

# Understanding the policy process: actors, discourses and power relations in the political arena of tourism

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A CASE STUDY FROM MEXICO

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## **Abstract**

This study contributes to the discussion of development studies by offering an analysis of the policy process. It explores the introduction of a tourism policy with developmental purposes in Mexico in the late 1960s (*Centros Integralmente Planeados* or State-Planned Tourism Destinations). For this purpose, this research utilised an actor-oriented approach under the assumption that it can help to reflect more broadly on the processes surrounding policy-making activities that are characterised by the existence of multiple scenarios of conflict, negotiation, uncertainty and ambiguity. Above all, this approach was utilised to shed some light on the important role that human factors play in the formulation and implementation of development policies. Assisted by some of the elements considered by the “social interface” concept, this research was able to deconstruct the traditional notion of the policy process (i.e. as a top-down intervention) and conceive it, rather, as an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiative process. The core of this thesis focuses on the analysis of the interaction between human, structural and contextual factors in the selected policy process over time. Through the exploration of the different phases of the policy process (policy background, agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy process evolution), this study attempts to illustrate the constant interplay of these three elements in the definition of policy agendas.

The empirical evidence collected by this research suggests that this policy process effectively contributed to expanding the powers of the Mexican state in tourism development tasks leading to the reconfiguration of the relations between the state and the private sector and the institutional structures in the Mexican tourism industry at the national level. Through the examination of the case of Cancun, this research also illustrates the influential role played by this policy process at regional and local levels, transforming the traditional power structures and giving origin to new ones. This study aims to enhance our understanding not only of the processes related to policy-making but also of the commonly neglected political dimension of tourism. By describing the lessons experienced in Mexico and, more particularly, in Cancun, this research contributes to illustrating that tourism is in fact a highly contested political arena where an important number of interests and power relations are continuously expressed.

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## List of acronyms

<b>AAA</b>	American Automobile Association
<b>AOA</b>	Actor-oriented Approach
<b>AMA</b>	Asociación Mexicana de Automóviles Mexican Automobile Association
<b>BID</b>	Banco Inter-Americano de Desarrollo Inter-American Development Bank
<b>CEMDA</b>	Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental Mexican Centre of Environmental Protection
<b>CIPs</b>	Centros Integralmente Planeados State-Planned Tourism Destinations
<b>COPLADEMUN</b>	Comité de Planeación para el Desarrollo Municipal Planning Committee for the Municipal Development
<b>CUD</b>	Acuerdo Nacional para el Desarrollo National Agreement for Development
<b>CFE</b>	Comisión Federal de Electricidad Federal Commission of Electricity
<b>CMPT</b>	Comisión Mixta Pro-Turismo Mixed Pro-tourism Commission
<b>CNET</b>	Consejo Nacional Empresarial Turístico National Council of Tourism Businesses
<b>CNPT</b>	Comité Nacional Pro-Turismo National Pro-tourism Committee
<b>CNT</b>	Comisión Nacional de Turismo National Tourism Commission
<b>CPLTD</b>	Consejo Local para la Protección del Desarrollo Turístico Local Council for the Protection of Tourism Development
<b>CPT</b>	Comisión Pro-Turismo Pro-tourism Commission
<b>CPTM</b>	Consejo de Promoción Turística de México Mexican Tourism Promotional Council
<b>CST</b>	Cuenta Satélite de Turismo Tourism Satellite Account

<b>CSNPT</b>	Consejo Nacional de Promoción Turística National Council of Tourism Promotion
<b>CT</b>	Communitarian Tourism
<b>DAAC</b>	Departamento Nacional de Asuntos Agrarios National Department of Agrarian Affairs
<b>DT</b>	Departamento de Turismo Department of Tourism
<b>FIDEC</b>	Fideicomiso para el Desarrollo Comercial Commercial Development Trust
<b>FIRA</b>	Fideicomisos Instituidos en Relación a la Agricultura Agriculture Constituted Trusts
<b>FOGAIN</b>	Fondo de Garantía para la Industria Industrial Guarantee Fund
<b>FOGATUR</b>	Fondo de Garantía y Fomento de Turismo Tourism Guarantee and Promotion Fund
<b>FOMEX</b>	Fondo para el Fomento de las Exportaciones de Productos Manufacturados Manufactured Goods Export Trust
<b>FONATUR</b>	Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo National Tourism Development and Infrastructure Fund
<b>FONEI</b>	Fondo de Equipamiento Industrial Industrial Equipment Trust
<b>FOVI</b>	Fondo de Operación y Financiamiento Bancario a la Vivienda Operation and Financing Housing Trust
<b>GATT</b>	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
<b>GEMA</b>	Grupo Ecologista del Mayab Ecologist Group Mayab
<b>GD</b>	Economic Great Depression
<b>GT</b>	Grounded Theory
<b>INAH</b>	Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia National Institute of Anthropology and History
<b>INE</b>	Instituto Nacional de Ecología

	National Institute of Ecology
<b>INEGI</b>	Instituto Nacional de Geografía, Estadística e Informática National Institute of Geography and Statistic
<b>INFRAATUR</b>	Fondo de Promoción de Infraestructura Turística Tourism Infrastructure and Development
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IMIT</b>	Instituto Mexicano de Investigación Turística Mexican Institute of Tourism Research
<b>IMPLAN</b>	Instituto de Planeación de Desarrollo Urbano Planning and Urban Development Institute
<b>ISI</b>	Import Substitution Industrialisation
<b>LFT</b>	Ley Federal de Turismo Tourism Federal Law
<b>MARTI</b>	The Mesoamerican Reef Tourism Initiative
<b>MRA</b>	Asociación Mexicana de Restaurantes Mexican Restaurants Association
<b>MTA</b>	Asociación Mexicana de Turismo Mexican Tourism Association
<b>NAFINSA</b>	Nacional Financiera National Development Financing Bank
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>PAN</b>	Partido Acción Nacional National Action Party
<b>PEMEX</b>	Petróleos Mexicanos National Petroleum Company
<b>POET</b>	Plan de Ordenamiento Ecológico y Territorial Urban and Ecological Development Plan
<b>PMD</b>	Plan Municipal de Desarrollo Municipal Development Plan
<b>PND</b>	Plan Nacional de Desarrollo National Development Plan
<b>PNDT</b>	Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Turístico

	National Plan of Tourism Development
<b>PRI</b>	Partido Revolucionario Institucional Institutional Revolutionary Party
<b>PVEM</b>	Partido Verde Ecologista de México Green Party of Mexico
<b>SECTUR</b>	Secretaría de Turismo Tourism Ministry
<b>SEDETUR</b>	Secretaría de Turismo del Estado de Quintana Roo Tourism Ministry of Quintana Roo
<b>SEDUE</b>	Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología Ministry of Urban Development and Ecology
<b>SEMARNAT</b>	Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales Environment and Natural Resources Ministry
<b>SCOP</b>	Secretaría de Comunicaciones Communications Ministry
<b>SHCP</b>	Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público Treasury Ministry
<b>SM</b>	Secretaría de Marina Ministry of the Marine
<b>SRH</b>	Secretaría de Recursos Hidráulicos Ministry of Water Resources
<b>UNAM</b>	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México National Autonomous University of Mexico
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Program
<b>UNWTO</b>	World Tourism Organisation
<b>WB</b>	World Bank

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**In memoriam**

Carolina Martínez García  
Vicente Ambriz Ortiz



# Chapter 1. Introduction

This research aims to contribute to the discussion of development studies by offering an analysis of a policy process in the context of Mexico. For this purpose, the political arena of tourism was chosen in light of its potential to illustrate the conflictive features of policy-making activities within this important economic sector for this country. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2011: 3) the tourism sector in Mexico represents 6.2% of total GDP, 7.3% of total employment, and 6.5% of total investment. Likewise, tourism constitutes the fourth largest source of foreign currency revenue in Mexico only after oil sales, remittances, and foreign direct investment (BBVA, 2011: 38). Considering these figures, it can be said that this industry has gained special relevance within the Mexican economy derived from the expansion of tourism-related activities over the last 40 years. This research thus is interested to explore the processes by which the Mexican government decided to support tourism as a development strategy through the design and implementation of a tourism policy called *Centros Integralmente Planeados* (State-Planned Tourism Destinations, CIPs) in the late 1960s.

## 1.1 Understanding the policy process

The analysis of the processes surrounding policy-making activities in any area is always a difficult task because it entails the examination of a complex set of elements that constantly interact over time (Sabatier, 2007). The former involves the investigation of the interrelation between human factors (i.e. the constellation of actors including their ideologies, interests, and agendas), structural factors (i.e. institutional and organisational arrangements) and contextual factors (cultural, economic, environmental, political and social environments) within the processes through which policies emerge. Thus, an analysis of the policy process should be concerned with revealing the nature of this interplay as well as identifying the evolution pattern that is followed by this process derived from the events that surround it. Recognising that it would be an impossible task to capture every single aspect within an analysis, a theoretical simplification of the policy process can be helpful to gain a better understanding of how it functions in practice.

Early policy analyses in the 1950s were focused on explaining policy-making activities from a rational perspective portraying related decisions as the result of a sequential process, starting with the identification of a problem and ending with a proposal to solve it (Sutton, 1999). Since then, several disciplines such as anthropology, international relations, management, political sciences, sociology and so on, have developed different approaches/frameworks/models with the main objective of identifying the main factors that have an influence over this process. Yet, as Springate-Baginski and Soussan (2001: 6) noted, “policy processes cannot simply be explained in traditional ‘rational’ terms...[because] policy making in reality is...a complex, messy and contested process, involving negotiation and power play between diverse stakeholders over control and use of limited resources”. Considering the former, this research is inscribed in the group of studies that conceive policy-making as a complex and dynamic process that involves constant negotiation of interests and agendas between the different actors involved through the exercise of power in the making of policy. In this sense, one of the main objectives of this study is related to the exploration of the role played by related actors in this process, paying special attention to discussing how different forms of power are generated and exercised and to what end.

The motivation of this research for conducting an analysis of a policy process stemmed from the interest to gain a better understanding of the processes through which development policies are formulated and implemented. I wanted to learn more about the organisational structures behind the formulation and implementation stages of the policy process but, above all, I wanted to learn more about the extent of the influence that related actors have to create policy agendas. I was interested to know more about the participation of the actors who lead this process in a particular direction, favouring some particular interests and disregarding others. The former required not only the identification of the main actors within the arena of negotiations but also to explore the different ways in which they exercised power, to analyse the range of strategies employed by them to forward their goals and agendas, and to study the main effects of their decisions and actions within this process. This research thus decided to adopt an actor-oriented approach (Long, 2001) to study the processes surrounding policy-making activities under the assumption that it could potentially help to reflect more effectively on the issues related to the agency and

power of actors. Taking into account the dominance of structural approaches in the construction of explanations about how development interventions occur, the adoption of an actor-oriented perspective was identified appropriate in this research to cast some light on the role that human action and consciousness play in the policy process. As Long (2001: 13) noted, although it might be true that important structural changes result from the impact of outside forces, it is theoretically unsatisfactory to base the analysis of the policy process solely on external determination. In this sense, it is believed here that an actor-oriented approach can offer the epistemological advantage of broadening the understanding of the social change produced by the formulation and implementation of policies associated with developmental objectives.

It was recognised, however, that focusing the analysis of these processes simply on the agency of actors would be clearly insufficient to build explanations about how policy-making activities occurred on the ground. The exploration of structural and contextual features was also considered necessary to be able to construct a broader and -perhaps- a clearer picture of this process. In this sense, this research attempted to integrate a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to analyse this policy process examining the relationships between three main units of analysis -actors, structure and context- and their interaction over time. Developing a multi-scale analysis (national, regional, local) this study attempts to unveil the principal features of this particular process with the objective of gaining a better understanding of the issues surrounding the CIPs policy. The following sections will provide more information about the rationale of this study, the research questions considered throughout the research process, and the general outline of this thesis.

## **1.2 Motivations behind this study**

### *1.2.1 Why Tourism?*

The principal motivation to conducting research on a tourism policy process emerged from the personal interest to understand how coastal destinations such as Cancun became a reality. As a graduate in tourism studies (BA in Tourism), I became very interested in topics related to tourism planning and the design of public policies associated with territorial organisation. I was very curious to know the reasons behind the involvement of governments in tourism development tasks as well as the effects (social and economic) that tourism policies generated at the local level.

Mexico is an excellent country to explore as it not only belonged to a group of developing countries that decided to support tourism as a state-led development strategy during the 1960s and 1970s (e.g. Egypt, Greece, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago just to mention some examples) lured by the economic outcomes achieved in countries such as Spain and France (cf. Ivars, 2003; Clarke, 1981) but also due to the special interest I have in this country derived from my own cultural identity. I was intrigued, above all, to know whether the construction of big coastal destinations and the expansion of tourism activities were contributing to the achievement of the development promises that gave them life in the first place.

My personal experience working for the tourism sector in Cancun for a period of three years (2002-2005) gave me some firsthand insights. Occupying several positions, mainly in the hotel sector, helped me to gain an insider's perspective of the functioning of the tourism industry. I met a lot of people who, just like me, migrated to this destination from other parts of Mexico with the idea of gaining better employment opportunities and quality of life. Given the great number of jobs available at the time, I was convinced that Cancun was actually achieving the main objectives for which it was created, i.e. creating employment, generating foreign currency revenues, and generating favourable conditions of regional development. However, as time passed, I became more aware of the high costs (economic, environmental, cultural and social) associated with tourism growth in this particular case. I started to perceive more clearly the profound social and economic inequalities produced by this industry reflected in the great contrasts between the benefits obtained by the local population *vis-à-vis* those obtained by tourism-related businesses (hotels, tour operators, restaurants and so on). I also started to become more aware of the profound environmental degradation reflected in the progressive destruction of the mangrove system and the excessive pollution in the lagoons caused by the massive construction of hotels and shopping malls, the increasing demand for water, and poor waste management. Likewise, I was able to perceive a society full of cultural contrasts with a profound absence of a sense of local identity. This lack of community engagement from the local population has been attributed to the exhausting work shifts demanded by tourism-related jobs and the limited time

available for workers to participate in leisure and social activities (cf. Jiménez and Sosa, 2005).

Seemingly, there were a lot of jobs available in Cancun but the majority of them were low-skilled, seasonal, underpaid and with very low provision for social security benefits. Indisputably, Cancun was the Mexican destination that was receiving the majority of the international tourists visiting the country generating a considerable amount of foreign currency revenue but the former was not reflected in better conditions for the local population who had to inhabit a city with serious infrastructural, housing and public services problems. The buoyant economy surrounding the tourism industry in Cancun over the last few decades helped to hide the fact that related businesses were mainly captured by an elite group of actors who were being favoured by their social networks within the local, regional and national governments over time. Thus, the development picture I had of Cancun prior to my observations *in-situ* acquired a more blurred aspect leading me to reassess my interpretation of this reality.

Several ideas flooded my mind attempting to understand how an allegedly planned destination such as Cancun could become the place I was observing. In this search for answers, I started to formulate some preliminary questions to explore the possible causes: were the prevailing conditions in Cancun the result of the functioning of the international tourism industry? Were these the result of the national tourism industry structure? Were these the result of bad decisions made by the local/regional/national government? Were these the result of a bad design of the CIPs policy? Were these the result of poor policy implementation? Were these the result of a lack of engagement of the local population in tourism development? Were these the result of the absence of strong regulatory bodies? Or, perhaps, were these conditions a combination of all these factors? Attempting to answer all these questions, I realised the great complexity of this task without investigating these issues in greater detail. As the Mexican professor Daniel Cosío Villegas, I also believe that the best approach to solve any question always consists in examining its antecedents. Taking into account this premise, I realised that, in order to gain any sense of understanding about these issues, the historical processes by which the tourism industry and Cancun became a reality in Mexico had to be investigated. As Sharpley (2002: 12) noted, although extensive research has been carried out to explore the positive and negative

effects of tourism development in the world, the processes that have created them had received relatively little attention. Therefore, I decided to contribute to fill this knowledge gap researching the issues surrounding tourism policy-making in Mexico.

### *1.2.2 Tourism and Development: a love-hate relationship?*

There is no doubt that the main interest of governments around the globe behind the support towards the development of tourism activities has historically been linked to the achievement of economic objectives. The economic value of the tourism industry in the world can be best understood from its numbers: nowadays international tourism accounts for 940 million tourist arrivals producing US\$944 million in receipts, and contributing US\$ 1.1 trillion in receipts for international transportation (UNWTO 2009a, 2011). Despite the former, this sector has recently experienced a deceleration effect derived from the appearance of international problems such as the economic recession, oil price fluctuations, social unrest in African and Middle Eastern countries, and the outbreak of global health issues associated with SARS and Influenza AH1N1. Irrespective of the volatile situation of the global tourism industry, many countries -especially developing ones- continue supporting the expansion of tourism activities within their territories due to the alleged contribution of this industry to produce fast economic growth and, above all, development. And although the estimation of the developmental contribution of tourism is still problematic, uneven, and debatable across countries, the economic powers of tourism have been little questioned.

