

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

### DYNAMICS OF TOURIST URBANIZATION ON THE COAST OF BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

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In Argentina, according to the National Tourism Forum (2017), tourism contributed 5.6 million foreign tourists and 43.4 million domestic tourism trips to the national economy during 2016, generating more than 1 million jobs. The intense growth of tourist activity has had a large number of consequences, one of the most significant is the development of urban areas associated with the affluence of visitor flows (Gladstone, 1998).

In this context, it is interesting to discuss the role and scope of tourism in the coastal urbanization processes in Argentina and, by extension, in Latin America. Thus, this study analyzes the urban evolution of the coastal municipalities of the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, from the perspective of considering tourism as a catalyst for urban growth, but also taking into account endogenous characteristics and the identity of the local communities where the activity is developed.

Therefore, the problem that is proposed to analyze and interpret in this paper is the heterogeneity of the tourist urbanization processes of the coastal municipalities of the Province of Buenos Aires. The general aim is to “analyze the evolution of coastal tourist destinations in the province of Buenos Aires, considering tourism as a catalyst for its urban growth and understand the dynamics and typologies of the processes of tourist urbanization that have occurred in this territory” being the particular aims the following:

- Characterize the cities that compose the coastal municipalities of the province of Buenos Aires, based on the identification of their tourist condition and urban, socio-economic and demographic aspects.
- Analyze the behavior of tourist cities and study their transformation based on evolution over time.
- Incorporate the analysis of the evolution of the conditions of the tourist destination as an urban system.

Likewise, the following working hypotheses are proposed:

- H1- Tourist cities base their development on the existence of a tourist attraction that generates a high rate of tourist function.
- H2- The tourist activity entails the attraction of residents and the demographic growth.
- H3- Tourist cities tend to have a young population.
- H4- The greater the tourist growth, the greater the establishment of unskilled labor, and the lower quality of the homes. This is, however, an evolving situation that may stabilize over time.
- H5- The tourist cities present a high activity index because tourism contributes to the generation and growth of employment.

The theoretical framework on which the empirical analysis is based, is the concept of tourist urbanization and its implementation in the territory (Mullins, 1991). Tourism urbanization is understood as a differential process with respect to other urbanization dynamics by which cities and towns are built or rebuilt specifically by tourism. Mullins (1991) affirms, in this sense, that tourist cities differ from the rest by having, among other aspects, higher housing density, higher demographic growth rates, higher proportion of old population and newcomers, predominance of couples like family typology, and a higher rate of job creation, as well as a higher level of unemployment. Several authors, including Essex and Brown (1997), Williams and Hall (2000), Gu and Wall (2007), González Reverté (2008), and Holderbaun and Lemos (2012), have studied this concept from the analysis of the processes occurred in other spaces that are reviewed in depth in the first part of this article.

In order to meet the proposed aims, the existence of typologies of urban evolution processes in the coastal municipalities of the province of Buenos Aires is analyzed through the study of demographic and economic variables in the period 2001-2010, according to data obtained from the National Population, Household and Housing Census made by INDEC. For this purpose, a group of cities in different conglomerates is carried out through statistical classification techniques —cluster analysis— using Ward's case analysis of the SPSS statistical computer program.

The results allow us to discuss the characteristics and nature of the different dynamics of urbanization observed and allow us to assess the role that both the attraction of tourists and new residents has had in each of them. Thus, six groups of cities have been identified according to the processes of change that tourism has caused in them and the diversity, complexity and dynamism that each type of conglomerate presents according to its particular characteristics has been evidenced. Thereby, a general reflection on the role of tourism in urban development is made and with respect to testing the hypotheses. These are, first of all, cities that present certain distinctive characteristics that approximate Mullins' (1991) definition of a tourist city, while being attractive to tourists they have generated rapid growth in the population and the workforce, which is flexible, in addition to having a structure of social groups and a specific residential organization.

Likewise, the empirical analysis has allowed us to reflect, from the observation of the role of tourism in urban growth in the coastal municipalities of the Province of Buenos Aires, on the most relevant theoretical contributions of the process of tourist urbanization in Latin America made by other authors that are related to economic

dynamism (Valdivieso and Coll-Hurtado, 2010; Mendoza and Leal, 2010), population growth (Anaya and Palafox, 2007; Lozano and Ramírez, 2007; Calderon and Orozco, 2009; Boggio Vázquez, 2008), the increase in job opportunities and the location of new residents in tourist cities (Mantero, 2002; Merlotto, 2010) and the existence of problems of overcapacity, excessive growth and lack of infrastructure (Fonseca and Costa, 2004; Soares and Gandara, 2010; Padilla and Benseny, 2104).

Since the analysis of the role of tourism in urbanization processes at a general level and, in particular, in Latin America, in the case of urban development of coastal destinations, is a generally unsolved question, this article offers empirical evidence that supports the conception that tourism not only has differential effects on urbanization processes, but especially taking into account local circumstances, generates specific dynamics at the local level that must be explained from the knowledge of the economic reality and the identity of each place.

Thus, it is interesting to mention that, as occurs in the Spanish Mediterranean coast (González Reverté, 2008), the observed urbanization process is an asymmetric phenomenon that does not occur in a homogeneous way, but rather distinguishes sectors with different dynamics and potentialities. Definitely, as Gu and Wall (2007) argue, tourist attraction as a factor of urban development generates differentiated and competitive dynamics in which urban planners must take a new role as administrators and mediate between different conflicts of interest. Furthermore, as mentioned by Anton Clavé *et al.* (2011), in certain cases, tourist destinations may no longer be understood as cities created only for the satisfaction of recreational uses and may be considered as complex urban spaces.