there would be various struggles. The most present themes when considering power 'over' are skepticism, exclusion, negative influence and indifference. They mostly refer to the challenges that were present rather than the opportunities.

In 2017, when the participatory process of the development programmes with a territorial-based focus (DPTF) begun, the Territorial Renovation Agency (ART) was facing a major challenge. How were they to approach the rural communities? In Sur del Tolima, the first reactions when the people found out about the DPTF were for many skepticism and precautions. Being territories where the state generally has a bad reputation people responded with reservation. Not until they were sure of the intentions of the state could they begin to open up. The feelings of initial skepticism are described by the participants as well as an ART representative.

*“One found very skeptical people. Much like thinking that they had been abandoned forever, that the state does not show up, that the opportunities are scarce and that of course the presence of the guerrilla in that zone has bound them and has pressured them. It has formed their attitude so that they distrust.” (ART representative 2, March 14, 2019).*

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*“What happens is that very few communities participate because many times, even oneself becomes skeptical. One no longer believes anything they say” (Participant 4, April 3, 2019).*

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*“Our first reaction was skepticism” (Participant 10, April 4, 2019).*

The abandonment of the state and the previous failed development programmes were still a painful memory. It was not the first time that the state arrived in Sur del Tolima with high ambitions. Other development programs had reached the same territories but had generated little or no results. In one project initiated between the Colombian state and the American development agency, USAID, they aimed to resolve the needs of the communities through a participatory exercise similar to the DPTF. They went to the territories and asked for people's opinions and desires but then nothing happened. As it turned out the state was not prepared with the necessary resources to fully implement

the programs and the communities in Sur del Tolima were left wondering what went wrong. This generated distrust in the community which made them very skeptical to participate in future processes. One of the ART representatives mentions her worry that the same thing would happen with the DPTF.

*“I had lots of doubts, and we all have doubts that we are the same” (ART representative 3, March 15, 2019).*

In the municipality of Rioblanco, the communities also expressed their worry by reminding the ART staff of one occasion when the state had attempted to respond to their needs. Without sufficient knowledge of the context, not knowing who the rural inhabitants were, how they lived and what the territory looked like the state decided to act. The lack of consideration for the local circumstances led to a failed attempt where money was wasted, and the pressing needs of the communities were left unchanged.

*“One time in Herrera, which is a populated center more or less three hours away from the city center of Rioblanco, where the indigenous people live... That territory is 2000-3000 meters above the sea level. (...) To Herrera, the government sent a bunch of rice for them to cultivate. (...) It was lost money because if they plant rice it won't grow. In the mountains one does not grow rice” (Student 1, March 27, 2019).*

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*Rioblanco is one of the municipalities where a lot of money has been invested with international cooperation, NGOs... There have been government programs that have done a lot of things in the territories, but say, the results have also been very limited. That also generates a level of uncertainty in the communities to think ‘Another time, the same people’. In Colombia we have a saying which is the ‘the vests’<sup>10</sup>. ‘Again the people with the vests show up to do projects’. But the process falls short” (Researcher, March 22, 2019).*

Another evident challenge that affected the whole community level and delayed the process by several months in some of the municipalities, was what the indigenous communities viewed as an unwillingness of the ART to do prior consultation with them and to respect their particular rights as an ethnic group. This was especially the case for the indigenous villages Pijao in Chaparral and Ataco, as well as to a lesser extent in Rioblanco. At the start of the DPTF, the indigenous people therefore did not feel

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<sup>10</sup> This refers to that development actors typically wear vests when they visit their project sites.

included nor welcome to participate. Despite the peace agreement stating that the indigenous communities should have their own differential process separate from the other community members this was something that the representatives from the ART tried to avoid. Neither were they consulted before the process started about the particular methodology of the DPTF, something which caused strong opposition within the indigenous communities and various discussions between them and the ART.

*“First of all, those [ART representatives] from here in the municipality of Ataco and the southern region started having a dialogue with the peasants. And us, the indigenous people they left out. It was only the peasants” (Participant 1, March 13, 2019).*

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*“It has all been a process in which we have needed to fight against racial discrimination, that they have not wanted to take us into consideration from the start” (Participant 2, March 13, 2019).*

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*“When the process started in august, when the ART arrived in 2017 to implement the process... There was a discrepancy between the authorities because one representative said... They summoned the authorities and he showed up for it was important, but he did not want to apply the special mechanism for prior consultation but instead the methodology of the peasants’ route” (Participant 3, April 3, 2019).*

As the various quotes show, the indigenous communities of Pijao felt excluded from the start. It especially had to do with that the ART seemed to insist that they should participate in the same groups as the peasants when in fact the regulations for ethnic groups stipulate that they have a right to influence the processes they participate in and to participate on their own terms. This surely affected their willingness to participate as they felt they were not included nor taken into consideration. The same happened in Rioblanco with the indigenous people Nasa but to a lesser extent. It was far from as complicated as the issue with the Pijao. They were first also told that they should have the same process as the peasants however after they stood up for their rights they were listened to.

*“At the beginning... At first everyone would go together but when we decided that the participation should be... Should guarantee the differential aspect that the regulation says... Well then... They listened to us and I think that the representative who managed the regional [work] said that it should be that way” (Participant 9, April 4, 2019).*

On another note, the FARC ex-combatants had negative influence over its own members and other community members in Planadas. Many of the ex-combatants decided not to participate and even tried to hinder others from participating. The leader of the territorial settlement “The Bear” is described by the ART representatives as filled with resentment towards the process and they further explain that he tried to exert influence over other people to think that the DPTF was a lie. A student in Planadas describes feelings of fear, power and influence after an encounter with them. During one meeting in the participatory process, the leader of the ex-combatants showed up together with some of his comrades to disrupt the meeting. They chose to come uniformed despite that they no longer represent an armed guerilla.