The reproduction of a beneficial discourse of tourism portraying it as a fast-growing, labour-intensive and foreign currency generating activity has helped several governments to justify the investment of public money in this industry as well as to legitimate territorial interventions in the name of 'development'. Yet, the central question that should be asked as Sharpley and Telfer (2002) noted is: to what extent and under which circumstances can tourism be considered a development option? There is no doubt that such a question cannot accept easy answers principally due to the multi-dimensional nature of the term 'development' as well as the complex and dynamic nature of the tourism industry. Some critics of the developmental role of tourism (cf. Burns, 2008; Britton, 1982; de Kadt, 1979; Francisco, 1983; Kerr, 2003; Richter, 1983, 1989) have argued that it has failed to achieve development-related

goals mainly due to the prevailing unequal economic and political system through which this industry operates globally. Considering the former, it can be said that in many cases the growth of tourism activities can actually occur but development might fail to materialise. In this sense, the countries that decide to adopt tourism as a development strategy commonly face what is referred to by Telfer and Sharpley (2008) as a 'tourism-development dilemma'. This implies the recognition that tourism not only generates economic and developmental benefits but also economic, environmental and social costs. Depending on the way that different governments manage the challenges generated by the existence of this dilemma, tourism might be considered as a real development agent (Telfer and Sharpley, 2008). Considering the complex and multifaceted nature of the relationship between tourism and development, it is believed that an analysis of the interaction of the different elements of the tourism policy process proposed in this research can contribute to shed some light on the main features of this relationship as well as to better understand the evolutionary pattern followed in the case of Mexico.

### *1.2.3 The role of tourism as a development strategy*

Historically, the expansion of the tourism industry has been widely supported around the world under the assumption that it may constitute a 'genuine' vehicle for development. During the 1960s, all related studies tended to portray tourism development as a good thing due to its supposed potential to solve the economic problems related to underdevelopment conditions (see for example UNESCO, 1963). It was claimed that expansion of tourism activities could produce rapid economic growth and the necessary conditions for ensuring economic independence, especially in developing countries. Many governments were thus encouraged to adopt tourism as a development strategy following the examples of countries such as Spain and France that experienced the boom of mass tourism and its perceived economic benefits. Although it was acknowledged that there were a number of problems associated with the growth of tourism activities in host destinations, it was believed that its benefits -economic and social- could outweigh the associated costs.

A supportive discourse emerged portraying tourism as a growth industry that was able to redistribute wealth with a relatively minor investment from the state. Above all, special attention was paid to stress the linkage between tourism and development goals within these discourses. Tourism came to be seen as a viable option for less developed countries to achieve the main objective of catching up with more prosperous societies in developmental terms. Many examples can be found of countries that decided to support the expansion of the tourism industry to finance their economic deficits during this period (e.g. Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Philippines, Mexico, Thailand, and Tunisia just to mention a few examples). This group of countries took advantage of the economic support for tourism development projects provided by institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) as well as of the momentum in the expansion of tourism activities at international level. Thus, new tourism destinations emerged generating great expectations in the form of foreign exchange revenues, foreign and domestic investment, employment and so on.

However, the developmental expectations of tourism began to vanish from the 1970s onwards as it became increasingly apparent that this industry had negative impacts whilst providing only limited benefits. This situation clearly contributed to open the debate and question more seriously the role of tourism as an effective contributor towards development. The image of tourism acquired a different façade over the years shaped by a more realistic perspective on its potential to transform the economic conditions of host destinations vis-à-vis the social, political and environmental costs associated with the development this industry. Nowadays, it would be clearly idealistic to propose that the mere introduction of tourism could be the solution to all the development problems faced by less developed countries. Experience has taught that tourism's contribution to development can vary from case to case according to the prevailing circumstances as well as the particular ideological construction of the term "development" by the society and/or group of societies under analysis. For example, while in countries such as the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, the Maldives, and Vanuatu tourism constitutes the most important economic activity representing, on average, more than 60% of the national GDP, there are many other examples where tourism forms part of a more diversified economic structure and its contribution remains marginal, as in Cambodia,



Dominican Republic, Kenya, Laos, Mexico, Namibia and Nepal, just to mention some examples (see Espinosa, 2004: 92-101 and UNESCAP, 2007: 16 for more statistical detail). Consequently, any claim in favour or against tourism's potential to contribute towards development should take into account the structural and contextual features of each individual case. Ultimately, it is important to recognise that "the achievement of development in any one country may be dependent upon a particular combination of economic, social and political conditions and processes which may or may not be satisfied by tourism" (Sharpley and Telfer, 2002: 2).

#### *1.2.4 A journey into the political dimension of tourism*

According to Hall (1994: 2) "the mainstream of tourism research has either ignored or neglected the political dimension of the allocation of tourism resources, the generation of tourism policy and the politics of tourism development". The former can be attributed, among many other things, to the lack of interest from different disciplines (such as political science, international relations, public administration and so on) investigating a policy area that seems to have low contestation levels. Portraying tourism as a development vehicle has allowed several governments and policy-makers to depoliticise and legitimate actions and decisions related to the formulation and implementation of tourism policies under the argument of working for national interests. What is more, it has helped to construct a neutral and value-free façade of tourism drawing the attention towards its economic benefits eclipsing the myriad of interests and power struggles that exist behind them. Yet, as Richter (1989: 19) noted, behind the decision to support tourism development through the design and implementation of a particular policy "there is always a political agenda – wise or foolish, benign or selfish, compatible or incompatible". This implies the recognition that the decisions surrounding any tourism policy, the extent of the involvement of the government in tourism, the structure of the tourism institutions and organisations, and the way in which tourism development occurs emerge from a political process where different forms of power operate (Hall and Jenkins, 1995). In this sense, this research is interested in investigating how power was exercised describing how tourism became a political arena in Mexico and, more particularly, how the CIPs policy was formulated and implemented in the context of Cancun.

As Espinosa (2004), I also argue that state-led tourism should be understood politically since it involves a number of decisions that determine the way in which public resources are allocated favouring the growth of this sector and affecting the development of others (e.g. education, health, security, social assistance, and so on). Throughout this thesis, I will try to demonstrate that tourism in Mexico has not emerged spontaneously but it has been the result of a group of purposive and calculated decisions from the state to support the growth of this industry. Exploring the political processes surrounding this sector over the last 80 years, this study will attempt to illustrate the different forms and relations of power that have emerged within this political arena. This implies the identification of the main actors that have controlled the processes that gave origin to the construction of a tourism agenda and the CIPs policy as well as the main resources employed by them (discursive, economic, political, and so on) to influence decision-making activities. Given the conflictive nature of the tourism arena derived from the concurrence of different interests and agendas, this research expects to contribute to provoke a greater discussion on the issues surrounding the political dimension of tourism that have received scarce attention in related literature.

### **1.3 Research questions**

In order to gain a better understanding of the tourism policy process in the context of Mexico, this research is interested to answer the following question: *How has the policy process related to the CIPs policy been influenced by the agency of actors, structural forces and prevailing contextual features over time?* In order to address this general question, a set of four specific sub-questions were developed aiming to explore in greater detail the units of analysis proposed in this research.

Research enquiry	Research question	Research objective
<b>Actors' influence in the CIPs policy process</b>	How and why did different actors influence the policy process?	To explore the role that knowledge, ideologies, and power exercise played in actions and decisions related to the policy process
<b>Structural influence in the CIPs policy process</b>	How did different organisational arrangements enable and/or constrain the policy process?	To understand the different organisational arrangements (formal and informal) surrounding the tourism industry in Mexico
<b>Contextual influence in the CIPs policy process</b>	To what extent did contextual circumstances contribute to transform policy-related decisions at different moments?	To analyse the influence of economic, social, political and environmental factors surrounding the policy process
<b>Evolution of the CIPs policy process at different levels</b>	To what extent did the analysis of the policy process generate meaningful insights about tourism development in Mexico?	To investigate the evolutionary pattern followed by the CIPs policy in the different phases of the policy process in Mexico, Quintana Roo, and Cancun.

**Table 1.1** Research questions.

#### **1.4 Thesis outline**

This thesis is divided into eight chapters, including this introduction. Chapter two presents the conceptual and analytical foundations of this research. It starts with a discussion of the analysis of policy-making under a process perspective. It is explained that the adoption of a 'process' perspective involves an investigation of the unfolding of actions, events and decisions that may result in the emergence of policies. Thus, it is argued that this research pays special attention to describing the effects that choice, power, and ideologies have on policy-making activities. Additionally, chapter two describes the main approach chosen by this research to investigate the CIPs policy process: an actor-oriented approach (Long, 2001). It is explained that a theory of 'agency' is a central component of this approach to gain a better understanding of the different strategies and resources employed by related

actors to forward their agendas within the multiple arenas of negotiation. The concept of 'social interface' considered by Long's approach is also described in this chapter as a useful entry point to analyse the interaction of divergent interests and agendas and scenarios of negotiation/cooperation/domination in the policy process. It is argued that the notion of 'social interface' helps to reflect more broadly on the different factors (human, structural, and contextual) influencing this process. The chapter goes on to discuss the approach of this research to analyse the generation and exercise of power: the three-dimensional perspective of Lukes (1974, 2005). It is explained that a Lukesian perspective can help to elucidate not only how different issues are kept off and on the political agenda but also how a policy process is dominated, by whom and to what end. Finally, this chapter concludes by describing the main units of analysis proposed in this research to investigate the issues surrounding the CIPs policy process.

Chapter three presents a description of the methodological strategies employed to collect and analyse the information related to the subject under analysis. For this purpose, a discussion of three main themes: the method of enquiry, the philosophical foundations, and the methods of data collection and data analysis is developed. The chapter makes the case for the adoption of a qualitative approach in this research. It is explained that through a qualitative approach, this research has been able to reflect more broadly on the decisions and actions made by related actors surrounding policy-making activities. Additionally, this chapter discusses the main philosophical foundations followed throughout the research process with the objective of providing an ontological and epistemological guide to the reader. Attention is centred on explaining why a constructivist paradigm, relativist ontology and subjective epistemology were adopted in this study. This chapter goes on to discuss the main strategy of enquiry of this research (case study) providing specific details of the case chosen (Mexico), the focus process (the CIPs policy) and the implementation case (Cancun). The information in this section includes a general overview of these units of analysis as well as a justification for their use. The rest of the sections in this chapter describe the main activities carried out during the fieldwork period, the data collection methods, the strategy employed to analyse the information collected, and the main ethical issues considered in this research.

Chapter four presents an analysis of the CIPs policy milestones describing the processes surrounding the construction of the political arena of tourism in Mexico during the period 1930-1960. Developing the element of the social interface concept called “interlocking relationships and intentionalities”, this chapter explores the different factors that led tourism to become an organised entity in this country. This chapter focuses its attention on describing how the proliferation of state-private networks of actors was crucial to construct a particular agenda of tourism interrelated to the national political objectives. It is argued that the mobilisation of different resources (such as control of information, access to decision-making spheres, group organisation and so on) by related actors enabled them to establish a particular agenda for tourism favouring the interests of particular networks over time. The construction and reproduction of certain discourses was identified as the main resource employed in this period to create sufficient room for manoeuvre. The emergence of different power struggles during this period is also explored in this chapter to illustrate the competition of ideologies and agendas within this incipient arena. Likewise, a general description of the structural features of the Mexican government is included to gain a better understanding of the configuration of the state and the policy-making practices at the time. The main argument of this chapter is that tourism and development agendas were interlocked derived from the interest of some groups of actors to redefine the role of the state in tourism aiming to increase its participation in the years to come.

Chapter five presents a discussion of the emergence of the CIPs policy process. Special attention is paid to describing the issues surrounding the phases of ‘agenda setting’ and ‘policy formulation’ during the 1960s. This time, the element of the social interface concept referred to as “the centrality of knowledge” is explored with the main objective of analysing the interplay of different forms of knowledge within these policy process stages. For this purpose, a discussion of the role that social constructions and discursive tools played to control the negotiations in this political arena is included. This chapter illustrates how the participation of different actors was largely determined through these constructions and the power relations derived from the reproduction of dominant ideologies at the time. Likewise, this chapter will describe how some particular ideas were included -and others excluded- in the debate that allowed tourism to be embedded in the objectives of the development agenda. It

is explained that the former was crucial to construct a local discourse supporting the intervention of the state in tourism developmental tasks. This chapter goes on to discuss the array of discursive tools employed by policy-makers to justify the formulation of a tourism policy at the national scale. The tools described here included the construction of narratives, the use measures, the constructions of causes, and the portrayal of common interests. The final section of this chapter explores the process of CIPs policy formulation. It is explained that this policy emerged as a result of an incremental process being purposively portrayed by policy-makers as the ‘best’ option to solve the problems associated with underdevelopment.

Chapter six analyses the issues surrounding the implementation stage of the CIPs policy process in the case of Cancun. For this purpose, the social interface element referred to as a “clash of cultural paradigms” is developed in this chapter with the aim of reflecting the differences in the world views of different actors and the way in which they interacted during this process. It focuses attention on explaining how the dominant ideology considered in the design of the CIPs policy helped to impose a particular system of values at the local level. The former included a description of the different strategies from different actors (policy-makers, implementers, locals, immigrants and so on) to bridge, accommodate, negotiate and/or transform their visions within the tourism policy project. Different narratives are included in this chapter with the aim of widening the understanding of these visions as the policy implementation unfolded. The main argument in this chapter is that during the implementation process of the CIPs policy in Cancun, a clash of cultural paradigms developed derived from the exclusive nature of the intervention. This information aims to illustrate how the different ideological struggles helped to mould the local policy process modifying to a certain extent the plans originally conceived by policy-makers. The final part of this chapter will describe the immediate effects of the introduction of the CIPs policy at national, regional and local levels. It is argued that this policy largely contributed to the appearance of other agendas in the arena of tourism transforming the traditional structures of control and decisions in tourism policy-making activities.

Chapter seven presents a discussion of the evolution of Cancun as a tourism destination after the conclusion of the implementation process. The element of the

social interface concept referred to as “power as the outcome of struggles over meanings and strategic relationships” is developed in this chapter to gain better understanding of the different strategies employed by related actors to create room for manoeuvre attempting to control the evolution of the CIPs policy process. For this purpose, the notions of the Tourism Area Life Cycle model (Butler, 1980) are used with the objective of describing the different development stages that Cancun experienced during the period 1975-2011. This chapter aims to illustrate the relevant role that different networks of actors played in the development of effective strategies to exert power and accommodate the objectives and agendas considered by them. The discussion of a number of social, economic, political and environmental factors is also included in this chapter to better understand the extent of their influence on the evolution of the policy process at national, regional and local levels. This chapter pays special attention to describing the circumstances by which traditional forms of power were eroded leading to the emergence of new ones in the arena of Mexican tourism.

The final chapter presents the main conclusions of this thesis. It reflects on the main findings as well as the main theoretical and practical contributions of this research to the study of the policy process as well as to development studies. This chapter also discusses the main limitations of this study as well as the possible implications for the design and implementation of tourism policies. The chapter concludes by exploring a series of issues that could be considered for further research in similar studies.

## Chapter 2. Conceptual and Analytical considerations

### 2.1 Chapter outline

The aim of this chapter is to present the conceptual and analytical foundations of this research. For this purpose, the structure of the chapter is divided into five main sections. The first section discusses the main perspective adopted by this research to analyse policy-making activities i.e. conceiving policy-making as a process. It is explained that a focus on the ‘process’ implies a detailed investigation of an unfolding of actions, events, and decisions that may result in the emergence of policies. This perspective, above all, pays special attention to describing the effects that choice, power, perception, and values have on policy-making (Hall and Jenkins, 1995). This section includes a brief review of some of the models/frameworks/approaches used to study policy-making under a process perspective. The main objectives of presenting this discussion are twofold: 1) to identify the principal units of analysis considered by these approaches, and; 2) to discuss their methodological advantages and limitations.

The second section describes the approach chosen by this research (Actor-oriented approach, AOA) to analyse the process of a policy called *Centros Integralmente Planeados* (State-planned tourism destinations, CIPs acronym in Spanish) in Mexico. The AOA has been developed in the work of Norman Long (1988, 1992, 2001) and centres its attention on the examination of the interaction and mutual determinations of the internal and external factors informing the policy-making process as well as the multiple responses from the related actors in policy practices. As its name points out, the AOA proposes to study the role of actors in policy-making through the analysis of their interactions in different arenas of negotiation. It is explained that a theory ‘agency’ is a central component of the AOA indispensable to gain a better understanding of the range of different strategies and resources employed by actors to forward their agendas within a policy-making process. The third section describes the concept of ‘social interface’ as a useful entry point to explore the encounter of divergent interests and agendas. Within this section, it is mentioned that the notion of ‘social interface’ helps to understand how dominant discourses are created, transformed or contested in the process of policy-making. This concept refers to those spaces of ideological confrontation where a number of strategies are put into



action by related actors with the main objective of successfully accommodating their interests.

The fourth part of this chapter discusses the perspective adopted by this research to analyse the exercise of power within the CIPs policy process i.e. a three-dimensional view of power. Based on the work of Steven Lukes (1974, 2005), a three-dimensional view centres its attention on describing how power is generated and exercised, by whom, and to what end. The Lukesian perspective, above all, considers the notion of a ‘latent’ conflict indispensable to developing insightful explanations of how a policy agenda is controlled and how particular interests are kept away from the negotiations. The final part of this chapter describes the analytical approach designed by this research to study the CIPs policy process. This approach proposes to investigate the interaction between actors, structure and context through a multi-scaled analysis over time.

## **2.2 Analysing policy-making: a process perspective**

A study of the policy process cannot evade a definitional problem concerning the meaning of the term ‘policy’ (Hill, 2009: 6). Several authors have agreed that there is no precise definition of the term because it can mean different things to different people (cf. Birkland, 2005; Parsons, 1995; Sabatier, 2007; Stone, 2002). The term ‘policy’ can be used to mean a broad orientation, an indication of normal practice, a specific commitment, or a statement of values (Colebatch, 2009: 7). However, practitioners and observers alike tend to employ the word under an ordinary umbrella associating it with the actions and decisions made by any government. For example, Keeley and Scoones (2003: 5) define ‘policy’ as “a set of decisions taken by those with the responsibility in a given policy area...these decisions take the form of statements...and are executed by the bureaucracy”. In the same vein, Hall (1994: 20) and Hall and Jenkins (1995: 5) pointed out that policy-making activities are dominated by the state and that they reflect “whatever governments choose to do or not to do”. Hill (2009) adds to the former saying that ‘policy’ is comprised of a web of decisions from the government that takes a course of action that is normally dynamic and interconnected to several policy arenas. Despite the lack of consensus in defining the term, three themes emerge surrounding this concept: *order*, *authority*, and *expertise* (Colebatch, 2009: 8-9).

