

THE PRODUCTION OF TOURIST SPACES EN SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Cozumel Island, Mexico and Cayo Las Brujas, Cuba

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This article presents an applied study of the process of production of tourist space in sensitive environments. The study is developed using compared scenarios between Cozumel, Mexico and Cayo Las Brujas, Cuba. It is based on the analysis of the uniqueness of the small tropical islands as receptive spaces of coastal tourism, in relation to their high vulnerability and the required protection levels. With this focus, the coastal area is identified as a structural element of the tourist destination. As a result, the spatial dynamics of the coastal tourist development and the organization of the tourist system are assessed within a framework based on sustainability, allowing the interpretation of current and potential impacts of the established tourism models. On the basis of the compared scenarios a diagnosis is presented and recommendations are given for a strategic plan that will make the management of sustainable development in Cayo Las Brujas possible.

KEY WORDS: *tourist space, small tropical island, sensitive environment, sustainable development, coastal tourism, tourist destination, tourism impact.*