*“I got really scared because I had only been there a month. We had just begun when they started arriving and they came with that offensive and distrustful attitude and... Well I got scared because I said they are demobilized and all, but still they want to conserve that... That is to say, that we saw them with a rank superior to ours and that they are still powerful, and I don't know what...”*

*(Student 3, April 14, 2019)*

Considering other local power structures, local leaders might also have had an influence over whether people participated or not. The leaders from the Junta de Acción Comunal (JAC) were responsible for summoning their community members and informing them about the DPTF as well as their right to participate. As the ART considered themselves unable to visit all the communities because of their quantity, and that they are often located so far off from the city center of the municipalities, they decided to delegate the responsibility to the local leaders. The idea was that in this way as many people as possible would be reached. The presidents of the organizations JAC were considered valuable gatekeepers as they have many contacts and often know everyone in their ‘vereda’ due to their commitment. However, depending on one person to gather his/her whole community can be risky if that person him-/herself is not interested or very skeptical towards the process. Therefore, this worked well in some cases and in others not.

*“The not so positive side about this is if that president of the JAC only attracts people that are his friends, for example. And well, leaves behind other people that... Let's say that in some ‘veredas’*

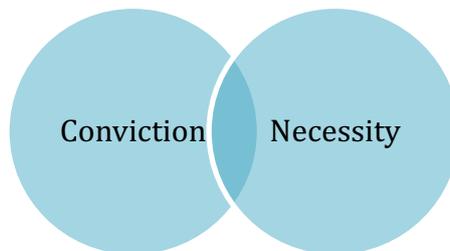
*the people didn't find out that the DPTF even existed because the president never called them”*  
(Researcher, March 22, 2019).

The supposed indifference of some of the ART representatives seems to also have affected the formal participation. The importance they placed on finishing the DPTF as quickly as possible rather than guaranteeing the participation of all people led to that some people could not participate. That they were not willing to reach the communities that were the farthest away from the municipality center meant that for example the ‘vereda’ Marquetalia, where the guerrilla FARC was born, did not participate. Others who did not participate were the Roma community. If this was voluntary exclusion or whether there were other factors behind this is only speculation. What might be noted nonetheless, is that in the case of Planadas, the unwillingness of the ART staff to reach the community members in the rural outskirts was a reality which permitted people from truly participating.

*“I in the field am a lot like if I have to walk for four hours well then I walk four hours because it is my job and I have to reach that place. But they were like ‘no, I’m not going to get inside that truck, and I don’t know what...’ In other words, they were inventing a lot of obstacles because they did not want to leave their comfort zone. So that prevented them from reaching other territories”* (Student 3, April 14, 2019).

Important to add here, however, is that in the other municipalities the ART representatives were for the most part described as very kind and engaged. That there were indifferent representatives was mostly the case in Planadas and to some extent in Chaparral as described by my interviewees.

### 9.1.2 Power ‘to’



**Figure 16. Themes for power ‘to’**

As concerns, the power ‘to’, the conviction that the DPTF meant a valuable opportunity and the necessity to participate seems to have affected people at an individual level. The conviction that the DPTF was the right way forward, in many cases related to how the participants viewed the peace agreement. The reason to trust the DPTF and to be convinced about it was thus that the peace agreement represented such a serious institution with many actors at so many different levels that could put pressure on the programs if nothing was advancing. In other words, this process in their view provided a completely new opportunity as compared to other development programs. The recognition of the DPTF in the peace agreement and by the state at the highest level, was something that never before had reached their territories.

*“It’s the seriousness that the DPTF has shown. Because it comes from a peace agreement”  
(Participant 6, April 4, 2019).*

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*“I believed it in the DPTF, I believe in the DPTF because it’s something that they signed with the government” (Participant 7, April 4, 2019).*

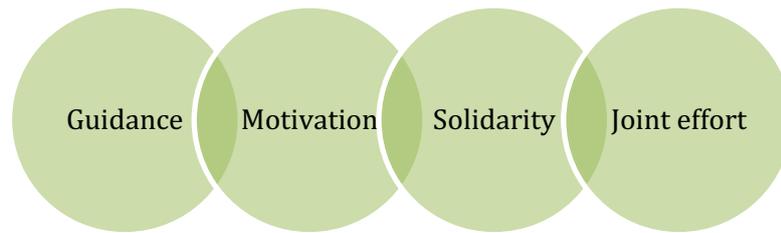
The community members further decided that there was no other option but to participate. Not the least those who were leaders in order to lead a good example. Even though they had distrust in the process they wanted to take part. More than deciding to participate it was considered a necessity. What if they would lose out on a great opportunity if they did not participate?

*“We participated because it was necessary to do it. So that they couldn’t tell us tomorrow that ‘you didn’t want to participate’. If we don’t participate nothing is solved” (Participant 10, April 4, 2019).*

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*“That is to say, more than deciding it is the necessity to do it because we are coming from a very difficult situation in a state that is let’s say catastrophic” (Participant 5, April 3, 2019).*

### 9.1.3 Power ‘with’



**Figure 17. Themes for power 'with'**

The four most notable themes when speaking of power 'with' in relation to broad participation are guidance, motivation, solidarity and joint effort. When analyzing the power 'with' it is interesting to note that considering the skepticism and distrust that was apparent in the communities, several people convinced their community members to take part and become more interested in the process. The sense of collectivity was strong. People helped each other out to ensure that everyone had a stake in the process. The communities particularly searched for the common ground and what they could win together from actually participating. More than individual preferences it was the community as a whole that mattered and that they were all in it together. In this way they managed to increase the participation also of others who were more skeptical or who were not informed.