‘Order’ refers to the existence of a formal system or structure whereby the plans from any government emerge; ‘authority’ refers to the operation of a legal framework so as to carry out the decisions involved in policy-making activities, and; ‘expertise’ is related to the imposition of a particular vision of the ‘problem’ (or ideology) to address issues affecting a society emphasising the crucial role that the construction of knowledge plays in this exercise. In this sense, ‘policy’ reflects the process of governing in a particular way, stressing order, intention and outcome (Colebatch, 2009: 19). The concept of ‘policy’ that is adopted in this research is focused on the interrogation of the actions and decisions -and non-decisions- made by the actors related to policy-making activities. More specifically, the attention is focused on the tourism sector in the context of Mexico describing the *processes* surrounding the emergence of the CIPs policy.

According to Springate-Baginski and Soussan (2001: 3), an analysis of actual policy processes can be motivated by any of the following interests: 1) to understand the processes through which policies are developed and implemented; 2) to understand the aims and motives behind policies; 3) to understand the ways through which policies impact household livelihoods, and; 4) to understand the potential areas of interventions in policy process in order to effect improvements in both policy development and implementation. The interest of this research is related to the first and second points in order to better understand the processes surrounding policy-making activities including the definition of arenas of negotiation and the generation and exercise of power. This work conceives policy-making as “a socially-constructed, negotiated, experiential and meaning creating *process*” (Long, 2001: 4). This implies to understand it as a dynamic and interactive process that involves a constant negotiation between the different actors involved as well as the constant reformulation of interests and agendas. The term *process*, according to Schlager (2007: 293), “connotes temporality, an unfolding of actions, events, and decisions that may culminate in an authoritative decision...in explaining policymaking processes, the emphasis is much more on the unfolding than on the authoritative decision, with attention devoted to the structure, context, constraints and dynamics of the process, as well as to the actual decisions and events that occur”. In this sense, this work analyses policy-making recognising the dynamic nature of this activity and

paying special attention to contextualising the decisions derived from this process. It is argued that contextual features play a crucial role in policy-making not only to determine the goals of policies but also to shape the different scenarios -social, political, economic- and the ideologies that policy-makers adopt. Policy-making, ultimately, is understood in this research as an ideological battle where divergent interests and agendas are confronted within a political arena with the main objective of establishing a particular vision of “problems” and “solutions” and the allocation of benefits and costs of such decisions in society.

A focus on the *process* -or processes- surrounding policy-making activity implies the adoption of a descriptive approach to develop insightful explanations of how particular policies emerge and to understand the associated struggles surrounding this activity. Hall and Jenkins (1995: 10) said that a descriptive approach to analysing policy-making processes can help to “understand the effects that choice, power, perception, and values have on policy-making”. Hill (2009: 25) mentioned in this respect that “the study of the policy *process* is essentially the study of the exercise of the power in the making of policy, and cannot therefore disregard underlying questions about the sources and nature of that power”. Similarly, Birkland (2005: 17) points out that the study of the policy *process* implies a close examination of “the values and belief systems of the participants in the process, the structure of the process itself, and the distribution of power”. Sabatier (2007: 3-4) says that the policy *process* involves a power struggle with a great number of actors with different values, interests, perceptions of the situation and policy preferences and that its understanding requires “knowledge of the goals and perceptions of the actors...actively seeking to propagate their “spin” on events [policies]”. For Keeley and Scoones (2003) the central issue about studying the policy *process* is to get a sense of how policies are framed, who is included and who is excluded in this exercise, which actors and which interests are dominant, and how policy is adapted over time.

It has to be said, however, that the task of understanding policy-making should not only be confined to the study of power but should also reflect the complex, multiple, and dynamic factors that interact within this process. The inherent complexity of policy-making activities has stimulated the appearance of several

frameworks/models/approaches in an attempt to gain a better understanding of them. For instance, the most-commonly held view of how policy-making occurs has been depicted in the “linear model” or “stages model” (Sabatier, 2007; Sutton, 1999: 9). In this model, policy-making is conceived as a sequential process divided into clearly distinguished phases i.e. agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation and evaluation. This representation of policy-making suggests the evolution of a non-problematic process disregarding the inherent conflictive and negotiative nature of this activity. Not surprisingly, this model has received great criticism mainly due to the oversimplification of a much more complex set of processes (Hill, 2009: 143; Long, 2001: 25; Sabatier, 2007: 7). Despite the explanatory limitations of this model, its contribution to reflecting on the main components of policy-making should not be underestimated as it is still widely used by many governments, practitioners and academics alike emphasising its potential to impose a sense of order in researching the processes related to policy-making activities (Parsons, 1995).

Other popular models/frameworks/approaches to study policy processes include the ‘multiple streams’ model (MS) (Kingdon, 1995), the Advocacy Coalition framework (ACF) (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993), and the Punctuated Equilibrium model (PE) (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). Firstly, the MS suggests the existence of three main ‘streams’ within the policy-making process: political stream, policy stream, and problem stream. It is argued that the encounter of two or more streams within a political arena would generate an ‘opportunity window’ through which public policies emerge (Birkland, 2005). The main criticism that MS has received is the impossibility to elaborate explanations away from the events associated with the ‘windows-opening’ process (Sabatier, 2007). Secondly, the ACF suggests that policy-making occurs among specialists within a well-defined policy subsystem. ACF advocates propose that the behaviour of policy-makers is highly influenced by factors in the broader political and socioeconomic structures. Despite the fact that ACF recognises the important role that the individual plays in policy-making, the main foundation of the framework is related to the interaction of actors that occurs within the policy subsystem, leading to the creation of “advocacy coalitions” (Sabatier and Weible, 2007: 191-192). Thus, the formation of these ‘coalitions’ is seen as a precondition to have any prospect of success in the process of policy-making. The main criticisms that ACF has received are, on the one hand, its pluralist

conception of power emphasising the ability of all actors to influence the process of policy-making and, on the other, a hypothetical scenario of coordination between related actors with similar objectives within the coalitions (Sabatier and Weible, 2007). Finally, the PE establishes the idea that policy-making is produced in a closed and stable system for long periods of time. The central argument is that policy-making is largely controlled by 'policy monopolies' (Birkland, 2005: 228). In the case of a rupture within the monopoly, a rapid change takes place leading to a new process of regrouping and stability. True *et al* (2007: 179) point out that PE is helpful in understanding policy-making at systems-level and the stability of policies but that it would be insufficient to reflect on the particular issues surrounding policy-making activities such as negotiation, ideologies, power relations and so on.

It is important to mention that the main purpose of the brief literature review of the models/frameworks/approaches to analyse a policy process was neither to portray a detailed account of all existing models nor to assess their effectiveness to construct an accurate picture of it. It is widely recognised that such a task is beyond the scope and objectives of this work. The objective was, rather, to stimulate a reflection of the different factors -internal and external- that are taken into consideration when this process is analysed. Irrespective of the differences -epistemological and practical- these models/frameworks/approaches may present, it can be said that they share some fundamental objectives i.e. to order and simplify reality, to identify what is significant about a system, to communicate meaningful information about the process of policy-making, to direct enquiry and research, and to suggest explanations of public policy (Dye, 1978).

Nonetheless, this research also identified the need to look at the process of policy-making from a different perspective. It is argued that more explanations are needed about the role that actors and their discursive constructions play in the different phases of the process of policy-making i.e. agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation. Since this research conceives policy-making as a socially constructed phenomenon, attention is centred on describing how related actors interpret the elements of the social problems constructed by them, how they create their own agendas and, ultimately, how these processes influence the way in which plans/policies/programs are formulated and implemented. It is argued that further

analysis is needed to explore the extent to which the agency of actors shapes the contours of the policy process over time. I agree with the claim made by some advocates of social constructionist approaches (cf. Ingram *et al*, 2007; Long, 2001; Schneider and Ingram, 1993) that these issues are little explored in analyses related to policy-making due to historical predominance of structural approaches. The adoption of such an approach -social constructionist- obeys the need to reflect on why certain policies emerge in particular contexts and to understand the patterns they develop according to the interplay of different actors at different levels (Ingram *et al*, 2007: 119). Above all, there is an interest to describe the social and political implications of policy-making in the particular arena of Mexican tourism exploring the processes related to the allocation of agendas, resources, benefits, and burdens in the implementation of tourism policies. Despite the apparent impossibility of generating testable propositions through an analysis of policy-making under a constructionist approach (Sabatier, 2007:11), it is believed that its interpretative nature should not be seen as a constraint but, rather, an opportunity to generate alternative explanations of how policy-making occurs on the ground. The adoption of a constructionist approach in this research, ultimately, aims to contribute to the discussion of the issues surrounding policy-making with information that has been overlooked in related studies.

### **2.3 An actor-oriented perspective to analyse policy-making**

The construction of ideologies that lead to the establishment of particular policy agendas largely depends on the actors who use, manipulate and transform these representations according to their particular interests. This research is interested in identifying these motivations within the Mexican tourism sector over time as well as in explaining how they helped in the configuration of policy-making processes. A closer examination of the strategies deployed by the related actors to this arena (discursive, political, relational, cultural, and so on) was identified as necessary in order to understand how the ‘projects’ of these actors -in the form of policies- structured and restructured the different social forms in tourism policy-making at different levels. For this purpose, an actor-oriented approach was adopted in light of its potential to gain a better understanding of the social transformations produced by different development interventions such as a tourism policy in Mexico.

It has to be noted that the analytical approach proposed in this research (discussed later in this chapter) to study the processes of policy-making in the Mexican tourism arena has been largely influenced -although not exclusively- by the work of Norman Long: *Development Sociology: Actor perspectives* (2001). It is believed that the actor-oriented perspective proposed by Long offers the researcher the possibility to reflect more broadly on the processes surrounding policy-making activities that are characterised, according to Colebatch (2009: IX), by multiple scenarios of conflict, resistance, uncertainty and ambiguity. The lack of attention to the strategies, tactics, motives, and resources employed by actors in different policy-making arenas has created a knowledge gap that this research wishes to fill. Long's approach grounds some useful theoretical concepts to analyse the formulation and implementation of development policies such as the CIPs. Considering the influential role that structural approaches (e.g. modernisation, dependency theory, neoliberal approach and so on) have played in developing explanations about how development interventions occur, the adoption of a perspective focused on the role of actors in policy-making was identified as a necessary alternative. Long (2001: 13) defines an actor-oriented approach as a dynamic approach to understand the social transformations generated by planned interventions stressing the interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships, and which recognises the central role played by human action and consciousness.

It is recognised in this research that an analysis of the social transformations produced by policy-making activities under the guide of the AOA should proceed by considering some conceptual principles in order to effectively focus the effort of the enquiry. Long (2001: 49-50) describes the conceptual 'cornerstones' of the AOA stressing their importance to build insightful explanations of policy-making processes. Firstly, social life should be seen as heterogeneous. Despite the apparent homogeneity that a specific social context may portray, the social and cultural diversity in different societies should be widely recognised. Secondly, it is not only important to acknowledge heterogeneity in society but also to explore how these social divergences are produced, reproduced, consolidated, and transformed over time. This is an important consideration of the AOA as it implies a closer examination of the interplay of different factors -internal and external- within the political arenas and not only in the prevailing structural features. Thirdly, a theory of

“agency” is a central component of the AOA to understand the processes of social construction and reconstruction. Actors are seen as active participants in this process possessing the capacity not only to process information acquired through experience but also to act according to the particular situations within a particular social organisation. Long (2001: 16) mentions that the AOA was largely influenced by the *Structuration* theory developed by Anthony Giddens in 1984. *Structuration* theory conceives ‘actors’ as having the “agency” to produce society and at the same time also be influenced, and even be constrained by it (Dredge, 2006). In the words of Giddens (1984: 66) agency should be understood as “the attributes of the actor and the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life”. “Agency” is thus characterised by the presence of two main components: ‘knowledgeability’, to interpret and internalise different experiences and; ‘capability’, to utilise any resource at hand (material and non-material) to increase the possibility of participating in a particular situation.

Fourthly, it should be noted that social action always takes place within a network of relations. In this sense, social action should never be seen as an individual pursuit because it is normally bound by prevailing social conventions, values and power relations (Long, 2001). Fifthly, social action is context-specific and contextually generated. This consideration is crucial to determine the degree of relevance that a particular context possesses supporting and/or constraining the processes of policy-making. Sixthly, meanings, values and interpretations are culturally constructed. Interpretation (or reinterpretation) of social situations should take into account the cultural setting in which they occur. Seventh, actors’ ‘projects’ can interpenetrate various social, symbolic and geographical spaces. This implies a reassessment of the notion that local contexts are exclusively shaped by external influences making explicit the need to explore in more detail the convergence points and degree of interaction. Finally, the AOA considers the concept of ‘social interface’ as key to understand the different scenarios of interaction between actors in policy-making activities. According to Long (2001: 65) the notion of social interface becomes relevant “as a way of exploring and understanding issues of social heterogeneity, cultural diversity and the conflicts inherent in processes involving external interventions”. In this sense, a social interface analysis can help to reflect broadly on how knowledge and power discrepancies are mediated, perpetuated and/or



transformed derived from the different scenarios generated by the formulation and implementation of policies. This analysis became a central component of this research to better understand the way in which the processes surrounding CIPs policy unfolded.

Recently, the AOA has been used to analyse the formulation and implementation of tourism policies in several parts of the world. That is the case, for example, of a study carried out by Bramwell (2006) exploring the case of Malta. This study shows how the use of the AOA helped to identify the power strategies implemented by different actors to advance their views to influence the policy-making process. Bramwell concludes that more attention is needed to explore the role of actors, their power relations, and their likely influence on government policies (Ibid: 276). Similarly, the study carried out by Bramwell and Meyer (2007) investigates tourism policy-making in the case of an island in the former East Germany. Examining the relations between the actors and prevailing structures, they argue that these have a dialectical connection breaking the traditional dualism notion between agency and structure. They concluded that more studies are needed to explore the relevance of networks in policy-making as well as their influence to shape the structures in which they operate. Finally, a study carried out by Verbole (2000) in Slovenia utilised an actor perspective to explore the role of actors in policy-making related to rural tourism development. She argues that policy-making is a negotiative process as “different actors involved in the on-going development process see it from genuinely different perspectives” (Ibid: 479). She concluded that, in order to better understand the processes related to policy-making, a deeper analysis of actors’ agendas, resources, and strategies is indispensable. These examples represent a new wave of studies that focus the attention on examining in greater detail the influence of human agency in policy-making activities. They contribute to an enrichment of the discussion of the policy process that had been largely dominated by explanations based on structural approaches. As Long (2001: 13) noted “although it might be true that important structural changes result from the impact of outside forces...it is theoretically unsatisfactory to base the analysis on the concept of external determination”. Therefore, the AOA offers the main epistemological advantage of broadening the understanding of social change recognising the central role of human action and consciousness in the policy process.

Considering the preceding information, this research develops an analysis of policy-making processes in the political arena of tourism in Mexico combining the AOA with a historical-structural approach. Recognising the important role of actors in influencing policy-making activities, this research explored the evolutionary path of the Mexican tourism arena taking into account the interaction between the actors and their strategies as well as the different prevailing structural features surrounding it. Holden (2006) points out that an analysis of the tourism phenomenon cannot be separated from the economic, political, and social structures that exist in society. In this sense, the combination of the AOA with a historical-structural approach can be seen as a response to conceive and locate tourism policy-making and its related processes in a wider analytical frame. This work acknowledges the challenge that represents the combination of these approaches given their epistemological differences. Nevertheless, their integration as visualised here is not only as possible but also favourable to promote a broader reflection of development interventions as arenas of negotiation, exploring the ways in which some actors attempt to control and manage the outcomes of these development efforts (Long, 2001: 27).

