

The Journal of Environment & Development

<http://jed.sagepub.com>

Baja California and California's Merging Tourist Corridors: The Influence of Mexican Government Policies

Nora L. Bringas-Rábago

The Journal of Environment Development 2002; 11; 267

DOI: 10.1177/107049602237158

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://jed.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/11/3/267>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *The Journal of Environment & Development* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://jed.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jed.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations <http://jed.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/11/3/267>

Baja California and California's Merging Tourist Corridors: The Influence of Mexican Government Policies

NORA L. BRINGAS-RÁBAGO

This article aims to show how the Mexican government's development policies have contributed to promoting coastal regions whose economic base rests on tourist activity. In this context, it describes the pattern of development taken by urbanization within a tourism development zone in northern Mexico: the Tijuana-Ensenada Coastal Corridor (Corredor Costero Tijuana-Ensenada), in Baja California. The article is concerned with the events that have influenced the zone's current configuration, that is, how and under what conditions tourism's process of implantation in space has occurred and what mechanisms have facilitated it.

The existence of natural resources and historical landmarks to a large extent determines tourism flows to a region, as do other factors such as tourists' discretionary income levels and preferences, for example. With the onset of mass tourism, the beach-sun combination became the main motivating factor for people to travel great distances in search of greater enjoyment of their leisure time. This marked the start of a change in how the space of tourism is valued: from being a space that is the object of observation and contemplation, it becomes a space that is consumed and coveted. The strong tourism pressures to which coastal zones are subjected arose from this transition (Lozato-Giotart, 1993).

Throughout human history, coastal zones have occupied a strategic place for the development of commerce as well as for the expansion and domination of one people over others. Therefore, coastal zones in and of themselves became a scarce resource that must be conserved and preserved through rational use. This does not mean that they cannot be used for commercial, industrial, or transportation ends or for the establishment of tourist zones. But it must be done with caution because the advantage that is the commodity's scarcity is what determines its demand. This is why speculation often occurs with this type of space.

Journal of Environment & Development, Vol. 11, No. 3, September 2002 267-296

DOI: 10.1177/107049602237158

© 2002 Sage Publications

In this context, an important question becomes, How can coastal zones be developed while at the same time their natural condition is protected? This is a challenge that all countries with extensive coastlines, such as Mexico, must face. The complexity of territorial occupation has forced those who have the task of promoting development and regional planning to seek and propose new methods and techniques that can enable a greater involvement and understanding of what must be done. As such, geography can be highlighted as a discipline that has contributed to identifying and explaining the spatial incidence of certain social phenomena.

To examine a space such as the Tijuana-Ensenada Coastal Corridor (Corredor Costero Tijuana-Ensenada [COCOTEN]) is not an easy task, because this space has characteristics that make it unlike other tourism spaces in Mexico: They are the land and the maritime border with the state of California, the richest state in the United States. In addition, California (along with Texas) is one of the states with the highest percentage of population of Mexican descent. At the same time, 50% of the tourism flows to Mexico are from California and Texas. A great many of the opportunities and challenges facing this region are derived from this fact because this coastal space is closely linked to the processes that take place on the other side of the border.

In the context of a developing country that needs to generate income while adopting a logic of conserving natural resources, a paradox develops of how to take advantage of the natural and cultural resources that exist in the territory without mortgaging the future prosperity of the region. To do this requires the implementation of measures that usually are not very well received by economic groups who want to develop the zone without taking into account the conservation and protection of areas of high ecological value. These measures can ensure the health of coastal ecosystems that are exposed to enormous tourism pressure.

The attraction that coastal zones exert on tourism constitutes a two-edged sword. On one hand, there are big economic interests pushing for rapid and ongoing urban development of the coastal zone with a traditional tourism approach—vertical hotel constructions and the building of vacation homes on the beachfront. With this approach, environmental concerns and a harmonious landscape are rarely taken into account. On the other hand, there are those (fewer in number) who struggle for carrying out a kind of tourism development that is in harmony with the surrounding environment.

In decades past, the balance was loaded toward economic aspects while neglecting environmental concerns; beginning in the 1970s, a concern with environmental conservation developed on a world scale. This concern has not been absent from the tourism arena. Since the 1970s, new planning currents have arisen that argue that urbanization can be pro-

moted while respecting the environment and its conservation as a basis for achieving sustainable development.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to determine what have been the promotion policies sponsored by the Mexican government in coastal zones with tourism potential. For this purpose, the article is divided into three parts. The first presents a general overview of the approach that has been followed by mass tourism in coastal zones. The second part reveals the role of the state as a promoter of policies aimed at stimulating coastal development through tourism. The final part describes the development of tourism in the COCOTEN, highlighting to the extent possible the impact that urban development and tourism promotion policies of the Mexican government have had on its expansion.

The Invasion of the Beaches: The Expansion of Mass Tourism

Up until the Second World War, the uses of the coastal zone were determined above all by primary sector activities and trade. But in the period following the war, industry and tourism appeared as two of the predominant activities making use of the coastal zone, to the degree that today these kinds of uses are the most rapidly growing (Barragán, 1994).

Beginning with the second half of the 20th century, the value placed on the ocean really began to change. During this period, the sea and the sun became part of the ideal vacation, accentuating a model of consumption based on the four Ss (sun, sea, sand, and sex). This has resulted in sharp spatial polarization, accompanied by a high concentration of tourists during a short period of time in reduced spaces. This has produced overcrowding and additional pressures on the environment, marking the start of a veritable tourist invasion of the coastal zone (Cazes, Lanquar, & Raymond, 1993; Racine, 1982; Shaw & Williams, 1998).

This kind of tourism has made the role of the modification of urban organization important, as expressed in the appearance and spread of tourism centers on ocean fronts, to the detriment of settlements that already existed adjacent to the coastline on interior lands (Callizo, 1991). Therefore, it should not be surprising that the model of development that was followed for conventional tourism was the construction of big vertical hotels on the beachfronts, which had all the amenities and services within the same space. This meant that each hotel functioned as a sort of enclave,¹ in such a way that contact between the tourists and the receiving community was nonexistent.

1. This type of enclave development prevents visitors from interacting with the receiving community, and visitors' mobility is confined to the route from the plane to the hotel to the beach. The organization of coastal space oriented toward conventional tourism has

As a consequence of the invasion of coastal zones by tourism, above all in European countries along the Mediterranean, major transformations took place that totally changed the traditional physiognomy of some beaches. Strong speculation in land, the construction of large hotels and condominiums on the beach, and the purchase of land by foreigners unleashed an all-out struggle to take control of beachfronts (Fernández, 1991; Jurado, 1990, 1992). In this context, residential tourism became one of the main factors in mass tourism to coastal zones. Because of the high demands that this type of tourism places on land, there began to be serious problems in the organization of space.

The excessive development of the tourism real estate business has been an opportunity and a way to escape for some, an escape that translates into a change from the temporary enjoyment of a place to the permanent appropriation of the vacation home. A spatial-temporal form rapidly took shape in which new spaces emerged, spaces that were easily urbanized, marketed, and ordered, in a speculative context of sales of lots and vacation homes close to the beach. Anarchic building construction at the edge of the sea took place with an enormous waste of space and low tourism productivity (Cazes et al., 1993).

With this, the construction of secondary residences became the main protagonist of this metamorphosis, and that activity became a voracious consumer of territory. Thus, the only guiding orientation for the process of implantation of tourism in a given territory was the change from natural to built land use, transforming the coastal zones. In this way, the real estate business was enshrined as the dynamic element in coastal tourist zones, to the detriment of traditional activities, which were abandoned. Also neglected were the objectives that gave rise to tourism activity itself; interest now focused on the sale of lots and real estate speculation, the latter linked to the availability of land and distance to the sea (Vera, 1997).

All this produced anarchic, out-of-control urbanization on oceanfronts and an enormous waste of space to build hotels or secondary residences. It also led to the rise of various types of tourism implantations in space, some of which have appeared spontaneously and others as the result of planned actions. This created a wide range of typologies of spatial organization with similar patterns of concentration on the coastline, although with differing degrees of articulation to the local and regional spheres (Barbaza, 1970; Santana, 1997; Vera, 1997).

produced the rapid growth of these zones without adequate planning or corrective measures to mitigate the negative impacts on the environment caused by accelerated construction and the intense use to which these ecosystems are subjected by visitors.

TYPES OF ORGANIZATION OF TOURISM SPACES IN COASTAL ZONES

The expansion of mass tourism has given rise to very diverse forms of territorial ordering. Among the main criteria needed to make a typology of tourism implantations in coastal spaces, according to Barbaza (1970), there are three aspects that must be taken into consideration. The first is the intensity in the use of space, that is, the diversity of activities that existed in a territory prior to the appearance of tourism. The second has to do with the spontaneous or voluntary character of buildup. The third is the one-time or continuous character of the implantations.