*“They did what was possible. There were many who tried to bring the others the information [about the meetings]” (Student 3, April 14, 2019).*

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*“There was a colleague of ours who came there [to the communities] and she organized a meeting and she explained it [the DPTF] more to us. The people like get more interested...” (Participant 4, April 3, 2019)*

It is essential to highlight the role of the collectivity and the organizations for the motivation and preparation of people to take part in the PDET. In Planadas one organization dedicated themselves to motivating the women (see the first quote). In Chaparral, those who had the advantage to already have had some preparation and explanations from local organizations that were well-informed about the peace agreement brought this knowledge with them to their own communities (see the second quote below). It is impossible to know exactly how this impacted people's motivation to participate, however it is noteworthy that individuals as well as organizations

accepted the challenge of transforming their communities and its' peoples' views in order for them to not miss out on the opportunity to participate.

*“I participated helping the women in Planadas through a project that a women’s organization was implementing there, we had the opportunity to create some initiatives and to bring them there. (...) We were helping out. Helping the women so that they participated, to... I think that our experience as a network and carrying out a project we succeeded in encouraging the women to participate in this process” (Expert, April 3, 2019).*

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*“There are people in the community that did not see the interest but after I first had a meeting here in Chaparral we started the task of going to our communities and replicating the work, and well the people participated more” (Participant 4, April 3, 2019).*

More examples of motivation can be found in other municipalities too. For the afro-Colombians in Rioblanco who experienced that they historically had been ignored and not taken into consideration the motivation that one ART representative gave them was key for them to participate. Considering their particular situation as a marginalized community who felt abandoned by the local authorities and had experienced incidents of racism it was crucial for them to feel welcome to participate on the same terms as anyone else. Apart from the motivation by the ART representative, the participant also describes the feeling of support from the other community members.

*“It was a representative from Ibagué who interviewed me. I told her that here they [the mayor’s office] have never taken us into consideration. And she said to me ‘Is that really so? No, if you commit yourself to coming to all the meetings and assist wherever... You will find out that this will be different. They opened the space for us. We always had our own table for the afro-Colombians. And the indigenous people too. And the peasants. We always had their help” (Participant 8, April 4, 2019).*

In the case that communities did not participate, the rest would argue about this. The solidarity people felt with each other made them stand up for others. A student in Planadas explained that the rural inhabitants knew very well what participating meant. Their view was that everyone should participate and if this was the case, why were some people not there then? They were making the ART representatives know that they were not happy with that the participation was not guaranteed for all.

*“All the time they were fighting about that. All the time they made us note their discomfort about there being so few. That this was not a participatory exercise... Despite that one would think that they are people who do not know because they are in the countryside and it’s far away, they were really clear on what participating meant. That all should participate” (Student 3, April 14, 2019).*

The struggle to participate on the terms they were entitled to brought the indigenous communities together because only together they were strong enough. There was a joint effort to make the ART representatives listen and finally take into consideration that they should have their separate differential process. Despite that there were certain divisions even within the indigenous communities of Pijao in the different municipalities and between the indigenous communities of Pijao and the community Nasa in general they cooperated for the sake of this process. The DPTF seems to have superseded any major differences between people to work for a result that benefits all as a joint community.

*“Of course. We joined up. It’s a must. If we’re going to make demands for everyone then we have to. We split the work. To that point there was union.” (Participant 10, April 4, 2019).*

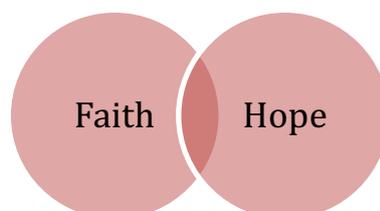
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*“There was fighting when we all were in union. Because when there is no union there is nothing” (Participant 4, April 3, 2019).*

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*“I feel for my male and female comrades even if they are not of my race [Afro-colombian]. Yes, for everyone. Because when it concerns winning, to take another step, it’s about what we will win for everyone” (Participant 7, April 4, 2019).*

#### 9.1.4 Power ‘within’



**Figure 18. Themes for power ‘within’**

The participation started off a bit shaky but many of the participants eventually decided to lay their hope in the process. If they were not convinced already from the beginning,

then many people became so for various reasons. Some chose to have faith in that the process would generate positive results for the community.

*“I am a person who believes” (Participant 8, April 4, 2019).*

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*“We are always focused on what we have faith in. We have faith in that our communities will move forward” (Participant 6, April 4, 2019).*

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*“We believe in this” (Participant 9, April 4, 2019).*

There seems to have been changes in the perceptions of people who went from first not wanting to participate to eventually deciding to do it. In these cases, the skepticism turned into hope. Even if it was just a glimmer of hope they decided to let this guide their decision rather than the initial skepticism.

*“When one looks at the possibilities and starts finding out that the DPTFs exist, the programs for development with a territorial-based focus, well one immediately acts because here is the beginning, here is the continuity of the agreement and the post-conflict that could benefit us” (Participant 5, April 3, 2019).*

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*“In the beginning we had doubts. Why do we need to have so many meetings to do this? Until we found out that it really had opportunities for us” (Participant 9).*

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*“For one part it was very beautiful because the people still have hope in the government. They still have hope” (Student 2).*

Many community members had faith in that the process would generate concrete results and it was therefore important to participate. If not all their needs could be met, then perhaps at least some of them? Despite the distrust in the state they chose to believe that this time would be the exception. An ART representative described how beautiful she thought this was.

*“That makes me very happy to know that people, despite that they have their hearts broken one time and two times and three times, and that they never have seen a lot... They say ‘well, I decide to believe, and I choose to go for this and well, let’s have a dialogue’” (ART representative 3, March 15, 2019).*

## 9.2. Active participation: Engaging actively but with reservations

In the following section how people participated in the DPTF will be discussed. What were some of the challenges and opportunities that facilitated or impeded an active participation? How people participated refers to what the participation looked like during the actual meetings and gatherings, in other words at the tables. As in the section before, the discussion evolves around the four powers and their most striking themes.