It is important to mention at this point that tourism policy-making processes in Mexico have been historically connected to governmental interventions in the name of 'development'. The contemporary history of this economic sector (1930s-2000s) suggests that its growth has largely been associated with the construction of particular developmental ideologies by different actors (public, private, civil) throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Although the nature of this relationship has typically been explained under an economic rationale (not only in Mexico but in other countries where tourism has been adopted as a development strategy), it is clear that the construction and reproduction of particular ideologies that link developmental and tourism objectives also has profound social and, above all, political implications. Therefore, the interests of this research were focused on examining the political dimension of this sector looking at the interaction of different ideologies within this arena. 'Ideologies' are understood here as those socially shared beliefs of groups that are acquired, used, and changed on the basis of the interests of different groups and the prevailing social environment (van Dijk, 1998). However, it should be noted that the reproduction of certain ideologies alone cannot ensure the

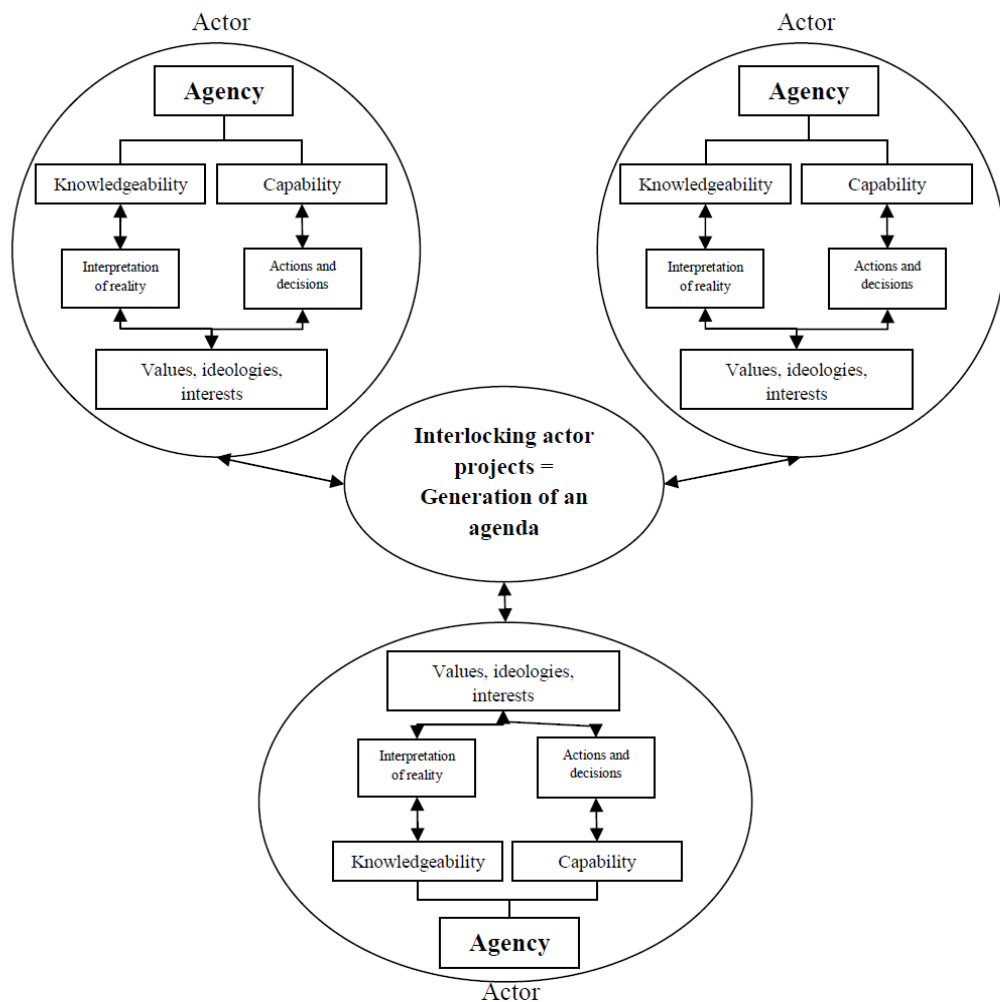
emergence of policy agendas. The key element identified in the reproduction and consolidation of particular ideologies is the “discourse”. “Discourses”, according to Long (2001: 242), are representations and interpretations about specific situations, persons and objects portraying a particular version of ‘the truth’. In this sense, this research centred its attention not only on analysing how these representations surrounding the Mexican tourism sector were constructed but also on reflecting the historical moments in which certain discourses were reproduced. The identification of these episodes were recognised in this research as crucial to gain a better understanding of how the CIPs policy emerged and its derived outcomes. The following sections explain the main concepts of this research that were considered within the analysis.

#### **2.4 The concept of ‘social interface’**

The notion of “social interface” to analyse policy-making issues within an actor-based perspective is crucial “to comprehend how ‘dominant’ discourses are endorsed, transformed or challenged” and to reflect how these related processes “enter the lifeworlds of the individuals and groups affected and come to form part of the resources and constraints of the social strategies they develop” (Long, 2001:71). An ‘interface’ analysis can be useful to deconstruct the traditional notion of a policy-making process (i.e. seen as a top-down intervention) and conceive it, rather, as an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiative process. An examination of the spaces in which different normative values and social interests concur aims to reveal “the struggles and power differentials taking place between the parties involved...[and] the dynamics of cultural accommodation that make it possible for the various worldviews to interact” (Ibid: 72). In this sense, a ‘social interface’ is understood here as a point of encounter where multiple interpretations of reality are confronted and where different ways of bridging, accommodating to, or struggling against these interpretations are devised by related actors.

“Social actors” according to Long (2001: 241) are “all those social entities that can be said to have *agency* in that they possess *knowledgeability* and *capability* to assess problematic situations and organise ‘appropriate’ responses” (my emphasis in italics). Possessing the capacity to process information and act accordingly in multiple situations, actors develop different values, ideologies and interests that are

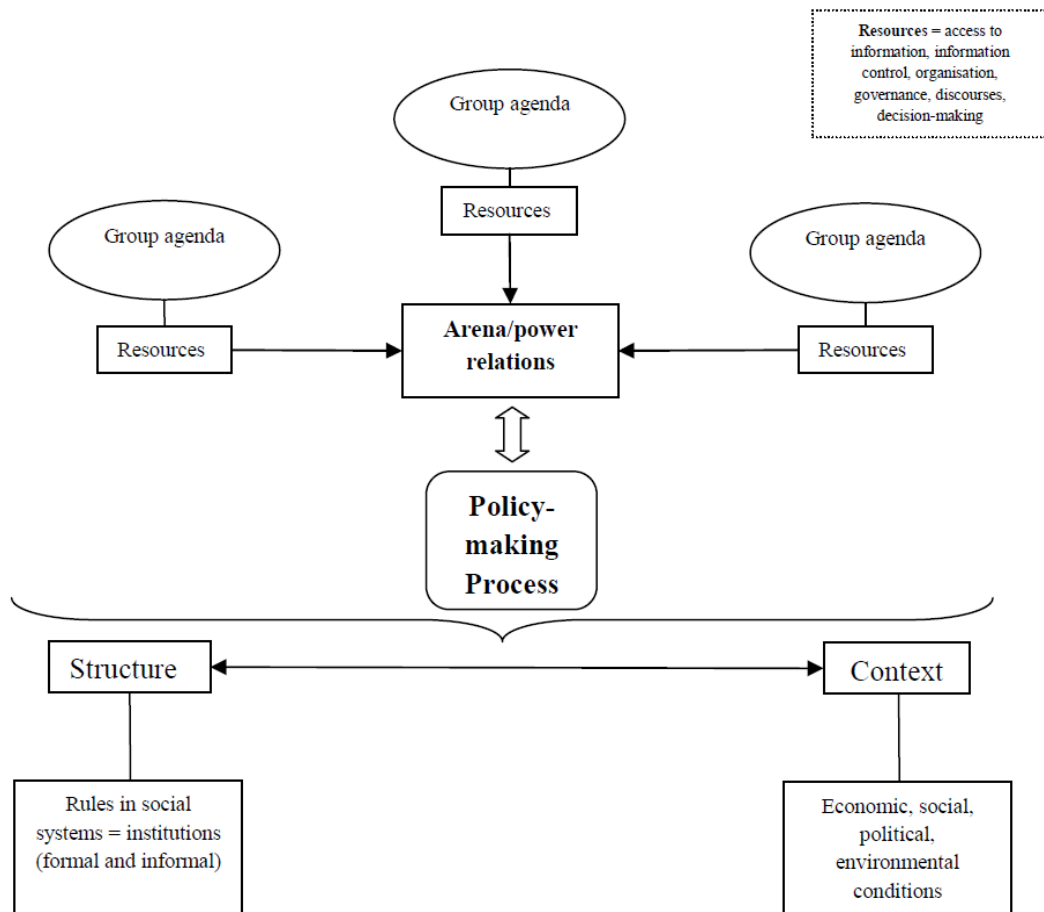
continuously shaped in line with their actions and interpretations. It is important to note that ‘actors’ may appear in a variety of forms (i.e. individual persons, groups, networks, organisations, and so on) and, due to the former, collective action is the result of the interlocking of individual projects -or agendas as I call them- into a single one (see **Figure 2.1**). It is the interlocking of similar values, ideologies, and interests of actors that lead to the formation of networks that can support or resist the introduction of specific agendas within a social scenario. Networks thus play a crucial role in the creation of common agendas and the subsequent mobilisation of resources that can give origin to a policy process.



**Figure 2.1** Agency of actors and the creation of common agendas.  
Source: Own elaboration with ideas from Long (2001) and Van Dijk (1998).

The spaces where a ‘social interface’ can be studied are commonly referred to as “arenas” that are originated through the constant negotiation of actors’ interpretations of social reality. Long (2001: 242) defines ‘arenas’ as the “spaces in which contests over issues, claims, resources, values, meanings and representations take place; that is, they are sites of struggle within and across domains”. The concept of ‘arenas’ was important for this research to identify the actors that contributed to constitute the arena of Mexican tourism as well as to identify the range of resources deployed by them in situations of consensus or dispute. Considering the former, the exploration of this particular arena paid special attention to the identification of actors’ discrepancies in terms of values, interests, knowledge, and power in order to illustrate the use of different strategies –discursive, power, organising- at various levels (national, regional, local) over time.

It has to be noted that this research does not make the claim that the appearance of common agendas ensures the formation of a policy process. It is argued, rather, that the generation of agendas is seen as a necessary precondition for a policy process to become a reality. Nevertheless, previous to the materialisation of this process, different agendas have to enter into a negotiation process whereby different visions of ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’ in society are contested. **Figure 2.2** (see below) displays a visual representation of the constitution of an arena through the confrontation of actors’ agendas utilising the ‘resources’ available to attempt to influence, in their favour, the negotiations and outcomes derived from this process. Few (2002: 33) pointed out that “resources” enhance the ability of actors to order social interactions within an arena and that “they refer not only to personal skills and social connections, but also structural properties of social systems including discourses”. Based on some examples of actors’ resources proposed by Few (2002: 35), this research identified six types of resources employed by different actors in the arena of Mexican tourism: 1) access to information, 2) control over the flow of information, 3) group organisation, 4) forms of governance, 5) construction and reproduction of discourses, and 6) access to the decision-making table (see figure 2.2).



**Figure 2.2** Generation of a policy process.  
 Source: Own elaboration with ideas of Few (2002).

It is precisely in these scenarios of agendas’ disagreement identified by this research that the concept of ‘social interface’ acquired a special relevance. Attention is focused on describing the strategies and resources implemented by different actors that helped to shape the different stages of the policy process i.e. agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. For this purpose, four elements of the ‘social interface’ concept proposed by Long (2001: 69-72) are described throughout this thesis: 1) interlocking relationships and intentionalities; 2) the centrality of knowledge; 3) the clash of cultural paradigms, and; 4) the generation of power derived from struggles over meanings and strategic relationships.

The analysis of the ‘interlocking relationships and intentionalities’ interface is developed through the construction of a narrative about the development of Mexican tourism during the period 1930-1960 (chapter four). The formation of political networks surrounding the tourism sector and the construction of discourses aimed at establishing -and legitimising- a particular vision of the role of the state in tourism

development will be described. This analysis aims to portray how the political arena of tourism emerged, being continuously shaped and dominated by a group of actors close to the dominant political networks within the structures of the state. It is argued that this pattern of actions might have helped to consolidate a highly centralised policy-making system determining the degree of interaction between different actors and preventing the appearance of major conflicts within this arena. These organisational and discursive practices can reflect the main features of an enduring system of political negotiation in Mexico during those years that also permeated the actors' agendas surrounding the tourism arena.

The interface analysis concerned with the 'centrality of knowledge' will describe the construction of discourses that gave origin to the phases of agenda setting and the formulation of a tourism policy called *Centros Integralmente Planeados* (CIPs) in the 1960s (chapter five). The ideas of Deborah Stone (2002) to study public policy-making will contribute to this analysis focusing attention towards the discursive construction of social 'problems' by policy-makers preparing the political environment for the CIPs agenda setting. Stone (2002: 153) points out that 'problem definition' "is a matter of *representation* because every description of a situation is a portrayal from *only one* of many points of view...*it is strategic* because groups, individuals, and government agencies *deliberatively* and *consciously* fashion portrayals so as to promote their favoured course of action...representations of a problem are therefore *constructed to win* the most people to one's side and the most leverage over one's opponent" (my emphasis in italics). These representations of problems might have led to the construction of purposive discourses that supported the idea of the need of the state to intervene more actively in tourism development tasks. The construction and reproduction of the necessary 'knowledge' within these discourses (through the portrayal of symbols, numbers, causes, interests and decisions) seemed to be crucial to give an aura of legitimacy within this process creating room for manoeuvre for policy-makers to introduce the ideas behind the CIPs policy. This interface analysis will help to reflect not only on how these understandings were created but also how they were deliberately manipulated and reproduced as part of a political strategy aimed at controlling the tourism arena and the economic benefits derived from this activity. Above all, this analysis will be

useful to describe how the solution to the problems publicised through the discourses was carefully delivered through the CIPs policy proposal.

The interface analysis related to a ‘clash of cultural paradigms’ will be described in the process of implementation of the CIPs policy at the local level during the 1970s (chapter six). The case of Cancun is presented focusing attention on actors’ interactions within a specific context. Long (2001: 70) points out that this element of a social interface becomes necessary “to identify the conditions under which particular definitions of reality and visions of the *future* are upheld, to analyse the interplay of cultural and ideological oppositions, and to map out the ways in which bridging or distancing [...] ideologies [...] reproduce or transform themselves” (my emphasis in italics). Thus, this interface analysis will be concentrated on identifying the nature of the differences in actors’ worldviews (explicit and/or implicit) as well as the resources employed to establish a dominant representation of the situation. The ideas of Stevenson (2007) and Stevenson *et al* (2008) will assist in this analysis to trace the conflict of rationalities between different actors (i.e. policy-makers, implementers, locals, immigrants and so on) in the situations related to the implementation process. The organisational, power, and discursive strategies employed by CIPs supporters (policy-makers, implementers, entrepreneurs, and so on) to legitimate a socio-cultural discourse based on a representation of modernity through tourism development that characterised policy recipients as passive actors will be described. This discourse might have played a crucial role stressing the importance of the intervention from the state to resolve the problems related to underdevelopment given the supposed structural and organisational constraints of the local context. Thus, this authoritative discourse will be explored analysing how the actors outside the decision-making table were portrayed as ‘incapable’ to act and transform their reality without the implementation of the CIPs policy.

Likewise, the strategies adopted by the actors outside the decision-making table resisting this ideological intervention and accommodating their interests in the implementation process will be described. Despite the disadvantaged position of these actors in the negotiation process, the different strategies employed to create sufficient room for manoeuvre (especially through the knowledge of the local context) to forward their agendas into the realms of decision-making will be analysed. Irrespective of the apparent passivity of policy recipients, it is believed that these



actors were able to effectively internalise the intervention process exercising, to a certain extent, their agency according to the prevailing negotiating conditions of the arena. This interface analysis will reflect the negotiative nature of this process that was highly subjected to the interplay of the power relations between different actors at various levels (local, regional, national) that made it possible to bridge clearly differing cultural models within the CIPs project.

Finally, the interface analysis related to the generation of power as “the outcome of struggles over meanings and strategic relationships” will also be included in this research (chapter seven). In line with the argument of Long (2001), power is seen here as the result of a strategic negotiative process and not only restricted to the analysis of the control over the access to resources. Derived from the assumption that actors have the capability to develop strategies to create room for manoeuvre to forward their interests, this process “implies a degree of consent, a degree of negotiation and thus a degree of power, as manifested in the possibility of exerting some control, prerogative, authority, and capacity for action” (Ibid: 71). In this sense, the generation and exercise of power is analysed in this work through the examination of the interaction of actors at different levels (local, regional, national) during the period 1974-2011. For this purpose, the transformations of networks and discourses surrounding the tourism arena will be described focusing attention on the historical evolution of Cancun and the national tourism policy as the main points of reference.

With the objective of providing a chronological structure to this interface analysis, the Tourism Area Life Cycle model (TALC) of Butler (1980) will be utilised in chapter seven. This model helped this research to construct an interpretation of the social, political, economic and territorial development of Cancun over time. Based on the concept of ‘product life-cycle’ from business literature, the TALC proposes the existence of different development stages whereby a tourism destination -in this case Cancun- goes through its evolution. These phases are: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, and stagnation, followed by two possible development options, decline or rejuvenation. This model is utilised in this research not only due to its potential to locate the relevant events and factors that led to episodes of social transformation in this destination but also to illustrate the different interaction of actors’ agendas across levels. More importantly, the narrative constructed in this

chapter aims to reveal how power struggles were generated and how these continuously transformed the arena of Mexican tourism incorporating new actors, new discourses, new negotiations, new power structures and new policy-making practices.

It has to be noted that this research included two broad conceptual categories within these 'interface' analyses, these were: *structure* and *context*. Following the ideas of *Structuration* theory (Giddens, 1984) and the AOA, it is argued that all social actions -including those related to policy-making- are influenced and even constrained by the prevailing structural features. 'Structures' according to Long (2001: 62) "constitute an important set of reference points...constraining/enabling possibilities that feed into the further elaboration, negotiation, and confrontation of actors' projects". He argues that these 'structures' should not be seen as static but "as an extremely fluid of emergent properties that...are a product of the interlocking and/or the distantiating (*sic*) of various actors' projects" (Ibid). Considering the former, it can be said that 'structures' are created through the interplay of different actors' projects and they can enable and/or regulate social action. This research is interested in exploring the appearance of these points of reference (formal and informal) related to the tourism sector over time. An examination of the structural characteristics of the Mexican tourism arena was considered essential to shed some light on the different organisational arrangements that may served as complementary 'filters' in the negotiation processes. Moreover, the exploration of these arrangements, in the form of regulations, statutes, government policy platforms (formal), organisational culture, set boundaries or standards of acceptable behaviour (informal) and so on, helps this research to assess the extent of their influence moulding the CIPs policy-making process. It is important to note that despite the fact that 'structures' can help to shape what actors will consider doing, they do not always control or determine social action (Hall and Jenkins, 1995).