The most notable example of the first type that is intensive and spontaneous is Spain's Costa Brava, which attracted massive tourism in the postwar period (1945-1950). The arrival of tourists to the region preceded urbanization, and therefore the latter had to rapidly respond to the demand, setting off a race to supply tourism's needs in which the anarchy of constructions and real estate speculation gained ground and the destruction of the landscape became unimportant. Despite these harmful effects, tourism gave the region a unity or identity that it did not previously have, converting it into a true tourist space (Barbaza, 1970; Callizo, 1991).

A second type of organization of tourist space has to do with the so-called planned centers in specific locations. Examples of this are the tourist centers built in Bulgaria and Romania on the coast of the Black Sea with strong state participation characteristic of socialist regimes. The first of these centers was established in 1948, but it was not until 1956 and 1957 that both centers experienced buildups. In both cases, the tourist centers were conceived and planned by the state and were later offered to tourism, so supply preceded demand. This type of organization constituted a functional unit that defined what to offer the tourists in previously unknown places that were chosen because they were characterized by large expanses of land and great short-run profit-making opportunities. These sites became the ideal prototype for vacation centers (Barbaza, 1970; Callizo, 1991).

Unlike the Costa Brava, which represented spontaneous and intensive development, in this other type of organization, there is not the continuous utilization of space but rather a tourist nucleus linked to the environment in a given location. The bulk of construction was up to the state, and its distribution was carefully calculated, foreseen, and put in place for tourist consumption. Each portion of space was assigned a specific function to avoid future conflicts over utilization. Space was superficially decorated, and perhaps it was this lack of authenticity that made it difficult for a self-identity to take shape because the space presented itself as something completely artificial and placed in a showcase for the

enjoyment of the tourists, without any charm and without a real integration to the region.

The third type of order is the continuous or integrated-extensive type. The best example of this is France's Languedoc-Roussillon region (Callizo, 1991; Cazes, 1972). This type of tourism organization was the result of an ambitious territorial ordering project promoted by the French government for this region in 1963. The idea was to develop this type of project in an area that was not very attractive to tourists, despite the existence of beaches with fine sand and the Mediterranean sun. However, the strong winds and the existence of a number of marshes and swamps made a favorable habitat for mosquitoes, which were a real plague that scared away the tourists who ventured into the area.

Due to the features mentioned, there were low population concentrations in the area, and these people made a living primarily from agriculture and fishing. Perhaps because of this, only the government could have ventured an undertaking such as the one it set out to do. The project entailed the overall ordering of a continuous space that would cover the entire coastal zone and that would integrate the existing localities, in contrast to the Bulgarian-Romanian case, which was at a single location. At least in theory, there was a concern with integrating the coastal zone in a regional space, and there was an idea that tourism would be the detonator to kick off development in the region as a whole. A very specialized vacation space was created. Just as in the Bulgarian case, it was somewhat artificial. However, unlike the former, the Languedoc-Roussillon region did try to incorporate interior land to the coastal zone to expand. Nevertheless, it may be said that it was more a cosmetic than a real integration, although this region is among those with the greatest number of planned tourist centers.

In the cases noted above, we can see that there are various factors that limit or favor the type of tourism utilization of space and its planned or spontaneous character. Among these elements are the economic structure already existing in the region, the degree of state participation as a promoter and developer, and the zone's own natural features. In the case of planned centers, the participation of the public sector has been fundamental in deciding the single-point or integrated nature of the tourist development model. Unlike spontaneous implantations, where construction takes place after the demand has been expressed and is added to already existing structures, most often in a disorderly and uncontrolled way, in planned centers new spaces are created with buildings and infrastructure that are independent of what is already in place.²

2. The work of Peck and Lepie (1989) is recognized as the first attempt to classify coastal tourism development in the United States. These authors carried out a study of three coastal communities of North Carolina to analyze the changes brought about by tourism. They focused on three categories: (a) the rate of transformation caused by tourism, which

*The State as a Promoter of
Tourism Development Policies
in Mexico's Coastal Zones*

There has not been a clear policy in Mexico regarding the type of development that should take place in coastal zones. Although it is recognized that the coast is important for the development of some activities, such as industry, trade, and tourism, this recognition has not, at least explicitly, been translated into concrete measures to protect it, aside from declarations by the National System of Protected Areas (Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas), which includes some coastal zones.

Mexico, with a coastline of a bit more than 11,000 kilometers (nearly 7,000 miles), is a country with enormous potential for coastal zone development. Regrettably, to date there has not been a clear policy on the type of development that should take place. The coastal areas of the Gulf of Mexico have been the most accessible and the most integrated to the urban zones in the center of the country. They have large amounts of maritime traffic and great growth perspectives thanks to oil reserves in the region. The Pacific coast is greater in area and more heterogeneous, discontinuous, underpopulated, and poorly integrated with the hinterlands and among communities along the coast. However, this has not been a barrier for the development of some of the country's main beach tourist centers.

In the period since the Second World War, the development of tourism in Mexico has experienced dynamic growth. One of its main attributes is the positive impact it has on the economy, measured by its share in the balance of payments, in the gross domestic product, and in employment creation and its multiplier effect on other activities. All of this is oriented toward promoting regional development.

The expansion of tourist activity in Mexico has gone hand in hand with the level of socioeconomic development reached by modern societies. This development has created the necessary conditions to bring about social welfare among the population, providing greater and better possibilities of access to social security and public health systems, as well as the right to obligatory paid rest time as stipulated by the Mexican constitution. Provision of paid vacation has allowed tourist activity to

includes the speed and the extent of development (slow, fast, and temporary); (b) the basis of power that rests on the ownership of land, the sources of financing, the contributions of the host population, and the relationship between local traditions and the purposes of development; and (c) the effects of commercialism (social impacts that transform the receiving community's norms and customs) on the receiving communities and of profitability (economic benefits of tourism and social mobility). These criteria were able to show the effects of power, of profitability, and of commercialism on the host community's practices, so that the emphasis is more anthropological than geographic.

take an important leap. Although once it was something within reach of only a privileged minority, it is now a part of the broader sphere of social and cultural life for a majority of the population who increasingly demand the right to enjoy their leisure time through recreational activities and tourism.

The practice of tourism presupposes the existence of a varied supply of tourist services, activities, and infrastructure, and Mexico is a country rich in natural and cultural resources. Because of this, and knowing the country's comparative advantages compared to other destinations, the federal government has promoted tourism mainly in beach locations that are most in demand by domestic as well as foreign visitors. Thus, in 1963, the Department of Tourism created the first National Tourism Development Plan, wherein the strategic role of tourism for the country's progress was reaffirmed. With this as its starting point, the federal government took the lead in planning, placing the greatest emphasis on the creation of infrastructure and support for investment in the tourism sector.

The history of government intervention as an investor and promoter of tourism activities located in Mexico's beach destinations has been very intense during the past 30 years (Jiménez, 1992). Nevertheless, there are certain fundamental aspects that characterize governmental action with regard to tourism, all in the context of the country's economic development. These include employment creation, generation of foreign exchange, direct government participation as a provider of investment and as a planning agent of economic activity, and finally, tourism's ability to bring about development in regions of Mexico that are lagging economically but that have natural attractions capable of drawing those on the market for beach tourism.

In this context, planning has aimed at the international market due to its importance in the generation of foreign exchange. Only tangentially were programs designed that were oriented toward satisfying the recreational needs of the Mexican tourist population. Economic criteria continue to be prioritized, given the undeniable argument of attracting foreign exchange with the goal of recovering the enormous investments by the public sector in its efforts to modernize facilities and gain international market shares. This became the basis for tourism policies from then on in Mexico. Policy has been characterized by giving priority to the economic aspect while neglecting the social and cultural implications that tourism activity has as a social experience (Bringas, 1997b).

Federal investment in tourism has been very low, never reaching 1% of the total budget. Not even in the oil bonanza days of President José López Portillo did it go over 1%, although its share of the budget did increase.³ Investment in the sector has especially benefited the hotel

3. During the period 1959 through 1970, the federal budget for tourism represented 0.21% of the total budget; from 1971 to 1977, it was 0.13%; from 1978 to 1982, it was 0.28%;

industry⁴ and has made it the spearhead for the takeoff of tourist activities through the creation of lodging that is competitive with other beach destinations worldwide, especially those of the Caribbean. The emphasis on providing infrastructure was another one of the development-through-tourism strategies on which a great part of the expectations for regional growth were based.