### 9.2.1 Power 'over'

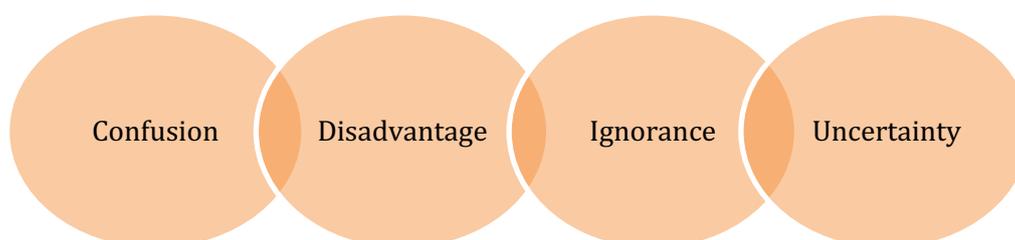


Figure 19. Themes for power 'over'

Particularly confusion, disadvantage, ignorance and uncertainty affected the degree to which the participation was active or not. There was confusion about the DPTF throughout the communities not the least because of its complexity and that many did not have any prior knowledge about the peace agreement. This was a completely new program for them of which they had not heard about before. In the rural areas people have no access to the internet and sometimes not even their phones have connection. Some are also illiterate which makes it very difficult for them to access information about programs such as the DPTF.

*“Let’s say that people... Let’s see... The people did not have, they were not really aware of what the DPTF consisted of” (Researcher, March 22, 2019).*

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*“Yes, women showed up, but many women without knowledge of the context, many women who were not leaders who did not know well the agreement nor the methodology” (Participant 3, April 3, 2019).*

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*“We demanded that the methodology should be as understandable as possible because we did not understand it until the end. In this we are limited. If one creates a methodology that is very technical the people won’t understand. It was emphasized a lot. It was too technical for the people to understand it” (Participant 8, April 4, 2019).*

Even for the ART staff it proved difficult to comprehend the DPTF. Taking that into consideration, it inevitably was a lot harder for the communities that to begin with barely knew that the peace agreement existed. The many stages of the DPTF, first of the community level itself and then of continuous processes at the municipal and regional level, as well as its arduous methodology demanded effort and explanation for those who encountered it for the first time. In Planadas this led to that the ART representatives sometimes gave wrong instructions.

*“In fact, I had a hard time understanding it. It took more or less one month for me to understand the DPTF. Because it has many different steps, it covers many things, many people. So, I had to take some time to understand it and also to understand the context of Rioblanco” (Student 1, March 27, 2019).*

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*“They [the ART representatives] did not even understand too well how the process of the construction of the DPTF worked. Many times, they gave bad instructions. (...) So the people got confused” (Student 3, April 14, 2019).*

One of the most concerning factors here seems however to be that there was barely, if any preparation at all, of the communities. This greatly affected their capacities to participate in an active manner. Additionally, people were not participating on the same terms. Some were lucky to have guidance while others had none at all. This affected their ability to understand the methodology and to engage with the participatory process in a fruitful way. In many “veredas”, the ART arrived only to do a quick presentation of the DPTF and then jump right into the exercise.

*“No, not yet. In the veredas they did a very general socialization and right here they applied the methodology. What their problematics were and opportunities and what their potential initiatives for solutions or proposals were... All at once” (Participant 3, April 3, 2019).*

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*“The only thing that they did was to before the workshop distribute leaflets that summarized the peace agreement but that always were... Well they contained a lot of information and they did not consider the context” (Student 3, April 14, 2019).*

Giving out leaflets when part of the population is illiterate implicates that they will not be able to access the only information handed out and, in this way, have a clear disadvantage as compared to others who are literate. Considering the confusion about the DPTF that was widespread among the communities a preparation of the people would have been necessary. It seems as though there were not sufficient resources for the ART to guarantee the preparation of all people. One of the ART representatives herself admits to that some came better prepared.

*“The people who belonged to an organization had a better capacity of preparing themselves. Because the organizations already have leadership skills” (ART representative 2, March 15, 2019).*

One of the consequences as the researcher describes it was that the initiatives that they came up with became very general. Due to that the preparation was not profound enough and that there was insufficient orientation in how to structure the initiatives for projects in the territories, the ones that were finally formed were not detailed enough for them to be taken into consideration at a later stage. The communities were not equipped with the background knowledge to be able to make well-informed decisions.

*“There were not sufficient elements to structure projects with enough detail. It’s like a criticism that the DPTF received” (Researcher, March 22, 2019).*

While some people were fortunate to get guidance and preparation or already be well-read about the issue, the individual differences became very unequal in general. Another hindering factor for particularly the women was that they could not leave their children home to assist the meetings. Some women were not able to participate because of their daily chores such as cooking or cleaning the house, something which for cultural reasons affected them differently in comparison to the men. Machismo thus affected these women negatively. The fact that their participation was not facilitated despite the communities including the ART staff already being aware of this reality is raised as a negative point of concern by one of the students. The women were

sometimes encouraged to bring their kids to the meetings but in most cases not. This neither happened in the case of Planadas for example, nor in Ataco.

*“They had to stay in the houses, cooking and taking care of the kids. And that was another thing I criticized about the process. That the participation of the women was not guaranteed understanding the chores they had. That they brought a person [to the meetings] who could take care of the kids or something like that. But it never happened” (Student 3, April 14, 2019).*

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*“In Sur del Tolima there is machismo. I noticed that the women are the ones who need to stay in the houses. The women are the ones who need to take care of the kids” (Student 2, April 2, 2019).*

One further factor was the ignorance about the local context and the rural inhabitants' circumstances. Due to the fact that the main part of the methodology was created in Bogotá, far from the rural areas there were certain faults in the exercises. The office in Bogotá received input from a territory in Colombia but that had a completely different context than Tolima. As the living conditions depend so much on the regional and local circumstances in Colombia, the methodology became too tailored to one certain reality. The following example brought up by an ART representative portrays how the ignorance affected the participation in a negative way.