Last but not least, the important role that 'contexts' can play influencing policy-making activities is systematically stressed in this research. 'Context' is understood here as those internal and external economic, social, political and environmental factors that may have an effect -direct or indirect- on policy-making activities. It is argued that the examination of these contextual features is necessary to gain a better

understanding of why a particular policy-making process evolves in the way it does. As with 'structure', these contextual conditions can also affect actors' perceptions of social reality but they do not always determine final decisions. This research considered important to make a distinction between 'structure' and 'context' understanding the latter as those exogenous factors that can have an influence over the policy process. What is important to analyse from these contextual features is the extent of their influence supporting and/or constraining policy-making activities and the conditions of negotiation within a political arena. Some studies have emphasised the importance of analysing the contextual features in policy-making activities related to the tourism sector (cf. Saxena, 2005, Verbole, 2000) so as to reflect on the effects of these *vis-a-vis* policy outcomes. In this sense, this research decided to analyse these contextual features in different historical episodes with the main objective of identifying the main transformations from one period to another and, ultimately, to determine the possible effects within the CIPs policy-making process at the national, regional and local levels.

### **2.5A three-dimensional view of power**

'Power' is one of the most important and contested concepts in social sciences, but it has been routinely and conveniently overlooked in critical discussions of tourism (Church and Coles, 2007: I). As already mentioned in the previous section, 'power' within policy-making is normally associated with the control over the access to resources employed by different actors. However, this research was interested not only to reveal these strategies but also to describe how 'power' is actually generated and exercised, by whom, and to what end. The central question in the work of Steven Lukes (1974: 1) was: how to think about power theoretically and study it empirically? Early explanations of power in policy-making (1950s) were associated with an elitist vision assuming that 'power' was concentrated irremediably in the hands of a small ruling elite. This vision has been mainly linked with the work of C. Wright Mills (1956) that described this 'power elite' as "composed of men (*sic*) whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences" (Ibid: 3). This elitist perspective proposed that access to the decision-making table in policy-making activities was confined to a small group working under a common agenda. Policy-makers, in this sense, were portrayed as rarely responsive to the opinion and interests

of the general public employing strategies such as coercion, manipulation, and persuasion to secure compliance to final decisions that normally responded to the interests of a dominant group in society (Cudworth *et al*, 2007). This elitist notion of power was criticised principally by Robert Dahl (1961) proposing, rather, the adoption of a 'pluralist' vision where power should be seen distributed throughout society. Under a pluralist perspective, power relations were conceived as the result of the free competition of actors' agendas rejecting the elitist notion of a long-lasting stability of power structures in policy-making activities.

However, pluralism was highly criticised for centring the analysis of power through observable behaviour, decisions, and conflict. Bachrach and Baratz (1970) pointed out that pluralism clearly failed to explain how certain issues were maintained away from a political arena through decisions and non-decisions. This was an important consideration since "what is kept off the agenda is as much an expression of power as what is included" (Coles and Church, 2007: 20). Power, argued Bachrach and Baratz (1970) had a 'second face' unperceived by the pluralists and undetectable by their methods of enquiry (Lukes, 2005: 6). It is important to note that this 'second face' or 'two-dimensional view' brought the idea of the 'mobilisation of bias' into the discussion making it possible to conceive a link between actors' ideologies and their decisions and non-decisions. Despite the acknowledgment of the possibility of non-decision within policy-making, this two-dimensional view also centred the analysis of power through observable conflict (overt and covert). Bachrach and Baratz (1970: 49) wrote "if there is no conflict, overt and covert, the presumption must be that there is consensus on the prevailing allocation of values, in which case non-decision-making is impossible" (quoted by Lukes, 2005: 23). Thus, it is proposed in this two-dimensional perspective that if no grievances are identified within a policy-making process, a consensus must be declared under the assumption that the exercise of power is not affecting any interest.

However, as Lukes (2005: 28) pointed out "to assume that the absence of grievance equals genuine consensus is simply to rule out the possibility of *false* or *manipulated* consensus by definitional fiat" (my emphasis in italics). And he asks, "is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they

see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial?” (Ibid). Due to the conceptual and practical limitations to study the generation and exercise of power by the pluralist and the two-dimensional perspectives, Lukes (1974, 2005) instead proposed the adoption of a three-dimensional view. This perspective, according to him, considered the different ways in which potential issues are maintained away from the negotiations in policy-making through the operation of social forces, institutional practices and/or individual decisions.

Unlike the pluralist and two-dimensional perspectives, a three-dimensional view considers that, even in the absence of an observable conflict, power can actually be exercised. With the aim of explaining the former, Lukes introduced the notion of ‘latent conflict’ which was defined as “a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the *real interests* of those they exclude” (Lukes, 2005: 28, emphasis original). Although such a conflict can never be materialised, it is argued that this possibility operates at an ideological level moulding people’s thoughts and desires contrary to their ‘real’ interests constraining their final decisions in different scenarios of negotiation. In this sense, “non-decisions and latent conflicts provide evidence for the existence of the third dimension of power” (Hall, 2007: 257). Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the challenges that a three-dimensional view poses for the study of the exercise of power; these are: to make visible this kind of power, to identify what are the ‘real’ interests of those in an apparent disadvantaged position (powerless), and to explore the different ways in which their perceptions are shaped to prevent the appearance of a conflict within a political arena. This research will attempt to evaluate the usefulness of this perspective to analyse power as well as to identify its main limitations in practical terms. What is important to emphasise, however, is that a three-dimensional view of power can help to analyse a scenario of structural dominance influencing and even constraining actors’ agency as well as to recognise the relational nature of power through the formation and coordination of networks (Hall, 2007).

<b>Power perspective</b>	<b>Pluralist view</b>	<b>Two-dimensional view</b>	<b>Three-dimensional view</b>
Focus	Behaviour, decision-making, key issues,  Observable (overt) conflict, (subjective)  Interests seen as policy preferences revealed by political participation	Decision-making and non-decision-making, issues and potential issues.  Observable (overt or covert) conflict, (subjective)  Interests, seen as policy preferences or grievances	Decision-making and control over political agenda (not necessarily through decisions)  Issues and potential issues, observable (over or covert), and latent conflict,  Subjective and real interests

**Table 2.1** Summary of the perspectives of power.  
Source: Lukes (2005: 29).

Since the main interest of this research is to gain a better understanding of how dominant groups and ideologies operated surrounding the arena of Mexican tourism over time, the three-dimensional view of power is adopted under the assumption that it allows a greater reflection of decisions, non-decisions, and political structures within the CIPs policy process. It is argued that, through the lenses of a three-dimensional perspective of power, it is possible to identify the issues that were not included within the policy agenda determining the course of action within the negotiations. This was an important consideration during the course of this research since, as argued by Edelman (1988), it is believed that real power in policy-making stems from the ability of actors to build the political arena and shape the conditions of negotiations within it. It has to be noted that the studies of tourism policy-making processes under a Lukesian thinking are relatively limited (Church and Coles, 2007: 23) and, due to the former, this research attempts to contribute to the discussion of power in tourism with a little-explored perspective. Therefore, the analysis of power exercise throughout this thesis focused attention on describing the means by which the political arena of Mexican tourism and the CIPs policy process have been controlled providing examples of observable and latent conflict episodes over time.

It is important to mention at this point that ‘power’ is considered here as “both dynamic and multidimensional, changing according to context, circumstance, and interest, its expressions and forms can range from domination and resistance to collaboration and transformation” (Veneklasen and Miller, 2002: 39). Considering

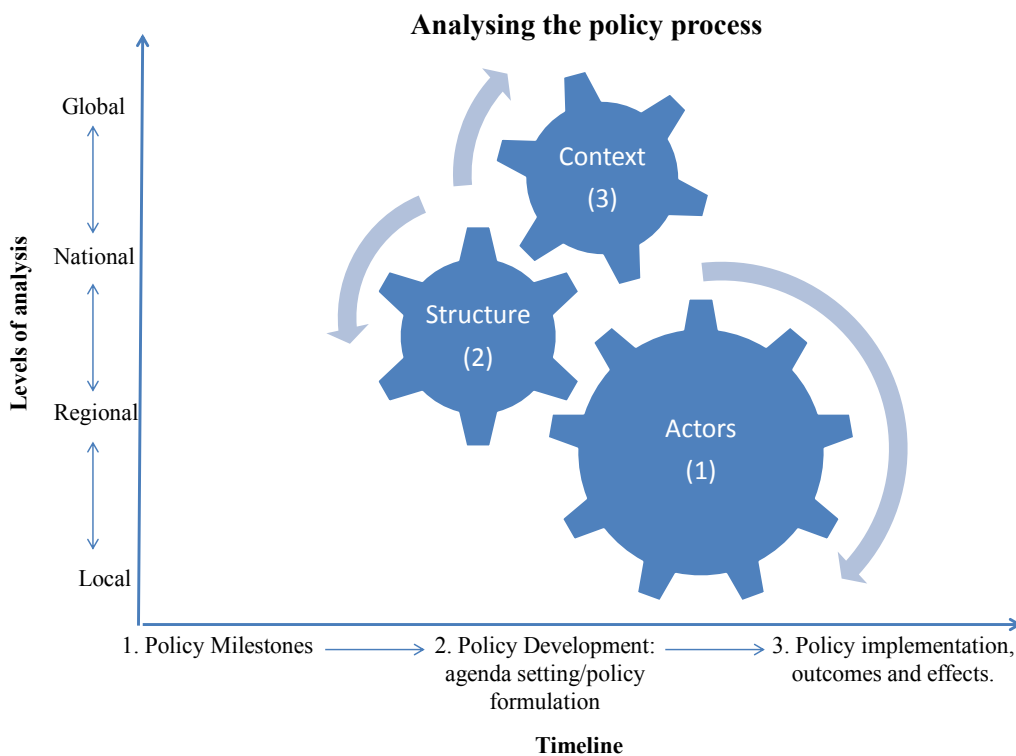
the former, this research is interested in describing the exercise of power related to issues of domination and control (power over) and the issues of actors' agency (power to). The analysis of power exercise in this research, ultimately, reflected how potential conflicts were maintained away from the decision-making table, how CIPs political agenda was controlled and by whom, and how different structures (formal and informal) delineated the contours of final decisions adopted by those in the position to exercise a certain degree of power within the CIPs policy process.

## **2.6 Analytical approach**

The analytical approach of this research was designed taking into account the theoretical and conceptual considerations explained in the previous sections of this chapter. **Figure 2.3** illustrates the principal elements that are considered here to analyse a policy process. The analytical core of this approach lies in the examination of three elements within this process: 'actors', 'structure', and 'context'.

The 'actors' element considers an analysis of the constellation of actors surrounding this particular policy process. As already mentioned in this chapter, actors may appear in a variety of forms exercising a certain degree of agency to interpret the situations they experience and to organise appropriate responses. Special attention will be paid to describe the formation of networks and the generation of particular agendas aimed to influence policy-making activities. Likewise, an analysis of the mobilisation of resources by these actors is proposed in order to reflect how different forms of power were generated and exercised in specific spaces of negotiation. This element, ultimately, will centre its attention to identify the interactions between these actors in different historical episodes within the arena of Mexican tourism. The 'structure' element, as its name indicates, aims to investigate those formal and informal policy-making structures that can influence and/or constrain this process. The main objective is to explore the inner workings of the structures by which a policy emerges. Likewise, this element proposes to analyse the historical evolution of these structures in order to gain a better understanding of the main transformations they experienced over time. It is believed here that these structures can play a crucial role in policy-making activities serving as points of reference when particular decisions and actions are adopted. In this sense, an analysis of their operation in the policy process is considered indispensable. Finally, the 'context' element suggests a

systematic analysis of the exogenous factors that include the economic, social, political and environmental conditions surrounding the policy process. The examination of these features, it is argued, can help to identify factors of continuity, change, and conflict that might have contributed to mould not only the policy process but also the political arena under analysis. Considering that the evolution of a policy process may depend on the combination of different factors, the analysis of these features becomes crucial to determine the degree of their influence in the whole process.



**Figure 2.3** Analytical approach to study the policy process.  
Source: Own elaboration.

It has to be noted that the description of the interaction of these three elements (actors, structure, and context) is framed under a multi-level analysis taking into consideration four different scales: global, national, regional, and local. It is important to mention, however, that the disposition in this figure may not necessarily reflect how the interaction of related actors, structures, and contexts occurs on the ground. The main purpose of including a multi-level analysis thus to identify the connections between these levels as well as to reveal the degree of their participation within the policy process and its related decision-making activities. The horizontal axis of this approach, on the other hand, proposes an evolutionary analysis of the



policy process including three main elements in the timeline: policy milestones, policy development and policy implementation. The decision of dividing this timeline obeys to the need of making a clear distinction between the different stages of the policy process i.e. agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy performance. The first element analyses the embryonic period of the policy agenda focusing attention on exploring how the political arena under analysis was brought to life. The analysis of this element is considered essential in this research to gain a better understanding of how the policy agenda was constructed and how it contributed to give origin to the policy process. The second element is considered here as the stage of agenda setting-policy formulation. The interest in this element is to explore the events surrounding the emergence of the policy. Special attention should be paid to analysing the different resources employed by actors to develop a political agenda and how policy is formulated and delivered to the public. The final element investigates the issues related to policy implementation and policy outcomes. Finally, it is important to note that the division proposed in this approach does not suggest that the policy process proceeds in a sequential and unproblematic way. The difficulty in distinguishing separately the different phases of the policy process due to its chaotic nature is widely recognised in this research. The objective is, rather, to establish a sense of order to the research enquiry framing the explanations within a historical perspective. It is believed that the analysis of all the elements considered in this approach can help to reveal important information of the policy process. This approach should be seen, ultimately, as an attempt from this research to construct an analytical tool to better understand the processes surrounding policy-making activities.

## **2.7 Conclusions**

The information contained in this chapter discusses the main conceptual and analytical foundations of this research. In doing so, the first part of this chapter was focused on describing the perspective adopted by this research to analyse policy-making i.e. conceiving it as a socially-constructed, negotiated, experiential and meaning creating process (Long, 2001). It was said that policy-making should not be seen as a straightforward/unproblematic series of events that ranges from the formulation to the execution of policies but as a complex, dynamic, and interactive process that involves a constant negotiation-reformulation of interests and objectives

between the different actors involved in it. Considering policy-making as a process implies a close examination of the exercise of power in the different political arenas to gain a better understanding of how policies emerge. The former should include an analysis of relevant information related to this process describing how policies are framed, what is included and excluded in the exercise, which actors and interests dominate within the negotiations, and what is the final outcome derived from these power struggles. For this purpose, the need to utilise a descriptive approach to analyse the processes related to the CIPs policy so as to reflect on the effects that choice, power, perception, and values have on policy-making activities was identified (Hall and Jenkins, 1995).

A social constructionist approach was adopted -the AOA, developed by Norman Long (2001) - in light of its potential to examine how 'problems' and 'solutions' are constructed by different actors within these processes and how different political arenas are continuously reshaped through the prevailing power relations. As Ingram *et al* (2007), Long (1988, 1992, 2001), Schneider and Ingram (1993), Stevenson (2007), Stevenson *et al* (2008) and Stone (2002), this research agrees with the claim that these issues have received little attention in related studies of policy-making despite their influence on the whole process. It is believed here that approaches such as the AOA can not only contribute to enrich the discussion of the activities of policy-making but also to broaden the horizons of enquiry in this subject.

Considering that a theory of agency is central to generate descriptions of the policy-making process, the AOA focuses attention to analyse the interaction of different factors stressing actors' 'knowledgeability' to interpret policy-making interventions and internalise them and actors' 'capability' to act according to the situation. The concept of 'social interface' within the AOA was recognised with the potential to promote a reflection on how dominant discourses are created, transformed, and challenged by related actors within a policy-making process. Since it was stated that one of the main interests of this research is to explore the construction and reproduction of discourses surrounding the Mexican tourism sector, the concept of 'social interface' acquires special relevance assisting in the construction of arguments within this thesis. The different analyses of the elements of the 'social interface' concept included in this research (interlocking relationships and intentionalities; the centrality of knowledge; the clash of cultural paradigms, and; the

generation of power derived from struggles over meanings and strategic relationships) aim to promote a reflection of how multiple interests were confronted within this arena as well as how different strategies were put into action by different actors in order to successfully accommodate their objectives within the policy process. Above all, these analyses aim to reveal the range of resources employed by these actors - organisational, discursive, power- that allowed them to exert a degree of control over the arena of tourism and to prevent the appearance of important conflicts within the negotiations, especially in the phases of agenda setting and policy formulation. It was mentioned that the exploration of power exercise within the processes surrounding the CIPs policy in this research will consider the three-dimensional approach suggested by Steven Lukes (1974, 2005). Taking into account the limitations of pluralist and behaviourist views of power, a Lukesian perspective was considered more appropriate to reflect on issues related to power exercise. It was argued that a three-dimensional view can more effectively help to investigate how potential conflicts were kept away from the negotiations and decisions in the establishment of a particular vision of tourism development in Mexico, how the CIPs policy agenda was controlled and by whom, and how different structures (formal and informal) influenced the decisions of policy-makers, policy recipients, and related actors in this process.

The last part of this chapter presented the analytical approach developed by this research. It was mentioned that this approach was designed incorporating all the conceptual and theoretical elements described throughout this chapter. This interactive process was considered the central unit of analysis within this approach focusing its attention on identifying and communicating relevant information of a policy-making process. The next chapter provides a discussion of the methodological strategies employed by this research for the collection and analysis of data integrated in this thesis.