The state has become a planning agent through the creation of institutions and agencies whose direct participation has involved practically everything from the initial design to the construction and financing of tourism centers.⁵ During the 1960s, there was a pause in governmental actions having to do with tourism. However, toward the end of that decade, things began to change. In 1968, the federal government asked the Banco de México to design a policy to promote tourism in the country. This resulted in the creation of the Fund for the Promotion of Tourism Infrastructure (Fondo de Promoción de Infraestructura Turística), whose objective was to carry out an integrated program for tourist centers. To do this, a series of studies was begun on the vast surface of Mexico's territory to locate appropriate zones for investment in tourism infrastructure (Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo [FONATUR], 1981).

This program to identify zones marked the beginning of the discovery of the sea as a tourist attraction and as a focus for a development strategy. It was crystallized in 1974 with the creation of the FONATUR, which resulted from the fusion of Fondo de Garantía y Fomento al

and from 1983 to 1990, it was 0.22% of the total. The highest share of tourism in the budget was in 1990, when it made up 0.57% of the total budget, and in 1980 and 1981, when it was 0.51% and 0.37%, respectively. See Jiménez (1992, p. 358).

4. During the postwar period (1946-1956), the hotel industry in Mexico was dominated by foreign hands. For this reason, in 1956, the Mexican government created the Tourism Guarantee and Promotion Fund (Fondo de Garantía y Fomento al Turismo) so that Mexican investors could invest in hotel infrastructure and in this way be able to compete with foreign capital. In 1963, the government reaffirmed its support of the hotel industry by carrying out a reform of legislation regulating credit institutions (*Ley General de Instituciones de Crédito*). This reform allowed mortgage banks to increase credits to hotel establishments from 30% to 50%. Between 1957 and 1970, the accumulated total of loans issued by Fondo de Garantía y Fomento al Turismo to the Mexican hotel industry was on the order of 496.4 million pesos (Jiménez, 1992, p. 79). The role of the state as a promoter and investor in the tourism sector, primarily in hotel accommodations, was consolidated with the establishment of Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo in 1974. Thus, 57% of all credits issued by Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo during the period between 1973 and 1990 were for the establishment of new hotels. The total amount of credits granted to Mexico by the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank during the period between 1971 and 1990 in total came to U.S. \$471.5 million, of which 68% was to finance the hotel sector (Jiménez, 1992, pp. 367-376).

5. This article does not attempt to carry out an exhaustive review of the critiques of the tourism planning model in Mexico. For this, see, for example, Rodríguez (1991), SECTUR (1988), Olivera (1977), IMIT (1980), and Bringas (1995b).

Turismo and Fondo de Promoción de Infraestructura Turística. Its main contribution was to grant credits to foster the development of the tourism sector in selected destinations (Ramírez, 1986). Thus, FONATUR became an instrument of the federal government charged with fostering the growth of Mexico's tourist installations by granting investment credits and strengthening general tourist activities.

From this period forward, a series of changes took place with regard to tourism policy. The importance of tourism as a stimulus to regional development was recognized, and with this premise, the participation of the state in tourism gradually widened. Thus, two strategies were followed in Mexico to promote tourism in some of the country's coastal zones. On one hand, credits were granted for the construction of infrastructure in already existing beach centers, as was the case with Acapulco in the state of Guerrero, and to a lesser degree with Puerto Vallarta in the state of Jalisco, Manzanillo in the state of Colima, and the port of Veracruz, among others.

On the other hand, a larger scale strategy was launched, which consisted of the development of new, fully planned tourist centers. Thus, at the end of the 1970s, five hitherto unknown beach destinations were selected to be directed and operated by FONATUR. External support for creating and financing these centers was sought from the Inter-American Development Bank. These centers were Cancún, in the state of Quintana Roo; Ixtapa, in the state of Guerrero; and Loreto and Los Cabos, in the state of Baja California Sur. The construction of Bahías Huatulco in the state of Oaxaca began 10 years later.

In contrast to the traditional tourist centers, which arose spontaneously and where the development of infrastructure and services took place as a function of the demand and only later with the support of the federal government through credits, the birth of the new centers was induced and promoted by the state. The justification for their creation was based on the fact that they would contribute to and promote the development of economically backward zones of Mexico.

But did this development strategy really reflect an overall policy of bringing order to coastal zones? The answer is not yet clear for, as we shall see below, the attempt to fully plan tourism in the regions where the new poles of development were located had the opposite effects of what was expected. Instead of causing a chain reaction of multiplier effects in the regions, these centers became tourist enclaves (Cazes, 1980; Gormsen, 1977; Hiernaux, 1989).

FONATUR's planned centers are the clearest example of a tourist enclave. However, the fact cannot be ignored that even in the traditional beach centers, the hotels or tourist complexes themselves function as mini-enclaves that seek to keep the tourists within their confines by offering all services so that they do not have to go out to find them outside of the establishment itself. Services offered by the hotel are reserved exclu-

sively for use by customers, as are the beaches that these hotels are on, even though by law the beaches may not be private because they are considered a public good.

The local population does not fit into this blueprint for development. On the contrary, it is excluded and pushed to the margins socially, economically, and territorially. Even though these centers are functionally and territorially integrated into the region, they do not integrate the region. In fact, this has been one of the major critiques of the tourism model based on poles of development, the theory that justified FONATUR's integrally planned beach centers. Currently, these trends are shifting, and there is an increasing recognition of the need for tourists to be integrated into receiving communities.

During the presidential administration of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976), a series of changes took place with regard to tourism policy, in particular for certain zones of Mexico. In 1971, the legal mechanisms were created (through contracts for property held in trust) to allow foreigners the use and enjoyment of real estate located on Mexico's coasts and in its border areas, which had been called the forbidden zone for foreigners and covered all territory 100 kilometers (about 60 miles) from the borders into the interior of the country and 50 kilometers (about 30 miles) from the coast inland. One of the purposes for the creation of these trusts was to control illegal foreign investment in those areas, for even though it was against the law, there were foreigners who used Mexican "name-lenders" (*prestanombres*) to gain access to real estate in these zones (Ramírez, 1981).

*Ejidos*⁶ for tourism also appeared during this period, located in most cases in coastal zones. This arrangement allowed ejido lands that were not suitable for agriculture to be utilized for tourist activities. This led to various ejidos' exploitation of their natural resources to survive. In fact, this allowed the Playas de Rosarito delegation (what was once the Mazatlán ejido) to become the last of Baja California's five municipalities, and this was possible thanks to tourism.

The unbridled population growth experienced by Mexico's coastal zones, particularly in the second half of the 20th century, has brought with it a chaotic redistribution of human settlements and production activities. This has had negative impacts on both the use and the benefits of coastal ecosystems. The creation in 1999 of the Special Program for Sustainable Utilization of Beaches, the Maritime-Terrestrial Federal Zone (*Zona Federal Marítimo-Terrestre*), and land taken from the sea (*terrenos ganados al mar*) was a measure aimed at ordering coastal occupation and coastal activities. Initially, the program set out to apply zoning to land use, taking into account environmental and urban aspects that

6. *Ejido* is defined as all land, woods, and water sources, conceded to a nucleus of rural population by virtue of the Agrarian Law of January 1915.

could promote the sustainable use of coastal resources (Instituto Nacional de Ecología [INE], 2000).

As will be discussed below, the policies implemented by the Mexican government to promote tourism in coastal zones have been contradictory. On one hand, significant projects were developed to build infrastructure and amenities, such as highways, airports, and services in general, which in addition to benefiting tourism also benefited the local population. But on the other hand, a marked spatial segregation arose between the tourism zones and areas where local residents live; there was also differential access to services to the detriment of living conditions for local residents.

In addition, the negative impacts on space resulting from bad planning must not be ignored. In both cases, an anarchic use of the coastal zone is evident, and there has even been a degradation of natural resources that is already having negative effects on the environment. This will create doubts about the new tourism model, which at least in its plans and programs mentions as one of its main objectives the achievement of sustainable development of the tourism industry.

THE COASTAL ZONES' IMPORTANCE FOR TOURISM

To fully understand the importance of the coastal zones, it is necessary to first define their specificity as a function of physical as well as human factors. From the perspective of the natural physical environment, the coast is considered "a space of contact between the lithosphere, the hydrosphere, and the atmosphere," whereas from the human perspective it is "an environment to be visited and the site of activities broadly influenced by the presence of the sea" (Michaud, 1981, p. 34). Although the term *coast* implicitly contains the land-sea combination, here the concept that will be used is that of Roselló (1982), who spoke of "a strip of land that lives from the sea or for the sea" (p. 53).

This leads to the consideration that coastal zones are fragile spaces and a scarce commodity, which makes them highly coveted spaces. They contain an incalculable ecological richness, and they bring together diverse ecosystems that are valued by human beings for different reasons. They represent the natural environment, are of genuine scientific interest, have an effect on the economic production system (food, communications), have cultural significance, and most important, offer the possibility for creative use of leisure time (Barragán, 1994).