*“From what I remember there is one tool that they insisted a lot that we please use that was very important. A tool that was called 'the refrigerator'. And the refrigerator is when people ask you questions, but you don't know how to respond them, so one writes down the question and one hangs it on the refrigerator so that you afterwards will take it down. They even told us to bring a box and invent a refrigerator. I did not use this. The first day we did it, but the people don't write in these territories. The people are much about oral tradition of speaking and speaking” (ART representative 3, March 15, 2019).*

Lastly the uncertainty of what the DPTF would lead to and if there would even be resources to implement the initiatives affected the attitude of the participants. When for example in the midst of the participatory process there was a change in government, and it became unclear if they would support the DPTFs people started to doubt whether they should participate or not. The new government in Colombia had been critical of the peace agreement and this affected the attitude of the people all the way down to the

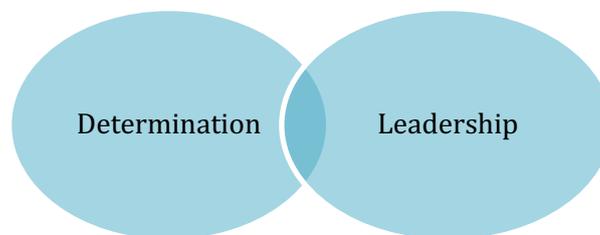
local level. The ART representatives also became uncertain which was noted by the participants.

*“Then the new government came, because there was a change in government. So that established a time of void because the new government wanted to revise everything that had been done and look at how they would continue, what adjustments to make, what novelties to introduce” (ART representative 2, March 14 2019).*

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*“High participation, but after all these voids that I told you about that happened, that they said ‘yes, then tomorrow no, we will suspend this, the participation is not....’ The people start having and start distancing themselves from the issue a bit” (Participant 5, April 3, 2019).*

### 9.2.2 Power ‘to’



**Figure 20. Themes for power ‘to’**

The power ‘to’ in relation to the active participation is characterized by determination and leadership. There was a determination to fulfill the process despite insecurities. There were many leaders in this process who decided to be a role model even though they were themselves doubting the process. As they explain, the distrust or skepticism was something they had to keep to themselves and simultaneously show a strong face outward to the other community members. They were aware of the risk that it would have a negative impact on the process if they too were critical.

*“I was the governor. I am the governor of my community. If the first authority that manages the community isn’t active, how can she expect that the rest will be?” (Participant 4, April 3, 2019)*

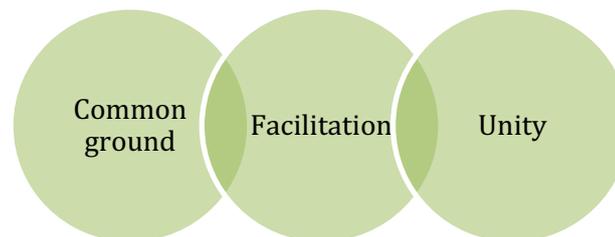
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*“What happens in my case personally is that I can feel that way, but I cannot manifest it that way. I form part of a big organization in which I cannot participate in being or fueling let’s say a dropout for any reason one wants” (Participant 5, April 3, 2019).*

This was also to some extent important for the government representatives/students since they had to be motivational with the sometimes very skeptical and distrustful communities. A student for example described the initial fear she felt when the FARC arrived and tried to disrupt their work in Planadas. Despite this incident they had to carry on their work with the DPTF without letting it influence their attitude negatively. The student decided to set the fear aside and convince both herself and the community members that the ex-combatants also had a right to participate on the same terms as anyone else. Considering that they had all disarmed, they were civilians. This is something she also tried to tell the community members when they felt scared.

*“I tried to tell the people that they [ex-combatants] are just another citizen, they are a person just like us that can participate too. If they don’t want to come, if they just want to obstruct the process, well that is a very individual decision if they want to be part of that sabotage or really work” (Student 3, April 14, 2019).*

### 9.2.3 Power ‘with’



**Figure 21. Themes for power ‘with’**

The various communities united to help each other, motivate one another, work together and build a sense of community. They managed to find common ground on many themes which made them stronger in the participation as many of them experience the same problematics where they live. Through this they were also able to get their own proposals included and listened to. Many describe that the communities for the most part agreed on the same issues, they were all concerned about territory, new roads etc. and thus many of them formed similar initiatives which could all then be incorporated into the plan for the DPTF.

*“What we noted is that they repeated themselves. All the ‘veredas’ asked for exactly the same. Then when we went to do the ‘main groups’ which was already to create the document with all the*

*initiatives well they were all reflected... Well, all the initiatives. Because they were so similar. They were about schools, roads, better healthcare systems, that kind of things.” (Student 3, April 14, 2019)*

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*“It’s something that we have always wanted to have, our own land, to be able to have our own resguardos. It’s the great struggle of everyone. The education. Health.” (Participant 4, April 3, 2019)*

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*“(…) At the community level we noticed that our problems are not the only ones there. They repeat themselves for whatever sector. We all have the same problems” (Participant 10, April 4, 2019).*

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*“In our macro work the issue with roads unites us, also the issue of health, the issue of education, the issue of defending natural resources. In other words, the land. So, we saw that we should work in unity” (Participant 8, April 4, 2019).*

Regarding facilitation, there were initiatives that aimed towards creating a stronger union amongst people. In Chaparral a group of women united to raise awareness of the opportunity that it meant for particularly the rural indigenous women to take part in the DPTF. They particularly united around their identity and as people working for the same purpose. They stayed together during the rest of the process and it reinforced them as a group of indigenous women.