## **Chapter 3. Research Strategies and Methods**

### **3.1 Chapter outline**

This chapter presents the methodological strategies selected for the analysis of the processes surrounding the CIPs policy process. It provides a description of the main components of the design proposed by this research including the method of enquiry, the philosophical foundations, and the methods selected to carry out the data collection and data analysis. The main objective of this chapter is to help the reader to gain a better understanding of the plan implemented to investigate the theoretical postulates discussed in chapter two. For this purpose, it includes detailed information about the different research phases describing the main challenges encountered during this process. Above all, the information contained in this chapter aims to illustrate the key methodological elements considered, how they fit together, and how they assisted this research to produce meaningful information to answer the research questions proposed.

The chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section justifies the adoption of a qualitative approach in this research. It is explained that, through a qualitative approach, a greater reflection of the political dimension of tourism as well as the issues surrounding policy-making can be achieved. The second section describes the main philosophical foundations of this research. Attention is centred to explain the paradigm I adopted as well as my ontological and epistemological position that helped to give direction and guidance to the entire research process. The third section describes the main strategy of enquiry employed i.e. case study. The details of the selected case (Mexico) are explained as well as the focus process (CIPs policy) and the implementation case (Cancun). The fourth section provides a detailed account of the different fieldwork stages carried out by this research. This section contains information regarding the different activities developed throughout three main periods. The fifth section describes the main research methods employed by this research to collect data i.e. semi-structured interviews and documental research. It includes details regarding the process of the selection of informants as well as the strategies to locate sources of information in relevant documents. The sixth section describes the strategy to analyse collected data. The objective of this section is to

explain how the general foundations of Grounded Theory assisted in the analysis and what the main outcomes derived from this exercise were. Finally, the seventh section discusses the ethical considerations and provides a description of the main challenges encountered throughout the research process.

### **3.2 A qualitative approach to understand policy-making processes**

Qualitative research is oriented towards the analysis of concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity starting from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts (Flick, 2009: 21). This research widely recognises that both qualitative and quantitative approaches have advantages and disadvantages in the process of conducting research, but the decision to adopt one over another ultimately relies on "the nature of the research topic, the possible limitations and the underlying theoretical paradigm that informs the research project" (Jennings, 2001: 127). It is important to note that "qualitative research is as much a way of conceptualising and approaching social enquiry as it is a way of doing research" (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004: 5).

Generally speaking, qualitative research should normally place special emphasis on gaining a better understanding of the social world from the perspective of its participants, conceiving social reality as the result of interaction and interpretation. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) pointed out that there are three key enduring features of qualitative research; these are: *contextuality*, *interpretation* and *subjectivity*. In this sense, qualitative research implies the study of social phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense and recognising the importance of meaning throughout this process. Considering the rapid social changes and the development of new social contexts in recent times, traditional positivistic approaches are being increasingly challenged due to their inability to develop insightful explanations about these transformations (Castillo and Lozano, 2006). Qualitative research is seen thus as a response to the former, gaining greater recognition among researchers in light of its potential to address these problems providing alternative interpretations. The main advantage of adopting a qualitative approach, according to Denscombe (2010: 109), is that it allows the researcher to make any pertinent adjustments as the research progresses. Given the exploratory nature of a qualitative enquiry, the flexibility and

adaptability features become crucial to effectively deal with the circumstances encountered throughout any research process.

It has to be noted that the main reason behind my decision to adopt a qualitative approach for this research was its potential to uncover and elucidate the political dimensions and tensions of tourism policy-making (Belsky, 2004). Since the main objective of this work was to discuss these processes, this researcher recognised the potential advantages that a qualitative approach could offer in terms of allowing a greater reflection of issues related to the exercise of power and the agency of actors. These issues have rarely been discussed in related research, the political dimension of tourism is normally overlooked (Bramwell, 2005, 2006; Britton, 1982; Elliot, 1983, 1997; Hall, 1994; Hall and Jenkins, 1995; Hollinshead, 1999; Henderson, 2002, 2003; Richter 1989, 2008) devoting much attention to investigate the practical business and marketing of this industry as well as its economic costs and benefits (Belsky, 2004). Not surprisingly, tourism research has relied heavily upon deductive research designs, collecting and analysing data under quantitative frameworks (Connell and Lowe, 1997). However, qualitative approaches have progressively gained more space in tourism research derived from the recognition of the need to adopt new forms of enquiry that can generate alternative interpretations of the issues surrounding this social phenomenon (Chambers, 2007; Hobson, 2003; Tribe and Airey, 2007). Assuming that many aspects of human behaviour and complex sets of interactions in policy-making activities are difficult to be dimensioned through a quantitative research strategy, a qualitative approach seemed to better fit to achieve those objectives. Therefore, I embarked on the task to develop a methodology primarily based on an inductive strategy aimed to gain a better understanding of the political implications of tourism policy-making focusing attention on the process itself.

What are the main implications for a research like this in adopting a qualitative methodology? According to Connell and Lowe (1997), the design of a qualitative methodology for research should contain, at least, three fundamental characteristics: firstly, it should adopt a holistic view of the social world i.e. all factors should be considered -internal and external- as much as possible in the process of collecting and analysing data in order to *construct* a broader picture of the phenomenon under study; secondly, it should adopt a philosophy of naturalistic enquiry i.e. the social

world is conceived as the result of *multiple interpretations* and constructions of reality; this conception should also permeate the processes of collection and analysis of data, and; thirdly, the data collected during the investigation should be analysed under an inductive approach i.e. emphasis should be paid to the *production of narratives* rather than on testing preconceived hypotheses. Considering the former information, I followed three main methodological guidelines: 1) the social world was conceived as a composition of multiple realities resulting from a continuous process of construction and reconstruction by related actors; primacy was given to the interpretations of these actors although the role of the researcher's interpretation was also widely recognised; 2) actors' interpretations were dimensioned according to their content and source locating their constructions in a wider social picture, and; 3) the formulation of conclusions were derived from the identification of key themes during the stages of collection and analysis of data. In implementing a qualitative methodology, I was convinced that "there are no stories there waiting to be told and no certain truths waiting to be recorded, there are only stories yet to be constructed" (Denzin, 1997: 220; quoted by Phillimore and Goodson, 2004: 17).

### **3.3 Philosophical foundations**

Paradigm, ontology, epistemology, and methodology are essential components of any research project. I recognised the importance of including a brief section within this chapter explaining the main philosophical foundations of this research. It has to be noted that these foundations became crucial not only to give direction throughout the enquiry process but also in shaping this researcher's notions of reality and truth. This process implied the collapse of preconceptions, the recognition of alternative ways of viewing the social world and the establishment of a relationship between the subject under analysis and myself.

To start with, I adopted a "constructivist" paradigm that conceives the social world as a creation of the human mind. A constructivist researcher believes that, in order to understand this world of meaning, one must interpret it (Schwandt, 1994: 118). It has to be noted that this paradigm has its theoretical foundations in the intellectual traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology. In line with these traditions, it is assumed that knowledge is the result of human activity rather than an entity waiting to be explained. In this sense, it relies on the interpretations that people hold about a

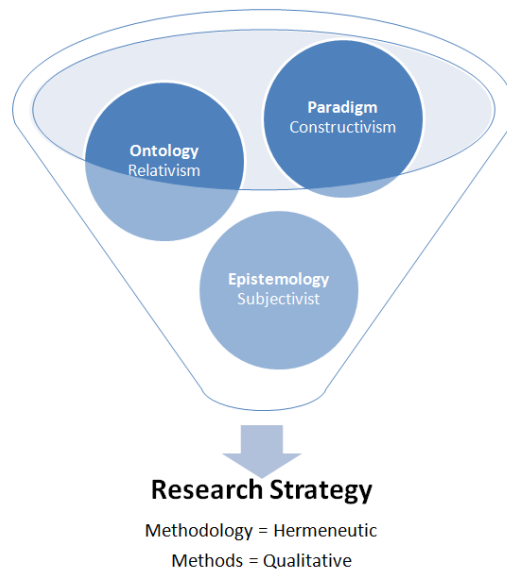
particular social situation. According to Guba (1990: 7; quoted by Pernecky, 2007: 221) “the aim of constructivism is not to predict, control or transform the “real” world but to reconstruct the world at the only point at which it exists –‘in the mind of constructors’”. Social reality is seen thus as “something that is constantly being produced and reproduced; something that exists only as long as people persist in creating it through their everyday actions, words and beliefs” (Denscombe, 2010: 119). Secondly, it has to be noted that this research was based on “relativist” ontology. This type of ontology, according to Pernecky (2007: 220) “claims that there are multiple, social constructed realities which are ungoverned by natural or causal laws”. As the constructivist paradigm, relativist ontology stresses the importance of interpretation and recognises that people’s constructions are dependent on the knowledge acquired through experience as well as the contextual features in which social interactions occur. In this sense, relativism proposes that there are no absolute truths but interpretations of reality that are subjected to a particular frame of reference. “Realities are apprehend-able in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature [...] and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 110-111).

Thirdly, this research is grounded in a subjective epistemology assuming that a researcher cannot adopt an objective position when it comes to interpretation. The development of an intimate relationship between the researcher and the topic under study makes it very difficult to disregard the influence of the researcher’s own judgements in the way in which explanations are constructed. This work was based on the understanding that the processes surrounding policy-making are constantly interpreted by different actors constructing multiple versions of reality. In this sense, these constructions of social reality are assumed to be subjective i.e. they depend on creations in the mind of individuals and knowledge is then reproduced, transformed, and/or reinforced through the interaction of other individuals’ constructions. Thus, the claim of producing “objective” knowledge is conceived here as problematic. The belief is that the researcher cannot be separated from the world he/she wants to investigate and, therefore, the observations and explanations are inevitably subjected to his/her own preconceptions/prejudices of the social phenomenon under analysis. Considering the former, epistemological reflexivity comes to play a crucial role



within a research process drawing the attention of the researcher making him/her conscious about his/her own preconceptions and positionality (Jackson, 2009). A researcher should not be seen as an objective, neutral/value-free actor but, rather, as an active agent that inevitably adopts a position and this is thoroughly reflected in the research. For this particular case, I paid special attention to the cultural, social, and gender characteristics of the informants of this study as well as my own during the interviewing and analytical process. My Mexican *meztizo* middle-class background enabled me to establish a natural cultural proximity with all the respondents being able to distinguish across social domains and contexts. In this sense, I was fully conscious of the role played by my ideological repertoire (composed by my own beliefs and values) within the construction of the different narratives presented in this thesis.

Fourthly, as already mentioned in a previous section of this chapter, this research developed a constructivist methodology adopting a qualitative approach. The main objective of this methodological design was to identify the variety of constructions about the CIPs policy-making process attempting to build a narrative derived from them. Attention was focused on reflecting the ways in which research informants made sense of the world through their actions and interpretations. This research methodology was designed, ultimately, to analyse how chosen informants made sense of their actions and decisions with a retrospective approach. Last but not least, the methods chosen by this research are closely interconnected with the methodological proposal. Research methods, according to Pernecky (2007: 221) are “the appropriate tools for collecting and analyzing (*sic*) data”. However, Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 353) said that qualitative methods under a constructivist position cannot be seen as simple tools for the treatment of data in research but “interpretative practices [...] for producing empirical materials as well as theoretical interpretations of the world”. Considering the former, this research employed two main qualitative methods to collect information regarding the processes surrounding CIPs policy, these were: semi-structured interviews with key informants and documental research (discussed later in this chapter). **Figure 3.1** summarises the methodological process followed by this research in the design of the strategy of enquiry. It illustrates all philosophical elements discussed in this section.



**Figure 3.1** Methodological process.  
Source: Adapted from Pernecky (2007: 222).

### 3.4 Strategy of enquiry: a case study approach

In order to look at the processes surrounding policy-making in the tourism arena, a “case study” approach was adopted as the main foundation of the methodological design of this research. As Hall and Jenkins (1995) noted, the adoption of a case study approach to study policy-making processes has been perceived appropriate to gain a better understanding of how these evolve over time. According to Yin (2009: 18) a case study is:

*“An empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context...[it] copes with the technicality distinctive situation in which there will be many variables of interest and data points, and as one result [it] relies on multiple sources of evidence..., and as another result [it] benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis”*

Considering this definition, it can be said that a case study approach aims to look at a particular phenomenon recognising the relevance that prevailing contextual conditions have upon that specific case. Unlike controlled experiments where the subject of study is normally detached from its context, a case study approach supposes the examination of the development of the relationship between the selected case and its context. Moreover, Yin’s definition also claims that a case study approach allows the incorporation of a great variety of data collection and analysis techniques as well as multiple sources of evidence. In this sense, it was recognised

here that a case study “is not limited to being a data collection tactic alone or even a design feature alone” (Stoecker, 1991; quoted by Yin, 2009: 18) but that it has the potential to become a useful tool to obtain insightful information about the circumstances surrounding that case. What is important to emphasise is that, through a case study approach, there is a possibility to reflect broadly not only on how things actually happen but also, and perhaps more importantly, on why (Denscombe, 2010: 182-183).

Despite all apparent advantages that the adoption of a case study approach supposes, it is important to note that a number of concerns have been raised by some researchers about the appropriateness of using this approach within a research project. These concerns include issues related to the difficulty to generalise, the difficulty to extrapolate the findings of the research to other similar cases, a great reliance upon historical facts, and its descriptive chronological nature. However, as Gerring (2007: 20) noted, one of the main purposes of utilising a case study approach is precisely “to shed light on a larger class of cases”. Yet, to what extent the findings from a single case can be used to inform other similar cases? I acknowledge that the answer to such a question depends, in great measure, on the criteria utilised to select the case from a universe of potential cases. This implies to justify why the selected case is worthy of analysis, whether because the particular characteristics of the case seemed to be representative of that group and/or because it may constitute a special case presenting a number of particularities. In any case, the objective of a research that employs a case study approach (such as this) must be focused on the identification of specific features within the case enabling the researcher to gain insights that can be informative for other similar cases, in a way that it permits him/her to conduct the research process in greater detail (Corbera, 2005).

Taking into consideration the information provided in the previous paragraphs, this research decided to select Mexico as the case study to investigate the processes surrounding policy-making activities in the arena of tourism. As already mentioned in chapter one, Mexico was chosen mainly due to my cultural proximity to this country. Furthermore, Mexico was identified as a suitable example of a developing country that designed and implemented a tourism policy as part of a national development strategy in the 1960s. Taking into consideration that it emerged as a tourism power derived from state support for the expansion of tourism activities

through the CIPs policy, it was believed that this case could effectively illustrate the issues surrounding policy-making in this particular arena. The next sections include the details of the case study selected as well as a description of the fieldwork stages and methods employed throughout the research process.

### *3.4.1 Mexico from the perspective of tourism*

Mexico is widely recognised as one of the leading nations in the tourism sector internationally (Cothran and Cothran, 1998). Over the years, Mexico has been able to consolidate a reputation in the tourism market being within the list of the top 25 most visited countries. According to the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), in 2009, Mexico ranked 10th in tourism arrivals reporting a flux of 22.6 million international visitors per year, and ranked 17th in receipts of foreign exchange reaching 13.8 million dollars (UNWTO, 2010: 6-8, see **Table 3.1**). Likewise, the Mexican Tourism Promotion Council (CPTM) stated in 2008 that the tourism sector in Mexico alone contributed on average to 7.7% of the national GDP, 5.5% of the national employment, and 2.5% of the total of foreign investment constituting the fourth largest source of foreign revenue after oil sales, remittances, and foreign investment in this country (BBVA, 2011: 38).

<b>Rank World 2009</b>	<b>Tourist arrivals in 2009 (millions of people)</b>	<b>% Variation 09/08</b>	<b>% 2009</b>
1. France	74.2	-6.3	8.4
2. United States	54.9	-5.3	6.2
3. Spain	52.2	-8.7	5.9
4. China	50.9	-4.1	5.8
5. Italy	43.2	1.2	4.9
6. United Kingdom	28	-7	3.2
7. Turkey	25.5	2	2.9
8. Germany	24.2	-2.7	2.8
9. Malaysia	23.6	7.2	2.7
<b>10. Mexico</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>-5.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>
11. Austria	21.4	-2.6	2.4

**Table 3.1** UNWTO World Ranking 2009.

There is no doubt that the historical expansion of tourism activities throughout the country in traditional destinations (such as *Acapulco*, *Ciudad Juárez*, *Mazatlán*, *Mexico City*, *Monterrey*, *Puerto Vallarta*, *Tijuana*, *Veracruz*, and so on) as well as in more contemporaneous destinations (such as *Cancun*, *Ixtapa-Zihutanejo*, *Huatulco*, *Loreto*, *Los Cabos*, and so on) has played a decisive role in the consolidation of these figures. However, it is important to note that the growth of the tourism industry in Mexico was far from accidental i.e. it has been the result of the decisions made by the state to provide planning, financial, and managerial support for the development of this sector as it happened in other countries such as Egypt, France, Spain, Thailand and so on just to mention some examples.