In times past, coastal zones were the bridges connecting various continents. The existence of coastal zones has sparked conflicting sentiments for on one hand they were considered a source of food and the only way for people to reach each other, benefiting the development of trade, but on the other hand, they also represented a source of illness

(malaria) and of insecurity (piracy). With the passage of time, and particularly after the Second World War, the concept of enemy sea gave way to the image of friendly sea, especially when dealing with tourist and recreation activities. However, there are also social groups in opposition to the development of the industry, knowing of the contamination that it generates or simply because of the large number of visitors (Roselló, 1982).

For beach tourist destinations, the coast functions as a leisure space. It is a place to rest, to get away from the monotony of work or from the usual place of residence. Or it is simply a space that brings us into contact with the natural environment. The production of mental space or space of representation is very important for these spaces.⁷ Thus, the coast takes on importance because of the way in which it is conceived: "life context, myth, symbol, and support for the imaginary, representation" (Dumolard, 1981, p. 17).

The coast functions as an escape from the pressures of life in the city. It is a space in which people seek respite from their habitual tasks. Thus, the individual tends to experience momentary deurbanization. And in Michaud's (1981) words, the yellow light goes on when this "anti-city" starts to become urbanized and populated in an anarchic way to the point that it loses the original "naturalness" that determined its original attraction.

Coastal space is a stage on which conflicting interests arise among different players and where power relations are established. Coastal zones' economic and social importance makes them highly susceptible to international dynamics and turns them into sites that are favorable for processes of rapid growth and expansion. These processes radically alter the organization of the territory and to a large extent determine the paths followed by the occupation of space devoted to touristic uses.

The Evolution of Tourism Development in COCOTEN

The analysis of a territory's spatial organization in a border context brings us to the nature of the tourism-urbanization duality as an expression of the relationship between space and society, because it refers to the manner in which production and consumption are socially organized in a given space. It is also very closely related to the geographic and economic differences of the specific milieu where the zone is located, and

7. For Lefebvre (1976), mental space is that which is perceived, conceived of, and represented. This is why he also called it the space of representation. This explains the importance that the landscape acquires as a symbol for those who perceive it.

finally, it has to do with historical processes of settlement and socioeconomic development.

This section aims to describe the historical scenario of how and under what conditions the zone between Tijuana and Ensenada took shape, for the changes that have occurred throughout its history permit a better understanding of its present organization. It is a twofold process: The flow of tourists has gradually adapted to the changes that have arisen throughout its history while at the same time it continues to have a marked influence on the life of the coastal corridor, leaving its footprint by affecting the configuration of space. In this sense, the making of the corridor is determined by changes in social organization and by new features presented by the flow of tourists.

To attempt to understand what the dynamics of tourism have been in the coastal corridor, reference is made to the history and the phases of tourism development. To the extent possible, for each stage, there is an attempt to highlight the elements that make up the tourism product. These include natural and artificial attractions, facilities (lodging, services, infrastructure), accessibility (various types of transportation), and the role that the state has played in that development.

The coastal corridor's privileged geographic situation with regard to California and the United States and the closeness of the relationship between the two regions lead us to suppose that its relationship to California is as a periphery. This is explainable not because it is far removed from central Mexico but rather because it borders on a traditional center of tourist attraction, namely the beaches of Southern California from Los Angeles to San Diego. Therein lies its peculiarity and the possible factors that explain its development.

Just as Christaller (1963) put forth in his central place theory, tourist activities avoid central places and frequently are located in isolated or peripheral zones, fleeing the agglomerations of industry in search of natural elements such as beaches. What is paradoxical about this is that tourists who go to the beach on vacation to rest, fleeing the city and everything that it represents (noise, traffic, pollution, masses of people), only find beaches saturated with visitors. To attempt to understand what the dynamics of tourism have been along the corridor stretching between Los Angeles and Ensenada, three time periods are analyzed: takeoff (1924-1960), expansion (1967-1989), and consolidation (1990 onward).

TAKEOFF (1924-1960)

The tourism corridor covers the coastal portion of the municipalities of Tijuana, Rosarito, and part of Ensenada. It extends continuously along 140 kilometers (nearly 87 miles) of coast, following an imaginary line approximately 2 kilometers (about 1 1/4 miles) inland. In some cases,

this line goes farther inland, depending on topographic features (see Figure 1).

It should be noted that since the end of the 19th century, the federal government promoted population growth for the region between Tijuana and Ensenada through land concessions to foreign companies for urbanization (Aguirre, 1975, p. 118). Although it may seem contradictory, this measure was aimed at preventing the United States from taking over a greater portion of Mexican territory. As was to be expected, the policy turned out to be counterproductive as it fanned the economic interests of the neighbors to the north eager to appropriate that part of Mexico for themselves.

COCOTEN's takeoff had very special growth characteristics, for its development relied in large part on the boom that the city of Tijuana and to a lesser extent Ensenada experienced during the period of Prohibition in the United States (1920-1933) that produced very large numbers of tourist flows to both of these cities.⁸ The visitors were drawn not by the existence of the beaches but rather by a whole series of services offered in Mexico that were prohibited in the United States, such as casinos, gambling, betting, and horse racing. The coastal zone grew very little and remained rural, despite the fact that the urbanization of the cities of Tijuana and Ensenada was well under way.

Because it was farther from the border, Ensenada received a lower flow of visitors. Therefore, faced with the possibility that the avalanche of tourists arriving in Tijuana might travel to the port, the Chamber of Commerce demanded that the highway joining the two cities be widened and paved. For although the distance could be covered in 6 hours, due to the abrupt terrain, few tourists visited the port city. In 1924, Ensenada saw 40 tourist automobiles a day and only on holidays did it see as many as 80 (Bonifaz de Novelo, 1983, pp. 462-463).

Construction of the first tourist center in Rosarito took place in 1924, and at the end of that decade, the first hotel was built. This began to lay the basis for what would become the most important tourist center in the state of Baja California, but the zone's tourism potential as a beach destination was still not clear.

Major efforts to increase the flow of tourists to Ensenada met with little success, mainly due to the lack of funds from the Mexican government to continue with infrastructure works and the absence of an entirely paved highway that could cut travel time even more. It now took 3 hours, but the highway could be impassable during rainy season (Bonifaz de Novelo, 1983, pp. 462-463). In addition, the Great Depression of 1929, which struck the entire world, marked the beginning of a declin-

8. Translator's note: During Prohibition, the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages were illegal in the United States.

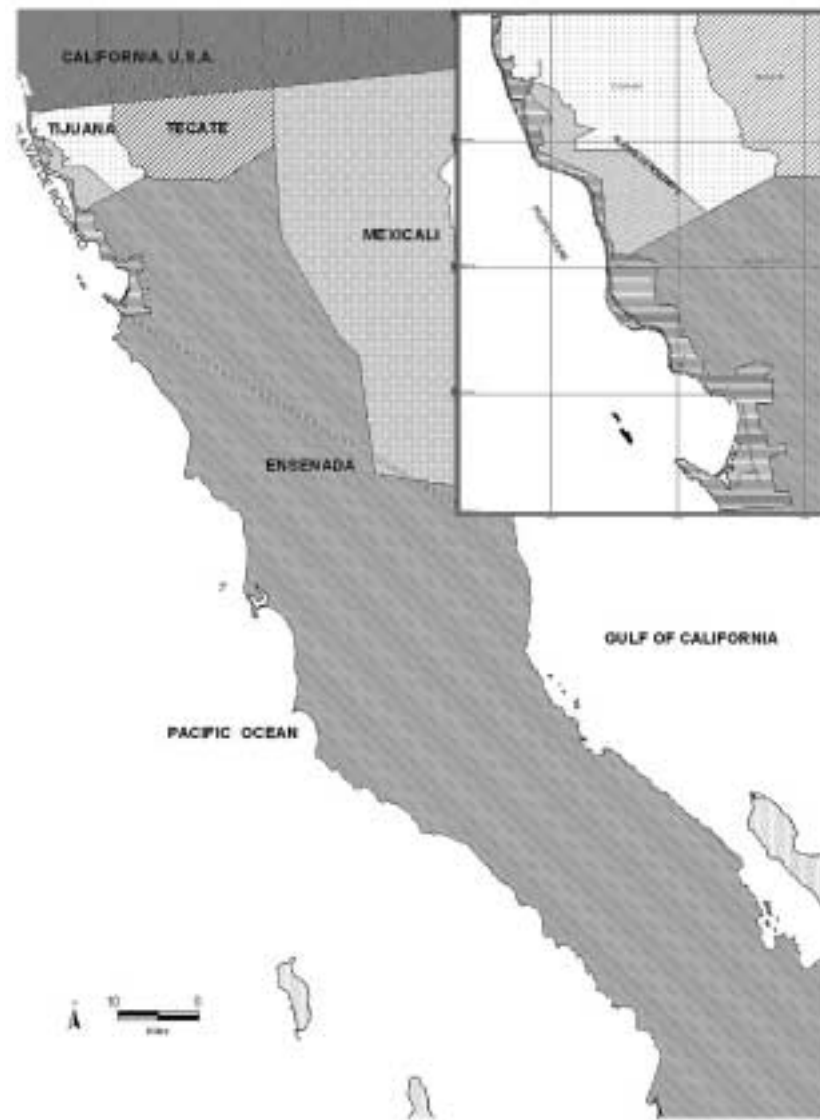


Figure 1: Tijuana-Ensenada Coastal Zone Localization

ing trend in the flow of visitors, which culminated with the repeal of Prohibition in 1933.