*“What we did was that with various women from organizations we met up to prepare ourselves to say what were the initiatives, what were the problematics, and the opportunities and we also helped to create inputs, to make inputs as an organization” (Participant 3, April 3, 2019)*

The researcher also describes that during the meetings in Rioblanco, for the women to be able to participate fully, the students were engaging with the children so that the mothers did not have to be occupied with that. When their kids were taken care of, they were able to let go of that worry and instead focus on the important work that was being done. In this way they were able to participate on more equal terms.

*“I saw an incident which I thought was really interesting. It was during the ‘main groups’, also at the community level. And it was to avoid that [women not participating], the students handled the*

*caretaking of the children during the meetings. That led to that the women could also participate very actively” (Researcher, March 22, 2019).*

A result of all the meetings was that there was interaction and interrelation between different communities, and they realized that they shared interests and needs. They started to count more on each other. The intercultural dialogues and encounters that were taking place was something out of the ordinary. Before the process the communities did not know each other too well but now they were suddenly working together. The DPTF provided an opportunity to socialize with the other communities and for some people to see others they had not seen in a while.

*“Let’s say, we never had the opportunity for interrelation with the other communities. That was what happened in the groups to reunite everyone. (...) We had the opportunity for meetings and getting to know the needs of the others” (Participant 8, April 4, 2019).*

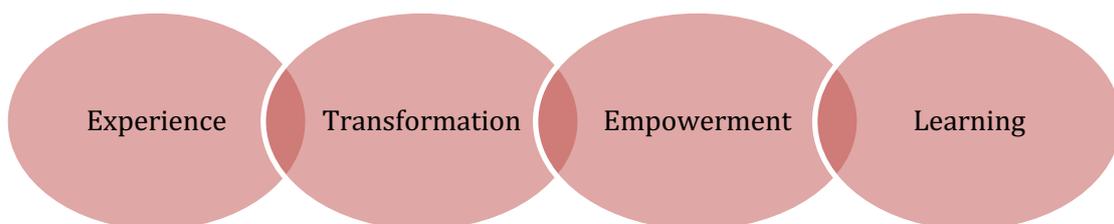
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*“It was a very positive experience. Many women had not left their territories. They had the opportunity to interact with the institutions, with organizations. They had the opportunity to say ‘well, we need this, and, in some way, we will work for this initiative to be formed here’. Somehow it was not only the individual benefit but rather the common good. I feel that this experience also benefitted the women” (Expert, April 3, 2019).*

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*“Despite the circumstances facing very strong legacies of violence, the community reunited and that for me does not have a name. It’s very very important the fact that they reunite indigenous communities, Afro-communities, peasant communities. This is in fact one of the intentions of the DPTF to create the space and meeting between different actors, to create intercultural dialogue. That was achieved” (Researcher, March 22, 2019).*

#### 9.2.4 Power ‘within’



**Figure 22. Themes for power ‘within’**

The power ‘within’ can be analyzed in terms of experience, transformation, empowerment and learning. To participate actively in this process meant being vulnerable. People were asked to share their most profound dreams and visions. They had to risk not being listened to or being neglected at the end of the day. Many of the participants are direct or indirect victims of the long conflict and it might have been difficult for them to truly open up.

*“(...) the legacies that the war leaves behind also leave many pains, a lot of resentment, and that people feel prohibited from participating. Not because of fear but because they have memories, they have a legacy that they do not want to share for that motive”. (Researcher, March 22, 2019)*

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*“The peasant in these territories where the conflict has been, it is very difficult to make him speak. They attend the meetings and they stay quiet. They don’t talk. With all that has happened to them they have all the reasons for it” (ART representative 1, March 13, 2019).*

Therefore, it could be considered remarkable that there was a transformation going on in which the participants opened up more and more as the process advanced. Something which might have allowed people to freely express their wishes and desires was the fact that at the community level there were neither limitations in terms of budget, of political character, nor technical or institutional. The community members were encouraged to dream and imagine their future. In Rioblanco the ART representatives were locals from the territory something which also seems to have created confidence among the community as they had particular knowledge about the context. It is possible that the participants started feeling secure in the kind of environment that was achieved during the meetings.

*“There were lots of meetings that involved and permitted talking and talking after everything that they kept saved from a long time ago. So, the people were like finding catharsis and after all that pain, all that worry, all that loneliness, false expectations... That I think helped the people open up and they were feeling that maybe there could be opportunities to improve the conditions. But at the start there was certain reservations” (ART representative 2, March 14, 2019).*

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*“The exercises were guided by people that we practically, almost everyone, already knew. We are friends. There is confidence for one to ask questions, challenge it. (...) Even for one to make other suggestions.” (Participant 10, April 4, 2019).*

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*“There was a representative that lived in, that was from the municipality. That man helped out a lot because there was a person who knew the territory. That is very important that whoever works in the participatory processes know... That the person is from the place where it is taking place because in that way, he/she has knowledge” (Researcher, March 22, 2019).*

What became evident in the interviews with the participants was that people had opened up and made themselves vulnerable for the common cause. People dared to say their opinions and express their desires. Even though this was difficult for many as people were struggling with believing in themselves or their capabilities, with time as the interviewees describe it many opened up. The participation has generally been described as very active. Many attested to how beautiful the experience was.

*“This was a beautiful experience, positive, because this space allowed the way of dreaming about one’s territory for those who participated. It allowed them to generate a breath of transformation. Yes? To dream, to write” (Participant 3, April 3, 2019).*

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*“It was very beautiful that they made the communities dream. Dream. Fly off. ‘Imagine how you want to be in 15 years. Imagine how you want to be within 10 years.’ Very beautiful.” (Participant 10, April 4, 2019).*

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*“I found it [the participation] super good because there they gave the communities the opportunity to emerge many of the things they have kept detained and that they haven’t been able to say” (Participant 11, April 4, 2019).*

On a further note, there was also some form of empowerment of the participants. Various participants described that people who did not speak before now spoke, particularly the women and the young people also got involved. However, perhaps more importantly they were listened to. Marginalized communities experienced that for the first time their voices were valued.