According to Clancy (1999) and Truett and Truett (1982), prior to the 1960s, the Mexican tourism industry was an economic activity mainly driven by the forces of the domestic and the international market with a minor intervention from the state. However, the information of some studies such as Berger (2006), Espinosa (2004), Merrill (2009) and this research itself maintains that the historical development of this sector has indeed largely depended on the profound involvement of the state through different actors closely related to the structures of the government (see chapter four for more details). Thus, although tourism development in Mexico during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s seemed to be an economic sector mainly managed by private hands, the profound involvement of some government actors in tourism through joint ventures with private capital as well as formal interventions from the state (legal and financial) played a decisive role in the growth of this activity bringing to life renowned destinations such as *Acapulco*. However, it was not until the 1960s that the Mexican government made more evident its interest to expand its powers in this sector. The formal establishment of the Department of Tourism and the creation of the Tourism Development Fund (FOGATUR) in the late 1950s prepared the political ground for the introduction of a long-term strategy for tourism development financed by the state for the first time in Mexico (see chapter five for a detailed discussion). Thus, a tourism policy emerged in the late 1960s called “*Centros Integralmente Planeados*” (State-Planned Tourism Destinations, CIPs acronym in Spanish) with the primary objective of building five tourism destinations on the Mexican coasts (*Cancun*, *Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo*, *Los Cabos*, *Loreto* and *Huatulco*).

Adopting a multifaceted role, the Mexican state embarked on the task not only to build these resorts, but also to operate, promote, and finance the necessary facilities and tourism activities within them. This decision represented a watershed moment in terms of tourism development in Mexico as it represented the major public investment proposed by the government in this sector until then. Unlike the emblematic Spanish case of tourism development that emanated from a political system based on a dictatorship (Francisco Franco 1936-1973), the Mexican experience seemed to be operating under a more contested political structure, at least discursively. The main difference between the Spanish and the Mexican case, however, was that tourism development in the former largely depended on the extensive rail network in Europe whereas on the latter it depended on the travels made by car and airplane (see Walton, 2009 for a detailed discussion).

The main question that arises is: why the Mexican government had an interest in expanding its powers in tourism adopting a developmental role? The government's discourse focused its attention to stress the economic and development rationale behind this decision constructing an aura of legitimacy due to the indisputable nature of developmental arguments. The formulation of CIPs policy helped to transform the role of the Mexican government in tourism development consolidating a more active and interventionist role. The implementation of CIPs policy in different contexts during the 1970s and 1980s generated a myriad of social, economic, and political implications that led to the reconfiguration of the structures and networks within the Mexican tourism industry for the rest of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries.

According to figures produced by the National Tourism Development and Infrastructure Fund (FONATUR), the destinations derived from the CIPs policy altogether constituted an offer of 40,580 hotel rooms, received 46% of the total number of international tourists, and are responsible for 54% of foreign revenue generated by the tourism industry in Mexico (FONATUR, 2005). However, it has to be noted that the CIPs destination that has been able to expand and grow the most since its creation in 1974 is Cancun (Brenner, 2005: 147). To put this in perspective, Cancun receives an average of four million tourists per year whereas, in contrast, *Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo* and *Los Cabos* receive less than five hundred thousand, and *Loreto* and *Huatulco* less than two hundred thousand (FONATUR, 2007). It can be

said that the differences in growth and performance between these destinations are the result of the combination of a number of different economic, social, political, environmental and cultural factors determining their historical evolution. However, it is clear that the implementation of CIPs policy played a crucial role in the expansion of tourism activities in Mexico transforming this country into a well-known world tourism destination. Considering the relevance that CIPs policy has had in terms of tourism development in Mexico, this research focussed its efforts to analyse the policy-making activities behind the CIPs formulation process as well as to explore one of the destinations derived from this policy to examine the processes surrounding the implementation phase. The main interest is to investigate whether Mexican tourism can be considered as an illustrative case of state-led development. The next section describes the generalities of the CIPs policy as the focus process of this research including a brief description of the selected case to illustrate and discuss the processes related to the implementation of this policy: Cancun.

#### *3.4.2 Focus process: CIPs policy-making*

The process chosen by this research to illustrate the issues surrounding tourism policy-making in Mexico was the policy called “*Centros Integralmente Planeados*” (State-Planned Tourism Destinations, CIPs acronym in Spanish). As already mentioned, this policy was formulated during the 1960s as part of a strategy by the Mexican government to play a more active role in the promotion and expansion of this sector throughout this country. The rationale behind this initiative stressed its economic and developmental benefits for the country portraying it as indispensable to “improve the socio-economic conditions of the country and, more particularly, of those regions that have been historically marginalised from national development” (FONATUR, 1982: 12; my translation). There were three elements underpinning the construction of the supportive discourse: 1) it was stated that tourism could help the national economy generating employment; 2) it was claimed that through tourism, regional development could be achieved in economically depressed regions and; 3) it was said that tourism could help to produce foreign revenue and generate a flux of foreign investment to the country. This policy was also portrayed as a demographic strategy aimed to re-direct the rural immigration flows from the cities towards less populated areas of the country. Under this discursive construction, the main objective of CIPs policy, as its name suggested, was the construction of tourism destinations

from zero under a rigorous planning approach. Collins (1979) pointed out that the planning framework embraced within the CIPs policy had the basic premise of preventing the appearance of social and economic problems (e.g. high inflation, uncontrolled growth, high rates of criminality, slums proliferation, insufficiency of public services and so on) experienced in traditional unplanned destinations such as *Acapulco* and *Mazatlán* among others.

The processes surrounding the phases of agenda setting and policy formulation of the CIPs policy led toward the appearance of a political arena where different power struggles were generated between different political networks aiming to maintain control over the governmental apparatus (see chapter five for a detailed discussion). It has to be noted that, despite the large political and social implications that the introduction of a policy of such a scale provoked, the issues surrounding CIPs policy-making have received scant attention in related literature. The former can be understood due to the lack of recognition of the political dimension of tourism as well as the predominance of economic-oriented analyses for the policy outcomes. The government institution that has devoted the largest budget to research local effects within the CIPs destinations has been FONATUR. Through multiple studies, FONATUR has produced information regarding the performance of these destinations in terms of tourist arrivals, number of hotel rooms, flight arrivals, produced foreign revenue, employment numbers, demographic growth, public investment, and so on. This information has principally served FONATUR to calculate some of the social and economic effects produced in these destinations over time. Above all, these statistics have helped CIPs advocates to reinforce the discourse behind tourism development justifying this decision and its continuity through similar interventions in other parts of the country. The assessment of the Mexican government of the outcomes of this policy in CIPs destinations is reflected in the following statement:

*“The beneficial contribution of CIPs policy, and more particularly of tourism development, in macroeconomic and microeconomic terms as well as social development terms in the country has no discussion...no doubt that this decision has allowed Mexico to be fully incorporated into modernity” (FONATUR, 2005: 6; my translation).*

However, the findings obtained in other academic investigations exploring the effects of CIPs destinations have challenged the optimistic assessment publicised by the



Mexican government through FONATUR's claims (cf. Arnaiz and Dachary, 1992; Brenner, 2005; Clancy, 1999, 2001a, 2001b; Espinosa, 2004; García-Fuentes, 1979; Hiernaux-Nicolas, 1989, 2003; Jiménez, 1992; Jiménez and Sosa, 2005; Murray, 2007; Torres, 2002; Torres and Momsen, 2005a, 2005b; Wilson, 2008). Several criticisms have been raised in these studies discussing the myriad of negative economic, social and environmental effects derived from the introduction of this policy and the subsequent expansion of tourism activities in these areas. The information provided in these studies has offered alternative interpretations of the realities happening in these communities putting forward a different perspective of the extent of the positive and negative effects achieved through tourism development. There is no doubt that these findings have contributed to generate an important discussion of the issues surrounding the CIPs policy over time. Nevertheless, actors' decisions behind CIPs policy-making have been scarcely discussed. Little information can be found related to the processes of agenda setting and policy formulation indispensable to gain a better understanding of the effects that decisions, power, ideology and values have had on the evolution of the CIPs policy.

Likewise, there is limited information of the role that different actors played in this process reinforcing or contesting the discourses underpinning the CIPs policy. More importantly, few explanations are provided describing the allocation of the costs and benefits of CIPs policy (discursive and practical) as well as the different strategies adopted by local communities to support and/or resist these interventions. The identification of these knowledge gaps motivated me to carry out this study in order to shed some light on these little explored issues. With the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the processes surrounding the CIPs policy process from the perspective of its actors, this research decided to examine in greater detail the experience of one of the destinations derived from this policy. Recognising the complexity that implied any attempt to research more than one case in terms of budget and time, it was considered that focusing attention on a single case could help to broadly reflect on this process, providing insightful explanations of the policy-making system whereby CIPs policy was brought to life. Above all, the main interest of this research was to decipher the interaction of actors' values, interests, power and resources derived from the process of CIPs policy-making at the local level. The next

section provides a brief description of the case I chose to exemplify the process of policy implementation explaining the main reasons for this research.

### *3.4.3 Focus project: Cancun*

In order to study the issues surrounding the implementation of CIPs policy on the ground, I considered it indispensable to examine this process through the discussion of a single case. The case of Cancun was chosen for this research to illustrate how the interaction of actors behind tourism development moulded the objectives of CIPs policy and how these intentions were translated in this particular context. This decision was based on four main considerations:

- 1) Cancun was the first project implemented derived from the CIPs policy. Cancun being the first implementation experience that CIPs policy-makers faced, it became a learning exercise enabling them to gain a better understanding of the local context as well as to find the solutions to the myriad of challenges that emerged at the different stages of the policy-making process. This learning process, ultimately, formed an important knowledge platform leading CIPs policy-makers to reassess the implementation strategies in subsequent interventions;
- 2) Cancun has been historically referred to as the most emblematic example of CIPs policy by both, academics and government agencies. This was an important consideration as one of the main objectives of this research was to explore in greater detail the original objectives, ideology and values underpinning this policy. Cancun was identified as the most appropriate case to reflect these characteristics. This is not to say that the objectives, values and ideology of other CIPs destinations suffered a profound transformation; it is argued, rather, that Cancun encapsulated the original vision of tourism development envisaged by CIPs policy-makers, a circumstance that I considered important to discuss the issues surrounding agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy implementation;
- 3) The expansion and growth of tourism activities in Cancun has not been equalled by any other destination built through the CIPs policy. Independent of the reasons behind the former, this destination has been able to acquire a

leading position in the domestic and international tourism market. Due to its explosive growth in a relatively short period of time, the economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental effects have acquired an important significance illustrating the main implications behind this strategy of tourism development. Taking into account the extent of Cancun's growth and expansion, this research decided to utilise this case to explore the factors that led to the consolidation of different social realities paying special attention to the repercussions that this particular case had over the historical evolution of the Mexican tourism sector as a whole in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

- 4) The information available regarding the case of Cancun is greater than any other similar case. I considered the former a potential advantage for the achievement of the objectives proposed by this research. It was recognised that the lack of information on other potential cases could pose serious challenges for the enquiry process constraining the analysis, discussion, and main findings of this investigation. Since Cancun has been the case that has attracted the attention of different disciplines and perspectives, it was decided to take advantage of the information generated in the past aiming to contribute to the discussion of this case with information that has received little attention in related studies.

Considering the former information, Cancun should be viewed not only as a representative case of the CIPs policy but also as a representative case of a state-led tourism development based on the construction of coastal resorts during the second half of the twentieth century (e.g. Egypt, France, Indonesia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, just to mention some examples). I deliberately decided not to include any further details of Cancun in this section as this thesis devotes an entire chapter to discuss the processes surrounding the implementation stage (chapter six) and an additional chapter to discuss the historical evolution of Cancun as tourism destination as well as the main social and political implications of CIPs policy at different levels (chapter seven). The next section provides the main details of the different fieldwork stages carried out throughout this research project.

### 3.5 Fieldwork stages

Researching policy-making activities of the past posed great challenges for this work in terms of data collection during the different fieldwork stages. In order to study the processes related to the formulation of the CIPs policy and its implementation phase in the case of Cancun involved the use of diverse sources of information. This research carried out a formal period of data collection (fieldwork) in Mexico throughout an eleven-month period divided into three main stages. The first stage covered a period of five months (October 2008-February 2009) and was based in Mexico City with the main objectives of establishing contact with key informants as well as to carry out the necessary documental research. The second stage covered a period of five months (March 2009-July 2009) and was based in Cancun. As in the first period of the fieldwork, the main objectives of the second stage were to locate key informants who could provide some information on CIPs processes in the particular case of Cancun and to carry out documental research at the local level. I implemented an additional stage (December 2010-January 2011) based in Mexico City in order to collect further information regarding the historical period prior to the formulation of the CIPs policy (see chapter four of this thesis). For this purpose in particular, I spent a month visiting on a regular basis the *Archivo General de la Nación* (Mexico's National Archives) reviewing government documents related to the historical period 1930-1960. The next sections present a general overview of the development of each one of the mentioned stages.

#### 3.5.1 First stage: Mexico City

I made a preliminary visit to Mexico (December 2007) in order to locate the main sources of information for this work. This process included the identification of the institutions, archives, documents, and possible informants related to the formulation and implementation of the CIPs policy. The literature review carried out during the first year of the PhD program (2007-2008) about the subject of study assisted in this process enabling me to design a data collection plan before the start of the formal period of fieldwork. The main challenge, within the first stage, was to find a person with sufficient knowledge of this process taking into account the wide time span between the emergence of the CIPs policy and the execution of this research project.

During this quest, I identified a gatekeeper (a former journalist who wrote a book related to the topic of this study) as the main point of departure. It has to be noted that the information possessed by this key informant was derived from a series of interviews he carried out with the principal group of CIPs policy-makers in the early 1980s. The main interests to establish contact with this informant in particular were two: to discuss in greater detail the extent of the findings of his investigations, and; to explore the possibility of obtaining contact details of the people he interviewed. A meeting was arranged with this informant during the month of October 2008 obtaining very positive outcomes: he was able not only to recall the whole network of actors he interviewed during his project but also to provide this researcher with the details necessary to contact the majority of them. This informant thus became the crucial link between this research and its key informants during this period.

Derived from the information provided by this informant, a total of 21 interviews were carried out with people who possessed first-hand knowledge of the process under analysis due to their close connection to the stages of policy formulation and implementation in Cancun (see **Table 3.2** for further details). The majority of these interviews took place at the time and place suggested by these informants with an average duration of 90 minutes per session. In addition to these interviews, this research also carried out eight more interviews with different government officials currently responsible for overseeing the national tourism policy within the institutional structure of the Mexican government (e.g. CNPT, FONATUR, and SECTUR). It has to be said that none of the informants of this study withdrew or openly refused to answer any question during the interviewing period. However, other issues emerged during this process such as the reluctance from some informants to share sensitive information about power exercise as well as their inability to provide meaningful explanations about their personal experience of the policy process. In this sense, the main challenge was to interpret the responses recognising the difficulty of obtaining accurate information of memories from the past. I paid special attention to ‘read’ these responses taking into account the extent of influence from these actors as well as the way in which they positioned their participation within the policy process.

With regards to documental research, three archives were identified as the main sources of information during this first stage. An important number of documents

were reviewed in the archives of institutions such as the National Tourism and Infrastructure Fund (FONATUR) and the Tourism Ministry (SECTUR) focusing attention on those documents containing relevant information related to the CIPs policy process and the particular case of Cancun. It has to be said that the access to these archives was negotiated through the appropriate institutional channels and it was circumscribed to a schedule set by the people responsible for the conservation of these documents. An additional archive was visited with the aim of reviewing a group of documents linked to the *Banco de Mexico* illustrating mainly the stage of policy formulation. It is important to note that the documents belonging to this archive were not available for consultation by the general public as they were part of a personal collection preserved by a former CIPs policy-maker. The access to this archive was the result of the development of rapport between the researcher and this informant during an interview session. I also identified the official library of SECTUR as a complementary source of information. Several visits were carried out in order to extract relevant information from contemporary secondary sources such as government plans, scientific articles, books, research reports, academic theses, statistics, newspaper articles, and so on. Finally, with the main aim of obtaining feedback from other academic colleagues, a paper regarding the proposal of this investigation was presented at the IV International and IX National Conference of Tourism Research organised by the National University of Mexico (UNAM) in coordination with other academic and civil society institutions in Mexico (November, 2008).

Interview date	Category of interviewee	Key questions covered	Contribution to research questions
26th October 2008	Gatekeeper #1 Mexico City.	Policy network mapping.	Actors influence over the policy process.
3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2008	Former Banco de Mexico-INFRAATUR-FONATUR-SECTUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process (attention on formulation, implementation and evaluation phases).

5 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	Former Banco de Mexico official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external).	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, (attention on policy formulation and implementation phases).
6 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	Former Banco de Mexico official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external).	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, evolution of the policy process (general overview).
9 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	Former FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, evolution of the policy process (attention on policy formulation phase).
14 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	Former INFRATUR-FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, evolution of the policy process (attention on policy formulation, policy implementation, policy evaluation phases).
14 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	Former Banco de Mexico official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements (attention on the identification of contextual issues mainly).
18 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	Former Banco de Mexico-INFRATUR-FONATUR-SECTUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, (attention on the identification of contextual and structural issues).

2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2008	SECTUR official #1.	Current tourism policy configuration, key strategies under operation, main objectives and goals pursued, short and medium-term agenda	Relevance of the policy process over the consolidation of tourism structure and institutional operation of SECTUR.
3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2008	Former FONATUR-SECTUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, evolution of the policy process (general overview).
11 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	Former Banco de Mexico official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decisions, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process (attention on agenda setting phase).
14 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	Former INFRATUR-FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, evolution of the policy process (attention on policy formulation phase).
10 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Former INFRATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, evolution of the policy process (attention on agenda setting and policy formulation phases).
12 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Former Banco de Mexico official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues (general overview of agenda setting phase).