At the start of this period, the situation was certainly difficult. Many businesses closed as a direct consequence of the repeal of Prohibition, and this generated unemployment. There were also serious problems of supply for at that time there were no communication and transportation

links between this zone and the rest of Mexico. That situation led merchants to insistently ask that duty-free perimeters be established for the importation of commodities.

A delegation of the city's prominent businessmen traveled to the Mexican capital to convince Abelardo L. Rodríguez, then president of the republic, of this. Rodríguez, who had been governor of the northern district of Baja California and knew the situation first-hand, had no problem recognizing the advantages that such a policy could have, and the proposal to establish duty-free perimeters went forward with relative ease. In 1933, Tijuana and Ensenada enjoyed an experimental special regime that permitted differential tariffs on imports.

In 1935, as one way to achieve improved communication and integration between the cities of Tijuana and Ensenada, as well as to support the growth of tourism activity, the state government did the necessary lobbying to begin the construction of a toll-free highway joining the two cities. The administration of President Lázaro Cárdenas issued a credit for 100,000 pesos for the construction of the highway, and this made possible its near completion by 1936 (Aguirre Bernal, 1975).

Later, in the context of Agrarian Reform (1936-1940), the federal government expropriated the lands that were in foreign hands in Baja California and distributed them to peasants in the form of ejidos (Aguirre, 1983). Land distribution was the first social benefit that the region's peasants received from the federal government. It resulted in migration toward the area in search of land, and this was how the main ejidos that existed along the coast took shape. As a result, by 1955, Rosarito already had a population of approximately 2,520 (Ortiz, 1985, p. 166).

Different interests were in dispute over how to define the future of the coastal space. Instead of ejido or private cultivation of the land, there was an alternative: renting lots to foreigners as an alternative way to obtain income. Thus, toward the end of the 1950s, an event damaged the future of the zone (Castellanos, 1983, pp. 53-62). At that time, a U.S. investor sought to buy land in that area, but because Article 27 of the Mexican constitution imposed restrictions on ownership of property by foreigners, he formed an alliance with a Mexican who had 8 hectares of land (nearly 20 acres). They formed a club and sold 99-year memberships in the United States, offering the use and enjoyment of the land. The memberships sold rapidly, and just as rapidly, the investors acquired the land next to theirs. The problem really started when those who had bought memberships tried to exercise their rights to the land, for the sale was in violation of Mexican law.

This situation took on an international dimension, for the neighbor to the north intervened to defend the interests of American citizens. This damaged the area's image and created a climate of uncertainty for investors that its northern neighbors took full advantage of to denigrate Mexico and prevent American citizens from buying properties in the region.

Therefore, it is not strange that up until the mid-1960s, the economy of the region was based more on primary activities such as agriculture, cattle, and fishing than on tourism. Throughout this period, federal public policies of land distribution to peasants, support to investments for the construction of highway infrastructure, and the authorization of duty-free perimeters—although not directly aimed at promoting tourism—were in fact determining elements for the development that the coastal corridor would later experience.

EXPANSION (1961-1989)

This period is important because the federal government made great efforts to promote employment and diversify the economy in the border region. At the same time, it marked the beginning of a new stage, with the opening of means of communication that favored the region's development. From then on, the border zone began to experience a series of changes with regard to land use. This was basically due to the construction of the toll highway, which linked the different settlements that existed along this communication axis. The tourism potential of the coastal zone was now discovered.

In 1961, the federal government established the National Border Program (Programa Nacional Fronterizo) to counteract the rise in unemployment and to improve infrastructure in border cities. Programa Nacional Fronterizo's main objectives were to foster the economic integration of Mexico's northern border region to the mainland, improve the appearance of the border cities, create sources of employment, stimulate flows of tourism, and improve urban and environmental conditions. The program did not meet its objectives, so later, in 1965, the federal government established the Border Industrialization Program, which had as its goals creating jobs, improving the living conditions of the border population, and promoting the use of Mexican domestic inputs in border region assembly plants, known as the *maquiladora* industry (Barrera, 1987).

Within this framework, the mid-1960s saw the start of major infrastructure works in Tijuana, such as the La Misión Aqueduct, the Federal Electricity Commission (Comisión Federal de Electricidad) plant, and a Petróleos Mexicanos plant. All this enabled the municipality of Tijuana to grow southward and lay the basis for what would be the future tourism development of this zone. Some tourist camps developed during that decade, such as Poptla, Cantiles Dorados, Villa Lepro, Raúl's, and Baja Malibú (Bringas, 1995a).

One of the constants in the COCOTEN has been the displacement of agricultural or cattle-raising ejidos, whose presence has steadily diminished in the name of tourism and residential development. In the case of the Mazatlán ejido, for example, a large plot was expropriated for urban

use by what today is the seat of the municipality of Playas de Rosarito. Similarly, some ejido members have been easy prey for the economic interests of some former public officials, who have abused their power to take over plots of land and sell them to the highest bidder (O. Salazar, personal communication, May, 2001). The small rural communities that exist in the area are characterized by the fact that the majority of their inhabitants are engaged in agriculture, small-scale cattle raising, flower growing, and fishing; in some instances, they also extract construction materials.

The expansion of the tourism centers in the COCOTEN really began in the 1970s, as a consequence of the ratification of the 1971 law to promote Mexican investment and regulate foreign investment. That same year, a new Agrarian Reform Law was also enacted; in Article 144, this new law granted all of Mexico's ejidos authorization to exploit tourism, fishing, and mining. Although there were already foreigners who possessed property on the coast, and tourism was exploited in some ejidos, these laws gave foreign investors the security needed to acquire real estate in the coastal zone.

Tourism development of the COCOTEN has taken place based on the existence of a preexisting urban nucleus (Rosarito) around which have arisen a whole series of tourist centers of various types, from luxury housing developments that provide vacation homes for (mostly retired) foreigners to spaces for truck campers and trailer parks for foreigners. Rosarito has functioned as a first-order urban center, where the inhabitants of the coastal and tourist center localities obtain supplies, employment, schooling, health, and entertainment.

The coastal zone began its urbanization during the 1980s with the creation of major tourist centers such as Plaza Santa María (today Plaza del Mar), Las Gaviotas, Rosamar, Ricamar, Baja del Mar, Calafia, and Villas del Mar, among others. Since then, second residences or vacation homes for foreigners have come to be one of the predominant forms of land use in the coastal zone, and the costs of bringing in services and facilities have generally been borne by the developers themselves and not the state.

This expansion of tourism services coincided with the 1982 peso devaluation, which was one of the sharpest during the period. In a way, it was the signal for some property owners who had lots on the coast to begin to invest more in their land and to improve the services they offered because many of these lots were rustic and therefore were rented at very low prices. The devaluation played a fundamental role in the reevaluation of the coastal zone's great tourism potential. It was during this time that the giant real estate companies entered the scene and an all-out struggle began to take control of the best lots facing the ocean. The value of these lots increased considerably, and this set off strong real estate speculation, which in turn signaled the current spatial segregation

of coastal tourism development that marginalizes those who do not have the resources to invest in their land.

TOWARD THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE COCOTEN (1990-)

The 1990s were characterized by the globalization of the economy and the formation of trade blocs to face the challenges of worldwide competition. The failure of the multilateral GATT negotiations in 1990, the integration of the European Economic Community into a single market, and the strong presence of Asian countries on the Pacific Rim were assuredly all factors that influenced the creation of a North American region encompassing Mexico, the United States, and Canada. These aspects would play an important role in defining the region's current profile.

A new stage for COCOTEN began in the 1990s, which saw its greater consolidation. And depending on the tasks carried out by each of the actors involved in its development, it could possibly lead to the long-desired tourism boom. There is for the first time an explicit recognition of the importance of the COCOTEN for the region's tourism development.