*“Because of the agreement that they created in Havana we, the peasants, the Afros, the indigenous people, have the opportunity to sit down, that they listen to us. Because before it wasn’t like that. Before they didn’t listen to us” (Participant 8, April 4, 2019).*

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*“Also, in some way we were giving a voice to people that apart from the vote never had participated in anything else and no one had every listened to their needs, and neither had their stances on different issues been taken into consideration. And well it’s really them who are living it, those who know what is happening in their territory” (Student 3, April 14, 2019).*

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*“There were people one did not think had that great capacity to challenge, to ask questions, to criticize and they were doing it” (Participant 10, April 4, 2019).*

The process also opened up many opportunities to learn new things or to develop one’s capabilities as a community or as an individual. Both the participants as much as the ART staff describe how the process of the DPTF changed them from within.

*“We also said it, the community, that there are things that we could even do within our community, that we have not done because many times we are lacking orientation. We learned a lot of working tools that we can use” (Participant 8, April 4, 2019).*

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*“It has served us in many regards. We have integrated more in terms of friendship and friends. And to work with development in the ‘vereda’ and in the municipality. All of that. It was very interesting.” (Participant 9, April 4, 2019).*

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*“I always tell everyone that the experience of the DPTF split my life in two. In other words, it was like a milestone in my timeline that showed me the true reality of my country” (Student 3, April 14, 2019).*

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*“We peasants in the community could visualize a lot of things. One realized many things... Like my friend from the ‘vereda’ said... It’s just that we can manage a certain project, a productive project, a tourism project. Because we have this and this to show and this to sell” (Participant 11, April 4, 2019).*

## 10. Conclusions

In the analysis of the interviews I have looked at challenges and opportunities that affected both the broad participation of the communities as well as the active participation of the aforementioned. As was already mentioned, it is important to study the two as the formal participation might be guaranteed without it truly being substantial. Particularly the example brought up in the analysis, of the mothers bringing their children to the meetings so that they could take part, illustrates this case. While

they were able to assist the participatory exercises, they could not participate actively as they were constantly being distracted and preoccupied with their kids. Distinguishing between broad and active participation is thus key.

There were notable challenges to the participation. Many of them were overcome and the community phase was eventually able to finish. Nonetheless, the participation could have been made both broader and more active. That some communities did not participate due to negative influence by local actors or indifference by ART representatives could have been approached differently. Various communities that were located the farthest away did not have the opportunity to participate and little was done to facilitate this. The exclusion that many people in the indigenous communities felt, particularly the Pijao, could also have been mitigated. If prior consultation had been introduced from the beginning some of the delay could have been avoided. Particularly the lack of preparation of the communities had serious implications. That people cannot participate on the same terms is troublesome for participatory processes.

Nonetheless, I find it interesting that many of the participants chose to view the exercise as something positive rather than focusing on the problematics. The community found solutions to the problems that arose and various representatives from the ART did their best to work through the discrepancies. Even the indigenous communities of Pijao emphasize the importance of initiatives such as the DPTF. People were skeptical but they still decided to believe this time. What if it would actually be different? Part of this explanation is perhaps to be found within these people themselves. They have a passion for what is possible as the saying goes, and also the title of this thesis (Kierkegaard, 1843). One can only speculate on this, however, knowing that this is the first successful peace process in over five decades of violent conflict, might have convinced people that this was a great opportunity. The conviction that nothing will change unless they hope might have encouraged them to participate and to do it actively.

The power “with” is particularly strong in this thesis. The fact that this is the case is perhaps not so surprising considering that the planning of the development program was meant for the benefit of all communities and not the individual interests. Most of my interviewees actually preferred to speak about themselves as a community rather than individuals, underlining the importance that the common notion played. The way people joined up and worked together for the common good had positive effects

not only on their own attitudes but also that of their community members and neighbors. The opportunities were thus just as many as the challenges.

I would like to emphasize, however, that the communities are not homogenous groups. Even though it is possible to identify patterns and a line of argument, it is important to remember that within the general description of a phenomenon there are constantly individual differences. For example, it will always be the case that no matter how much participation is facilitated in any location there will always be individuals who participate less (or more) and there will always be people who decide to participate and those who do not. Local power structures also play a role. In this particular case the participation further differed depending on the municipality. Planadas seems to have had a much more complicated participatory process than the other three municipalities.

With this being said participatory processes can be extremely complex. While some things work out really well others might not. And even when things turn out well it does not mean that this was easy or that there was never an initial struggle to finally achieve this result. The case of Sur del Tolima shows some of the difficulties with participatory processes in general, but it also highlights the potentials of letting rural communities, or specifically the Colombian communities most affected by the conflict, be the true protagonists of their own development.

On a different note, there are many topics this thesis has not been able to cover in relation to the DPTFs. An important study area would have been to investigate the next two phases of the community level, in other words the municipal and the regional level. These are the two levels where the institutions and organizations started interfering with the proposals of the communities. Another interesting idea would have been to compare this DPTF with one of the others as context matters and each process is different. One of the more pertinent issues at the moment is the actual implementation of the DPTFs and its' initiatives that were formed during the process. All participants I interviewed raised concerns over that there has been very little done up to this moment.