To date, the growth of this region has been anarchic and unregulated. Because of its history, the area has serious land tenure problems, with ejido and private interests competing with the interests of the government. Because of this, its development has been shaped by fluctuations in the real estate market for touristic demands and is far removed from any policy for orderly urban development.

It was not until the creation of the 1990 to 1995 state development plan (Plan de Desarrollo Estatal) that the government of Baja California considered the need for territorial ordering as part of urban planning guidelines in the Tijuana-Ensenada corridor and as an integral part of fostering regional development. The plan established as a priority the elaboration of a program that includes urbanization and public services both for the tourist zones and for their surrounding communities. The importance of tourism for Baja California is clearly reflected by the resources it generates. In 1990, the state obtained an income of U.S. \$746 million from tourists visiting the COCOTEN (FONATUR-COLEF, 1991).

Despite the good intentions expressed on paper, the problems of an urban locality that develops without adequate zoning continue unsolved. In 1995, the government of the state of Baja California published the urban, tourism, and ecological Regional Development Program for the COCOTEN. This document aspired to become the "guiding instrument for regulating and controlling the zone's development" (Gobierno del Estado de Baja California, 1995, p. 16). Although the idea was for this program to provide guidelines for the growth of the coastal zone and to regulate land use, in practice, this objective was not met because of the lack of an agency that would be responsible for imple-

menting the plan, among other reasons. Three levels of government financed the study, but it was never decided who would be responsible for coordinating it.

The mirages of planning persist. It is thought that a plan by itself will solve problems, when in reality what is required is the political will to implement it. Apparently, the state government and the municipalities involved in this zone do not feel a real urgency to regulate the growth of the coastal zone, much less to regulate land use; thus, this program has suffered no better fate than previous ones.

Although urban problems persist in the coastal corridor, it continues to be enormously attractive to foreigners. This is due primarily to the proximity of the ocean and to the Mediterranean climate that prevails in the zone. These characteristics make the corridor particularly different from other parts of the same state because the rest of the region is mainly a desert environment. The low cost of lots has become one more attractive feature for many foreigners seeking to acquire second homes on the coasts of Baja California, given that geographic proximity to the United States allows them to travel quickly and easily back to the United States while providing them with a transborder sphere of living. This has given rise to a growing process of urbanization and to the creation of a service-oriented infrastructure.

Very specialized and exclusive zones coexist in the corridor, such as the trusts that spearhead the process of territorial occupation. They continue to exist thanks to the high purchasing power that foreign tourists have while searching for tranquility and entertainment. These tourists form small enclaves all along the COCOTEN, and their links with other localities is limited to contracting temporary labor and a minimal consumption of goods. At the same time, there are housing areas for low-income inhabitants and tourists, such as the trailer parks and campgrounds that satisfy both temporary and permanent consumers.

In a national context, the coastal corridor has been considered a part of priority tourism centers and regions that the tourism development program for 1995 to 2000 (programa de desarrollo del sector turismo 1995-2000) would support. Because of this, measures by the federal and the state governments should be aimed at privileging the development of this zone due to its importance as a source of tourist flows and foreign exchange. An additional element that may play a fundamental role in consolidating the region's development is the fact that the fifth municipality in the state of Baja California was formally created in December 1995. This is Playas de Rosarito, which for years had sought autonomy from Tijuana, arguing that it was economically self-sufficient, thanks above all to the income generated by tourism. The new municipality will no doubt be fundamental in defining the area's profile.

In addition to the above, in 1996, Estudios Cinematográficos Baja Fox (a movie studio) was established in the corridor, creating a small nucleus

that has turned out to be an important focus of employment creation as well as a tourist attraction for the region. Much of the movie *Titanic* was shot here. Generalizations are not possible, because *Titanic* was a very large production, with a budget of about U.S. \$200 million, of which U.S. \$30 million was spent on construction of the studio. But the filming of *Titanic* alone provides an indication of the economic potential that the film industry can bring to the region (SECTURE, 1998).

Without considering the impacts that the Baja Fox studios have had in the state, there are estimates that show that in 1996, annual spending in this region amounted to U.S. \$425 million (COLEF-CESTUR, 1997), representing 6.1% of income obtained nationally in that same year (U.S. \$6,934.4 million) and 25.8% of all income obtained along the border from visitors (SECTUR, 1997).

But the corridor is not all a bonanza. The effects of tourism and urbanization on the coastal zone have had an impact on the geographic configuration of the landscape, the privatization of beaches, beach pollution from sewage dumped in the ocean by the local population as well as by tourists, and industrial pollution caused by the *Petróleos Mexicanos* (state oil monopoly) and *Comisión Federal de Electricidad* (electric power) plants. This in turn results in the deterioration of the ecosystem, creating a danger of extinction for marine species that provide sustenance and livelihood to communities devoted to fishing and that form one of the bases of tourism itself.⁹

The provision of public services such as water, sewage, and electricity in residential housing developments in the coastal corridor's rural areas has depended mostly on the tourism developers themselves and not on the contributions of local government. This has produced levels of urbanization and infrastructure that are differentiated when compared to each other and when compared to the communities of local residents.

9. The Corredor Costero Tijuana-Ensenada has pollution problems due to the discharge of residential waste from the Tijuana, Baja California, and Point Loma, California, treatment plants. The waste reaches the area because of the pattern of the marine currents. The Bay of Ensenada is another one of the areas polluted by wastewater, as well as by organic waste from fishmeal processing plants. In terms of water quality, it has been found that in the most polluted parts, there are coliform concentrations of about 2,400 per 10 milliliters, a level very far above Mexico's bacteriological norms for the quality of water for recreational use. The norms stipulate indexes below 200 coliforms per 100 milliliters (see Gobierno del Estado de Baja California, 1995, p. 9). The deficit in sewage lines also heightens pollution problems because in Rosarito sewage lines serve the needs of no more than 53% of the population, and in the case of Ensenada, although the figure is lower (23%), it is still very significant. Both waste flows discharge into the ocean. Estimates of wastewater treatment deficits in the corridor's urbanized zones run as high as 80%, which causes pollution in the beaches near urban centers. The most affected areas are San Antonio del Mar, Rosarito, and Bahía de Todos Santos in Ensenada, which also receives industrial waste from El Sauzal (Gobierno del Estado de Baja California, 1995, p. 9).

But at the same time, this has opened up the possibility that in the near future these services may be introduced in the localities at lower prices, both for local government and for the population, because private enterprise has already borne the initial costs.

This explains the high level of coverage of public services such as potable water (90%) and electricity (98%) in the trusts, especially compared to other types of establishments such as trailer parks or campgrounds, where it is lower. Among these services, in general, the most problematic and conflict ridden are the demand for sewage and the handling of wastewater. It is noteworthy that 60% of the trusts have wastewater treatment plants, although they do not necessarily function all the time. Thus, although the tourism centers in trusts have the highest levels of urbanization and a high level of coverage for services, these levels are lower in the trailer parks. Only 51.6% of them are connected to municipal water services, and 14% have sewage lines; in contrast, 86% have septic tanks despite the environmental and health risks that they entail. Electricity coverage is about 89% (Bringas, 1997a).

Because of the trends observed in the coastal corridor, it can be said that urbanization is greater to the extent that demand increases in the various tourist localities, and the process of spatial segregation between the local population and the tourist population is also greater.

Final Comments: Hidden Dangers for Regional Development

The process of development of mass tourism has brought about significant changes in all social spheres. But basically, the most visible signs of transformation are in the coastal zones, as a consequence of the great tourist demand for these areas. This metamorphosis appears to be to a large extent determined by the major concentration of tourism centers along the beaches, occupying the oceanfront areas. These agglomerations are characterized by their highly seasonal nature and by the high density of vacation residences that they offer, especially to the foreign population.

Because of its proximity to California, the COCOTEN has become the ideal site for inhabitants of the neighboring country to take short vacations. The region offers an atmosphere of tranquility or fun, depending on the tourist segment that is sought. Furthermore, the corridor's privileged location guarantees a transborder way of life to those who have acquired a second residence or who cross the border to enjoy their holidays or weekends in hotels or in the various establishments that rent spaces for trailer parks or camping.

Thus, tourism is a process that alters the territorial, urban, social, and economic structures of the coastal areas. It culminates in truly specialized tourist centers, as in the case of the trusts, and others that arise spontaneously without planning, much like many of the settlements that rent spaces for trailer parks or camping in the corridor.

Urbanization of the COCOTEN has been the outcome of two superimposed processes. On one hand, rural spaces have been transformed into urban spaces with the introduction of new means of communication along with the installations necessary to supply the needs of a growing population. Simultaneously, tourism promotion policies caused a transition from an economy based on primary activities to one clearly oriented toward the tertiary sector, especially tourism and commercial services. This unleashed an all-out struggle over land use, where tourism centers arose as one of the main land uses to the detriment of the agricultural ejido areas.

In this context, the Tijuana-Ensenada coastal zone itself constitutes a *sui generis* space that arose in a spontaneous way where demand preceded supply. It is perhaps this feature that has stamped it with its anarchic and improvised character; all along the coastal zone one frequently finds luxury planned tourism developments (trusts and hotels) side by side with tourist centers lacking even the most minimal services and infrastructure (trailer parks and campgrounds). With this type of organization, there is no continuous space but rather developments at given points along the coastline that are not really integrated into the region. This is the unequivocal mark of coastal tourism along this corridor.

The "discovery of the ocean" by foreign visitors came some time after the decline of tourism in Tijuana and Ensenada in the 1930s following the closure of casinos and the enactment of laws against gambling in Mexico. But this did not stop the enormous urban transformation that the region has experienced, especially in the past two decades. This has simultaneously given rise to the dynamic appearance of various tourism centers on the oceanfronts.

The above defines the zone's profile and the path followed by most of the localities that are in the COCOTEN. There is no doubt that the construction of the scenic highway became the axis that articulated the coastal space because it joined the main urban centers with the small settlements along the coastal zone. With the construction of the highway, lodging establishments began to be built right on the coastline. Later, dedicated tourism services and establishments appeared at specific points. They sprouted in an unplanned manner, discontinuous in space, appearing in areas contiguous to the ocean. Afterward, some more organized centers emerged, most of them in the form of enclaves, although the idea in the background was to follow an integrated development of

the area, albeit being understood mostly in economic terms and not in terms of spatial integration.

In general, there is a high degree of specialization in the northern part of the corridor (from Playas de Tijuana to Rosarito), where luxury residential developments along with housing rentals in spaces dedicated to trailer parks predominate. In contrast, in the southern part of the corridor, from La Misión to La Bufadora in Ensenada, campgrounds predominate; that is, rustic spaces with less service coverage, particularly in the area of Punta Banda, one of the zones with the most spectacular panoramic view and with native vegetation that is well conserved.

The issue of conservation is of vital importance because the diversity of interests that converge in the Tijuana-Ensenada coastal zone has permitted a process of change in land use tending in varying degrees toward the displacement of the rural by the urban and by tourism. Thus, we find that from 1966 to 1993, urban land use expanded the most (55.2 square kilometers), followed by tourism use (0.7 square kilometers). This growth does not include that which took place within the urban zones of the main localities of the COCOTEN. There was a corresponding loss of 63.5 square kilometers of natural vegetation (coastal scrub), whereas sown vegetation (pastures) gained 52.2 squared kilometers (Bringas, 2001) (see Figure 2).

It is noteworthy that the COCOTEN has experienced a boom, especially beginning in the 1990s. In a relatively short period of time, from 1993 to 1999, the region has been notably transformed, giving way to the formation of new spaces and new actors on the ground. During this period, urban use expanded its area by 19.2%; that is, it grew at a pace of 2.7 square kilometers per year. Tourism use rose by 12.7% in the same period, which means that a new 1.7 square kilometers were added, at a rate of growth of only 0.28 square kilometers per year. However, from 1999 to the present, tourism use has experienced a dizzying increase that has not yet been possible to measure.

From the above, it can be inferred that based on the evolution of land use and the different types of vegetation found in the COCOTEN, it is possible to foresee the future of the zone, provided the growth pattern remains the same. It is important to note the danger of a polarization in the standards of living between tourism establishments and nontourism human settlements along the corridor. The rapid growth of spontaneous settlements with incomplete urbanization in parts of Tijuana-Rosarito may lead to the creation of a strip of precarious settlements or shantytowns running parallel to the tourism establishments. This can lead to situations of social, economic, environmental, and political conflict such as those that have already occurred in other tourism regions of Mexico. In the southern part of the corridor (Ensenada), the risk is that ejido cen-

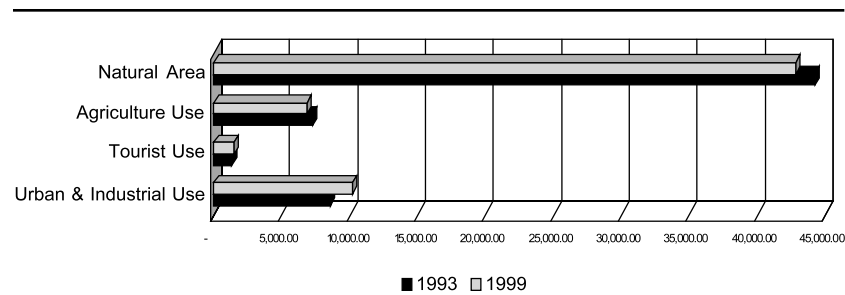


Figure 2: Land Use and Vegetation Changes Along the Tijuana-Ensenada Coastal Zone

Source: Bringas (2001).

ters will be transformed into tourism activity zones under unfavorable conditions for their inhabitants as well as for the ecological and social balance of the region.

The current state of growth of the region and of its problems requires immediate action to prevent the decline of the coastal zone. One of the main factors that traditionally have led to the decline of tourism and its centers has been inadequate planning and management, as the centers generally become isolated from the local or regional context into which they supposedly should integrate.

To counteract this, the point of departure must be that successful tourism must have as its aim the incorporation of the local communities that host tourist flows. This means providing them with the necessary urban infrastructure and services. This reality cannot be left out of tourism studies and planning, for the local economies and societies generally reflect more global processes. Beyond thinking merely about satisfying a demand, it is also necessary to consider that the host society must be the beneficiary of the regional development that in theory will be generated by tourism. For this to happen, structural changes must take place in the way we think about tourism. It must be adapted to the new requirements demanded by the global market, which seeks closer interactions with the host communities in a healthy environment. Therefore, it is necessary to see the provision of services and installations in the host communities as part of a restructuring of the tourism centers.

In the case at hand, what are required are joint strategies that bring together private enterprise, the different levels of government, the local population, and the various social actors who play a role in the Tijuana-Ensenada coastal zone. I believe that zoning offers a framework that can reduce spatial disequilibria, as well as make land use and the distribution of activities within human settlements in the territory compatible. Any delay in the application of measures to regulate the growth of the Tijuana-Ensenada coastal zone will result in a significant increase in

social, economic, and environmental costs, detrimental to the future development of the corridor and tourism itself.

Manuscript submitted July 1, 2002; revised manuscript accepted for publication July 15, 2002.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the translator, Aníbal Yáñez-Chávez of the Center for Border and Regional Affairs, California State University, San Marcos, and Gustavo del Castillo of El Colegio de la Frontera Norte for his assistance in editing the final version of this article. I gratefully acknowledge Kathy Kopinak and Jane Clough-Riquelme for their valuable assistance with this article. Finally, I am grateful for the support of the staff of the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.

References

- Aguirre, C. (1975). *Tijuana, su historia y sus hombres* [Tijuana, its history and its men]. Mexicali, Mexico: N. E.
- Aguirre, C. (1983). La mexicanización del Valle de Mexicali [The mexicanization of the Mexicali Valley]. In D. Piñeira (Coordinator) *Panorama histórico de Baja California* (pp. 487-496). Tijuana, Mexico: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas—UNAM-UABC.
- Barbaza, Y. (1970). Trois types d'intervention du tourisme dans l'organisation de l'espace littoral [Three types of tourism intervention in the coastal-space organization]. *Annales de Géographie*, 434, 446-469.
- Barragán, J. M. (1994). *Ordenación, planificación y gestión del espacio litoral* [Planning and management of the littoral space]. Barcelona, Spain: Oikos-Tau.
- Barrera, D. (1987). *Condiciones de vida de los trabajadores de Tijuana: 1970-1978* [Living conditions of workers in Tijuana: 1970-1978]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, SEP.
- Bonifaz de Novelo, M. E. (1983). Ensenada en la Época de los Veintes [Ensenada in the 1920s]. In D. Piñera (Coordinator), *Panorama histórico de Baja California* (pp. 462-463). Tijuana, Mexico: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas—UNAM-UABC.
- Bringas, N. L. (1995a). Les usages du sol dans la zone côtière Tijuana-Ensenada [Land uses in the Tijuana-Ensenada coastal zone]. In J. Revel-Mouroz (Coordinator), *La frontière Mexique-Etats-Unis: Processus d'intégration et d'internationalisation dans les régions de la frontière nord et du centre-ouest mexicain* (pp. 37-73). Paris: CREDAL/ORSTOM.
- Bringas, N. L. (1995b). Turismo, municipio y desarrollo regional en la frontera norte: El caso del corredor turístico Tijuana-Ensenada [Tourism, municipality and regional development in Mexico's northern border: The case of the Tijuana-Ensenada tourist coastal corridor]. In T. Guillén & G. Ordóñez (Coordinators), *El municipio y el desarrollo social en la frontera norte* (pp. 91-125). Distrito Federal, Mexico: El COLEF-Fundación Friedrech Ebert.
- Bringas, N. L. (1997a). *Inventario de establecimientos turísticos del COCOTEN* [Inventory of tourist services of COCOTEN] (Research Report). Tijuana, Mexico: COLEF-SECTURE.