In some municipalities there is low interest in the DPTFs and too little is being done to see the challenge through. There is thus a pressing need to follow the actual implementation and to evaluate its progress. As there seems to be lacking financial resources many actors raise the need for international cooperation and higher interest from relevant actors. That the participation of the communities was prioritized is valuable however if the process was for nothing, Ataco, Chaparral, Rioblanco and Planadas might be let down yet another time. The DPTFs provide such a fruitful

opportunity, if they are implemented, to once and for all improve the lives of the rural inhabitants that were so affected by the conflict. However, if this does not happen the hearts of the participants will be broken again. This time their hearts might be unrepairable.

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## Annex 1: Detailed list of interviewees

Date	Role	Gender	Municipality respondent worked/participated
March 13, 2019	Participant 1	Female	Ataco
March 13, 2019	Participant 2	Female	Ataco
March 13, 2019	ART representative 1	Male	Ataco
March 14, 2019	ART representative 2	Female	Regional level (Ibagué)
March 15, 2019	ART representative 3	Female	Regional level (Ibagué)
March 22, 2019	Researcher	Male	Rioblanco
March 27, 2019	Student 1	Female	Rioblanco
April 2, 2019	Student 2	Female	Ataco
April 3, 2019	Participant 3	Female	Chaparral
April 3, 2019	Participant 4	Female	Chaparral
April 3, 2019	Participant 5	Male	Chaparral
April 3, 2019	Expert	Female	Planadas
April 4, 2019	Participant 6	Male	Rioblanco
April 4, 2019	Participant 7	Male	Rioblanco
April 4, 2019	Participant 8	Male	Rioblanco
April 4, 2019	Participant 9	Male	Rioblanco
April 4, 2019	Participant 10	Male	Rioblanco
April 4, 2019	Participant 11	Male	Rioblanco
April 14, 2019	Student 3	Female	Planadas

**Participant** = participated in the DPTF as a rural community member

**ART representative** = contracted staff within the ART working with the DPTFs

**Researcher** = followed the whole DPTF process and also acted as a facilitator when the ART was running short of staff

**Students** = formed part of the ART team and followed the DPTF process

**Expert** = formed part of a women's' organization that encouraged other women to participate in the DPTF

## Annex 2: Sample interview guide

### Questions for ART and students:

#### ***The role of the interviewee***

What was your role as a coordinator/facilitator/manager/student?

Why did you decide to accept this role?

Did you have any preoccupations before getting started?

What were the main challenges for you as a coordinator/facilitator/manager/student in the process?

Did you ever change your strategy?

What lessons did you learn during the process?

#### ***Active participation of the communities***

According to you, what is the importance of the DPTFs?

How can the DPTFs contribute to peacebuilding?

What importance does the participation of the communities have for the DPTFs and specifically at the community level?

What is the relevance of a DPTF specifically in Sur del Tolima?

What does it mean that the participation should be influential and effective?

For you, what is a successful dialogue?

How would you describe the participation of the communities at the community level?

What were the main challenges behind a participation of the communities?

How did you find the participants? How did you approach them?

Who participated in the community phase?

Who did not participate? Why?

Where there any people that you approached that did not want to participate?

How did you prepare the communities for the participation in the different stages?

Where did you organize the pre-assemblies/motor groups/assemblies?

How did you facilitate for everyone to participate?

Did you ever change or adapt the methodology for the community level?

### ***Broad participation***

How did you make sure that the participation was broad and diverse/equal?

How did you work with the differential focal point (the ethnic perspective) of the peace agreement?

How did you work with the territorial focal point?

How did you work with the gender focus?

Were there any “resguardos” or “veredas” that decided to not participate? If so, why?

Did you do prior consultations with the indigenous communities (required by law)?

Did you consult organizations that work with the promotion of gender equality and/or women?

### Questions for the participants:

#### ***The participant***

In what moment did you decide to participate/not participate in the DPTF in Sur del Tolima?

Why did you decide to participate/not participate?

Did they contact you or how did it happen?

In what stage of the community level did you participate? In the pre-assembly? In one of the motor groups? In the communitarian assembly? Or some? All?

Do you belong to any “vereda”/“resguardo”/indigenous community/association/company?

Why did it seem important for you to participate/not participate?

Did you have any preoccupations before getting started?

***The experience/active participation***

How was everything organized according to you?

Did you receive information before your participation at the community level? Was this information sufficient?

Is your impression that the participants were aware of the objective of the DPTFs?

Were you aware of the objective of the DPTFs?

How did the organizers facilitate for you to participate?

Was it clear at all moments what you were participating in and why?

How would you describe your experience as a participant?

Did the participation meet your expectations? How? Or how not?

How was your experience to participate together with the other participants?

Did you feel included?

Was there anything you would have liked to change?

If you were to participate again, how would you have liked it to be different?

How was the environment between the facilitator and the participants?

What role did the facilitator play?

Did you feel like you were given the opportunity to raise your opinions?

Did you feel like you were being listened to?

Did you feel like what you were contributing with had an influence/impact?

How would you describe the environment between the many participants?

Were there people who spoke more than others?

For you, what is a successful dialogue?

Was there any point where the participation felt forced? If the answer is yes, then how?

Who were the “owners” of the process according to you? The communities or the ART?

Were the results in the stage were you participated a common decision between all participants?

***Broad participation***

Were the problematics of the specific group/groups you belong to taken into consideration?

Was the specific problematics of rural women/farmers/indigenous people taken into consideration?

Did your resguardo/vereda/community feel included and welcome?

Did you experience that there was willingness within the communities to participate?

Were there any people that according to you were not included at the community level?



## Annex 4: Impactful meeting

During my fieldwork in Colombia I had the opportunity for a short encounter with, the former Colombian president and Nobel Peace Prize winner of 2016, Juan Manuel Santos. This was such a big moment for me who had spent so many months studying one of the initiatives to the accords. He was the first president to achieve the end to a more than five-decade long conflict in Colombia. In the picture he is signing my copy of his book “The Battle for Peace”.