- Bringas, N. L. (1997b). Las dos caras del turismo en México: Beneficios económicos contra costos sociales, culturales y ecológicos [The two faces of tourism in Mexico: Economical benefits versus social, cultural and ecological costs]. *Fermentum*, 7(18), 89-116.
- Bringas, N.L. (2001). Développement touristique dans le couloir côtier Tijuana-Ensenada à la frontière nord de Mexique: Dynamique de l'occupation du sol et l'aménagement [Tourist development in the Tijuana-Ensenada Coastal Corridor at the northern border of Mexico: Dynamic of the land use and planning]. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Université Paris III, La Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris.
- Callizo, J. (1991). *Aproximación a la geografía del turismo* [An approximation to a geography of tourism]. Madrid, Spain: Editorial Síntesis.
- Castellanos, M. (1983). *Testimonios de un hombre: Entrevistas de Humberto Hernández Tirada a Milton Castellanos Everardo* [Testimonies of a man: Interviews with Milton Castellanos Everardo by Humberto Hernández Tirado]. Tijuana, Mexico: Asistencia Profesional para el Desarrollo.
- Cazes, G. (1972). Réflexions sur l'aménagement touristique du littoral du Languedoc-Roussillon [Some reflections about the tourist land use planning of the Languedoc-Roussillon littoral]. *L'espace Géographique*, 3, 193-210.
- Cazes, G. (1980). *Les aménagements touristiques au Mexique* [The planning of tourism in Mexico]. Aix-en-Provence, France: Collection *Etudes et Mémoires*, Centre des Hautes Etudes Touristiques, Université de Droit, d'Economie et des Sciences.
- Cazes, G., Lanquar, R., & Raymond, Y. (1993). *L'aménagement touristique* [Land use planning in tourism] (4th ed.). Paris: Coll. que sais-je? Presses Universitaires de France.
- Christaller, W. (1963). Some consideration on tourism location in Europe: The peripheral regions, underdeveloped countries recreations areas. *Regional Science Association*, 12, 95-105.
- COLEF-CESTUR. (1997). *El turismo en el corredor Tijuana-Ensenada* [Tourism in the Tijuana-Ensenada Corridor] (Research Report). Tijuana, Mexico: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.
- Dumolard, P. (1981). *L'espace différencie: Introduction à une géotaxonomie* [Space differentiation: Introduction to a geotaxonomy]. Paris: Collection Géographie. Editorial Economica.
- Hernández, L. (1991). *Historia general del turismo de masas* [General history of mass tourism]. Madrid, Spain: Alianza Universidad Textos.
- FONATUR-COLEF. (1991). *Caracterización del turista residente en el extranjero que visita el corredor Tijuana-Rosarito-Ensenada* [Foreign tourist visiting Tijuana-Rosarito-Ensenada Corridor] (Research Report). Tijuana, Mexico: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.
- Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo. (1981). *Loreto: Un nuevo desarrollo turístico en Baja California Sur* [Loreto: A new tourist development in South Baja California]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: Author.
- Gobierno del Estado de Baja California. (1995). *Programa regional de desarrollo urbano, turístico y ecológico para el corredor costero Tijuana-Ensenada* [Regional program of urban, tourist and ecological development for the Tijuana-Ensenada Coastal Corridor]. Mexicali, Mexico: Periódico Oficial del Estado.
- Gormsen, E. (1977). *El turismo como factor de desarrollo regional en México* [Tourism as regional development factor in Mexico]. Mainz, Germany: NE.
- Hiernaux, D. (Compiler). (1989). *Teoría y praxis del espacio turístico* [Theory and praxis of the tourist space]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana.
- IMIT (Instituto Mexicano de Investigaciones Turísticas). (1980). *Historia del turismo moderno en México* [History of modern tourism in Mexico]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: Instituto Mexicano de Investigaciones Turísticas.
- INE (Instituto Nacional de Ecología). (2000). *Medio ambiente y turismo: Logros y retos para el desarrollo sustentable 1995-2000* [Environment and tourism: Achievements and challenges for the sustainable development 1995-2000]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: SEMARNAP.

- Jiménez, A. J. (1992). *Turismo: Estructura y desarrollo* [Tourism: Structure and development]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: McGraw-Hill Interamericana.
- Jurado, F. (1990). *España en venta: Compra y venta de suelos por extranjeros y colonización de campesinos en la Costa del Sol* [Spain for sale: Land purchase and sale by foreigners and peasant colonization along the Costa del Sol]. Madrid, Spain: Editorial Ayusco.
- Jurado, F. (Compiler). (1992). *Los mitos del turismo* [The myths of tourism]. Madrid, Spain: Endimión.
- Lefebvre, H. (1976). *Espacio y política* [Space and politics]. Barcelona, Spain: Península.
- Lozato-Giotart, J. P. (1993). *Géographie du tourisme: De l'espace regardé à l'espace consommé* [Geography of tourism: From the observed space to the consumed space]. Paris: MASSON-Géographie.
- Michaud, J. L. (1981). *Ordenación de las zonas litorales* [Planning of coastal zone]. Madrid, Spain: Colección Nuevo Urbanismo, Núm. 32, Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local.
- Olivera, J. (1977). *Legislación y organización turística mexicana* [Mexican tourist legislation and organization]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: SECTUR.
- Ortiz, J. (1985). Rosarito a partir de los años treinta [Rosarito since the 1930s]. In D. Piñera (Coordinator), *Historia de Tijuana: Semblanza general* (pp. 163-168). Tijuana, Mexico: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, UNAM-UABC.
- Peck, J. G., & Lepie, A. S. (1989). Turismo y desarrollo en tres enclaves costeros de Carolina del Norte [Tourism and development in three coastal enclaves in North Carolina]. In V. Smith (Ed.), *Anfitriones e invitados* (pp. 303-333). Madrid, Spain: ENDYMION.
- Racine, P. (1982). *Conférence inaugurale* [opening remarks]. In *Colloque Franco-Espagnol sur les espaces-littoraux* (pp. 23-32). Madrid, Spain: Publicaciones del Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación.
- Ramírez, J. M. (1986). *Turismo y medio ambiente: El caso de Acapulco* [Tourism and environment: The case of Acapulco]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Cuaderno Divisional 4.
- Ramírez, M. (1981). *Teoría general de turismo* [General theory of tourism]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: Editorial Diana.
- Rodríguez, M. (1991). *La planeación del turismo en México: Reflexiones y perspectivas* [The planning of tourism in Mexico: Insights and perspectives]. Unpublished document.
- Roselló, V. M. (1982). *Aspectos geográficos y legales de la transformación del litoral mediterráneo* [Geographic and legal aspects of the Mediterranean littoral transformation]. In *Colloque Franco-Espagnol sur les espaces-littoraux* (pp. 53-64). Madrid, Spain: Publicaciones del Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación.
- Santana, A. (1997). *Antropología y turismo: ¿Nuevas hordas, viejas culturas?* [Anthropology and tourism: New herds, old cultures?]. Barcelona, Spain: Ariel.
- SECTUR. (1988). *Evolución del turismo en México y su relación con los tres niveles de gobierno, desde un punto de vista jurídico-administrativo* [The evolution of tourism in Mexico and its relation to three government levels: A law-management perspective]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: Oficialía Mayor-SECTUR.
- SECTUR. (1997). *Estadísticas básicas de la actividad turística 1996* [Basic statistics for tourism 1996]. Distrito Federal, Mexico: Author.
- SECTURE. (1998). *El impacto de la industria filmica para Baja California* [The impact of the film industry on Baja California]. Tijuana, Mexico: Cuaderno de divulgación, Secretaría de Turismo del Estado de B.C.
- Shaw, G., & Williams, A. M. (1998). *Critical issues in tourism: A geographical perspective*. London: Blackwell.
- Vera, F. J. (Coordinator). (1997). *Análisis territorial del turismo* [Territorial analysis of tourism]. Barcelona, Spain: Ariel.

Nora L. Bringas-Rábago is a researcher at the Urban and Regional Studies Program at the Colegio de la Frontera Norte in Tijuana, Mexico. Her research interests include land use management, regional development, and sustainable tourism.