15 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	FONATUR official #1.	Evolution of the CIPs policy and associated plans, historical changes in the institutional structure, current issues surrounding the original CIPs projects.	Policy process influence over FONATUR's institutional operation and the historical evolution of the CIPs policy.
18 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Former FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements (attention on policy implementation phase).
19 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Former Banco de México-INFRATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, evolution of the policy process (attention on policy formulation and policy implementation phases).
22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2009	SECTUR official #2.	Studies associated with the CIPs policy, influence of CIPs destinations on the national tourism industry, economic contribution of the CIPs destinations, comparison across different cases.	Historical evolution of the policy process and its relevance for the Mexican tourism industry.
26 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Former Banco de Mexico.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process (attention on agenda setting phase).
28 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Former Banco de Mexico official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decisions, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process (attention on agenda setting and policy formulation phases).

28 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	SECTUR official #3.	PNT's 2007-2012 design and rationale, partnerships with private and civil sectors, public sector investment.	Structural influence through the understanding of SECTUR's operation and priorities as well as the identification of medium and long-term objectives.
30 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Former INFRATUR-FONATUR-SECTUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, evolution of the policy process (attention on policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation phases).
31 <sup>st</sup> January 2009	Former FONATUR-SECTUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, evolution of the policy process (attention on policy evaluation phase).
4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	Former Banco de Mexico official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process (attention on agenda setting phase).
6 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	SECTUR official #4.	Configuration of the current legal framework with regards to the attributions of the state in tourism development, policy plans, regulatory bodies and enforcement tools.	Structural influence through the understanding of the historical evolution of the tourism legal framework and its relationship with the policy process.
10 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	Former INFRATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements (attention on policy formulation and policy implementation phases).

13 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	Former Banco de Mexico-INFRAATUR-FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements (attention on the identification of contextual issues at different scales).
16 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	FONATUR official #2.	Current CIPs projects, public sector investments and short-term agenda.	Structural influence through the understanding of the current vision of the CIPs policy as well as the identification of the main differences between the original projects and the new ones.
20 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	SECTUR official #5.	National statistics of the tourism industry, institutional cooperation in the construction of the Tourism Satellite Account, current statistical analyses.	Structural influence through the understanding of tourism institutional operation.
22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2009	CNPT official.	Current promotional schemes, marketing strategies, target markets, public sector investment, geographical coverage.	Structural and contextual influence of the policy process.
27 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	Former Banco de Mexico Official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external) and emerging issues.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process (attention on agenda setting and policy formulation phase).

**Table 3.2** Interviewing process detail, first stage October 2008-February 2009.  
Source: Own elaboration.

### 3.5.2 Second stage: Cancun

As previously mentioned, the second fieldwork stage of this research was carried out during the period March 2009-July 2009. The main strategy employed by this research during this period to gain access to key informants in the context of Cancun was the establishment of regular contact with a renowned member of academic staff at a local university (*Universidad del Caribe*). This informant provided a list of

potential key informants with contact details as well as appropriate guidance to locate relevant information in documents belonging to government institutions, libraries and private archives at the local level. As with the first fieldwork stage, I embarked on the task of contacting a local gatekeeper that could provide a general overview of the historical events related to Cancun as well as to identify other informants within his/her social network. The former could be materialised through personal contact between the member of the *Universidad del Caribe* and the potential gatekeeper. An informal meeting was arranged with this informant in order to assess the extent of his knowledge about the process under investigation. Through a series of interviews and informal meetings with this informant at different moments (seven in total), he was able to provide relevant information about the process of implementation in Cancun as well as a number of contacts of people suitable for interview. Moreover, he shared a group of historical documents in his personal archive that were related to different stages of the policy process in Cancun, containing specific details regarding the execution plans.

In addition to the former, a second round of interviews with key informants was carried out, interviewing a total of 16 people in Cancun (see **Table 3.3** for further details). As in the first stage, these sessions lasted 90 minutes on average and took place mainly in the residences of these informants. Likewise, this research carried out a series of interviews with municipality officials (five informants from Benito Juárez and Solidaridad municipalities) and Quintana Roo's state tourism officials (six people from SEDETUR's, IMPLAN, and COPLADEMUN offices) responsible for the formulation and execution of the local tourism and development policies. As the first period, some interviewing issues emerged such as the difficulty to gain access to the local network, the reluctance from some informants to provide relevant information about power struggles and conflict episodes as well as the inability of some to provide information of key events due to their lack of participation in these.

With regards to the voices of the private sector and civil society, this research included information extracted from interviews carried out with the representatives of three local NGOs (two from environmental-oriented organisations and one from a social-oriented organisation) as well as five members of the current local tourism industry (three from the hotel sector, one from the food sector, and one from the transport sector). Furthermore, this researcher reviewed documents located in the

archives of the local government during this period, (*Benito Juárez Municipality*). It has to be said that, despite the wide time span between the creation of the municipality and the execution of this research (more than thirty-four years), the availability of relevant documents in this archive was relatively limited. The person responsible for the conservation of these documents declared that different municipal administrations have been unable to consolidate a more complete archive mainly due to the poor management of documents and lack of accountability by local public servants over time. Two additional archives were visited during this second fieldwork stage: one related to a social-oriented local NGO (*ACADEMIA A.C.*) and a personal archive in the possession of the *Universidad del Caribe*. The former included documents that illustrated the historical evolution of the local society of Cancun whereas the latter contained a wide range of personal and institutional documents that belonged to one of the most influential actors within the CIPs policy process and the formulation of national and international tourism policy in the twentieth century.

After the death of this actor in 2007, his family decided to donate this collection of historical documents to the library of the previously referred to university. For obvious reasons, the arrangement of an interview with this actor was not possible; the existence of this archive thus became the main source of first-hand information about this actor. At the time of the review, the university library had not completed the classification process of these documents preserving them in several boxes within a special room within the university with no public access. In order to review these documents, I made use of the contact held within this university (member of academic staff) to negotiate access to this archive. After the completion of the formal procedures requested by the director of the library, I was able to explore an important number of documents from this archive afterwards considering it one of the richest sources of information for this research. Finally, the review of secondary sources of information was also included during this stage. For this purpose, I visited, on a regular basis, the *Universidad del Caribe* library in order to review the publications related to the topic of study.

Interview date	Category of interviewee	Key questions covered	Contribution to research questions
3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2009	Gatekeeper #2 Cancun.	Policy network mapping	Actors influence over the

			policy process.
10 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Former Banco de México-INFRATUR-FONATUR-SECTUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on implementation phase).
13 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Former INFRATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on agenda setting and implementation phases).
17 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Former INFRATUR-FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on implementation phase and policy evolution).
18 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Former FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on institutional operation and policy evolution).
19 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Former INFRATUR-FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process,	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements,

		identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on implementation issues).
23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2009	Former INFRATUR-FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on agenda setting and policy implementation phases).
25 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	SEDETUR official #1.	Current planning and tourism development plans, institutional operation, cooperation between different stakeholders, tourism projects at the local level.	Structural and actors influence in Cancun.
25 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	SEDETUR official #2.	Design and implementation of the legal framework and regulatory bodies at the local level.	Influence of the policy process for the development of local legal framework.
26 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Hotel sector representative #1.	Historical evolution of the hotel sector at the local level, key actors mapping, identification of key events in the destination (internal and external), relationship between the state and the private sector.	Actors and structural influence over the configuration of the tourism industry in Cancun.
27 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Former FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on implementation issues, contextual factors and institutional

			configuration).
30 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Benito Juárez Municipality official.	Institutional arrangements for the organisation of tourism development at the local level, participation in the design of tourism policies, cooperation with different government branches (regional and national).	Actor and structural influence through the understanding of the organisation of the local government and its ability to manage the policy process.
30 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Former INFRATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on policy formulation and agenda setting phases).
30 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Environmental NGO #1.	Current environmental legislation for tourism developments, verification mechanisms, legal procedures, NGO's agenda, local environmental issues.	Actors influence through the understanding of the organisation of parallel agendas and the mobilisation of resources in favour and/or against the policy process.
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2009	Former FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on implementation issues and contextual factors).
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2009	Former FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on implementation phase).



7 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Hotel sector representative #2.	Historical evolution of the hotel sector at the local level, key actors mapping, identification of key events in the destination (internal and external), relationship between the state and the private sector.	Structural influence through the understanding of the transformation of the local tourism industry.
9 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Benito Juárez Municipality official.	Historical participation of the municipality in tourism development, institutional arrangements, urban development agenda.	Structural influence through the understanding of the <i>de jure</i> role of the municipality in tourism development and the identification of its <i>de facto</i> powers.
9 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	COPLADEMUN official.	Design and implementation of the current development plans at the local level.	Effects of the policy process over the formulation of development plans.
13 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Environmental NGO #2.	NGO's agenda, political operation, identification of environmental issues at the local level.	Actors influence through the understanding of the organisation of parallel agendas and the mobilisation of resources in favour and/or against the policy process (attention on the historical changes applied to the original Cancun's master plan).
14 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Solidaridad Municipality official.	Tourism development agenda, institutional arrangements, participation in the design and implementation of development policies, local and regional cooperation issues.	Structural influence of the policy process through the understanding of development of the Riviera Maya tourism industry.
17 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Former INFRATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on policy formulation and implementation phases).
18 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Former Banco de Mexico	Participation in the policy process, sphere of	Individual and network decision-making,

	official.	decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on policy formulation and agenda setting phases).
20 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	SEDETUR official #3.	Tourism product design at regional and local levels, marketing strategies, target markets, promotional events and campaigns.	Contextual influence through the understanding of the local organisation for the marketing of Cancun as a tourism destination.
22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2009	Restaurant sector representative.	Historical evolution of the restaurant sector at the local level, key actors mapping, identification of key events in the destination (internal and external), relationship between the state and the private sector.	Actors and structural influence over the configuration of the tourism industry in Cancun (attention on agenda setting and state-private negotiations).
27 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Former FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on institutional organisation and policy delivery).
29 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Benito Juárez Municipality official.	Historical evolution of development and tourism plans at the local level.	Contextual influence through the identification of key drivers within the policy process in Cancun.
30 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Transportation sector representative.	Historical evolution of the transportation sector at the local level, key actors mapping, identification of key events in the destination (internal and external), relationship between the state and the private sector.	Actors influence through the understanding of the organisation of tourism industry at international, national, regional and local levels (attention on network mapping)
6 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Former INFRATUR-	Participation in the policy process, sphere of	Individual and network decision-making,

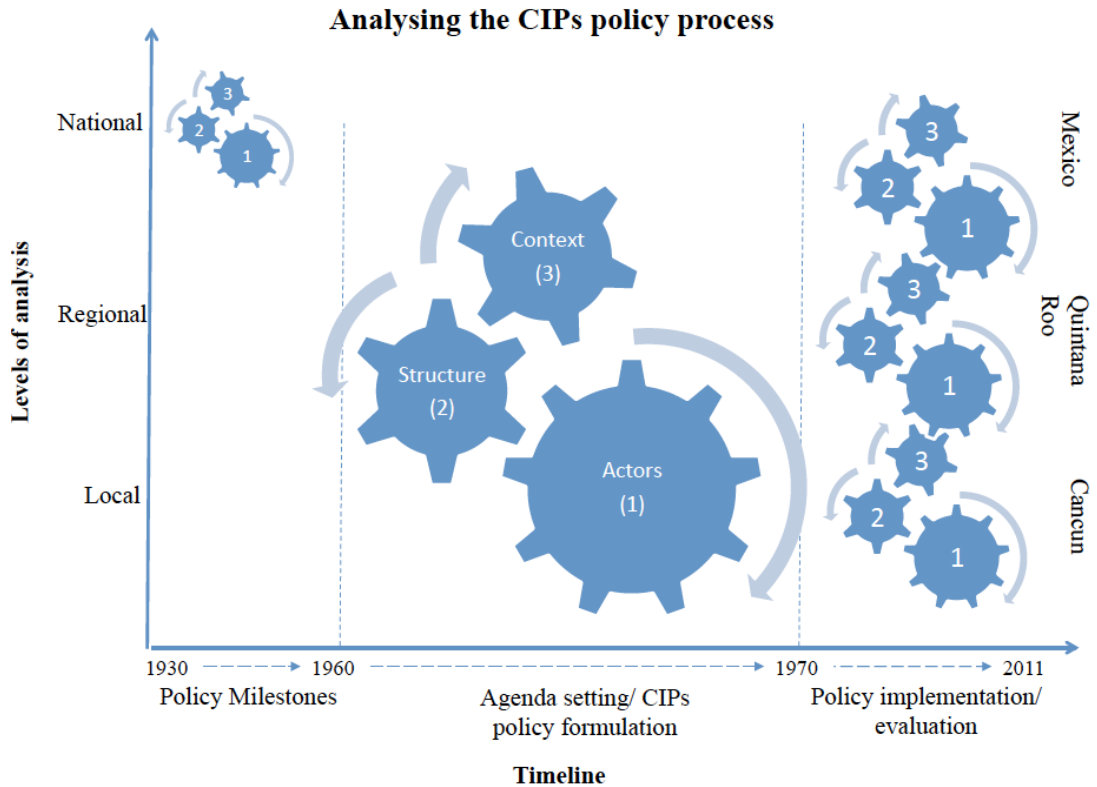
	FONATUR official.	decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on policy implementation phase).
11 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	IMPLAN official #1.	Current urban development plans at the local level, institutional structure, and legal attributions.	Structural influence over the local policy process.
15 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Former FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on implementation and policy evolution phases).
20 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Solidaridad Municipality official.	Current urban and tourism development plans.	Actors influence over the formulation of parallel agendas to the CIPs policy (attention on the evolution of the local networks).
29 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	IMPLAN official #2.	Current urban infrastructure plans and projections in the short and medium-term.	Structural influence over the local policy process.
22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2009	Environmental NGO #3.	NGO's agenda, political operation, identification of environmental issues at the local level.	Actors influence through the understanding of the organisation of parallel agendas and the mobilisation of resources in favour and/or against the policy process (attention on current tourism development projects in Cancun and the Riviera Maya).
25 <sup>th</sup> June 2009	Hotel sector representative #3.	Historical evolution of the hotel sector at the local level, key actors mapping, identification of key events in the destination	Actors and structural influence over the configuration of the tourism industry in Cancun (attention on the

		(internal and external), relationship between the state and the private sector.	liberalisation process).
26 <sup>th</sup> June 2009	Former FONATUR official.	Participation in the policy process, sphere of decision-making, network mapping, evolution of the policy process, identification of influential events (internal and external), emerging issues at the local level.	Individual and network decision-making, identification of organisational and power arrangements, identification of contextual issues, evolution of the policy process at the local and regional levels (attention on policy implementation issues).

**Table 3.3** Interviewing process detail, second stage March 2009-July 2009.  
Source: Own elaboration.

### 3.5.3 Third stage: National Archives

A final fieldwork stage (third) was carried out by this research during the period December 2010-January 2011. This stage was mainly focused on the collection of information regarding the historical period previous to the formulation of the CIPs policy (1930-1960). Through an assessment of the amount of information collected and analysed related to this historical period, the supervisory team and I identified that an additional fieldwork period was needed to provide further evidence from primary sources. For this purpose, I visited the *Archivo General de la Nación* (Mexico's National Archives) regularly over a month period in order to collect the necessary information. The documents of different government administrations (mainly at national level) were reviewed with the main aim of locating relevant information linked to the configuration of the tourism sector in this country. This review included documents such as government reports, official correspondence, tourism plans, tourism legal reforms, political discourses and so on. **Figure 3.2** (see below) maps out the elements considered in this research (see chapter two) to analyse the CIPs policy process; this representation was based on the analytical approach previously discussed in chapter two (see **Figure 2.3**).



**Figure 3.2** Analytical approach to study the CIPs policy process.  
Source: Own elaboration.

### 3.6 Research Methods

Research methods are understood here as those tools employed to collect empirical information. In line with the methodological strategy proposed by this research, the adoption of qualitative methods seemed appropriate for the achievement of the objectives envisaged by this project. The key principle of a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis, according to Jennings (2001), is to gain a better understanding of people's interpretations of the social world. In this sense, if the purpose of research such as this was to comprehend the social meaning of a policy process, the analysis had to be based on the concepts of the people who experienced the social phenomenon studied. As previously mentioned in this chapter, this research used a case study as the main strategy of enquiry focusing attention towards the examination of the process of the CIPs policy, and the implementation experience of Cancun. Two main methods were employed by this research in order to gather relevant data regarding these processes: *semi-structured interviews* and *documentary research*. The combination of these two methods enabled this research to compare the information obtained through the interviews and through the documental sources.

Beyond verification purposes, these methods were employed in this research to ensure that the interpretations constructed in this thesis could be developed based on different sources of information facilitating a better understanding of the policy process. The next sections describe the details of how this research used these methods during the period of fieldwork.

### *3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews*

It has to be said that the interviews carried out by this research constituted one of the main sources of information. The method of semi-structured interviews was used due to its flexibility to gather information during the interview process allowing a constant dialogue between the interviewee and the researcher. A set of topics and questions were defined prior to the interviews according to the specific profile of the interviewees. The informants were divided in sub-groups of actors (i.e. government officials, NGO representatives, academics, local entrepreneurs, and so on) developing an instrument for each one of the identified groups. The main objective behind this strategy was to ensure the possibility of comparison across interviews belonging to these sub-groups.

Generally speaking, the different instruments designed covered the following points: 1) an introductory part where the main purpose of the study was explained to the interviewees, clarifying their right to refuse to answer any question and/or withdraw from the interview at any moment. In all cases, verbal consent was sought prior to the start of the interview; written consent was avoided due to its potential to inhibit the responses of the interviewees in the Mexican context. The majority of interviews were digitally recorded with the exception of one in which the informant expressed his reluctance to provide any information if he was to be recorded. In that particular case, note-taking replaced the digital recording device, writing down the main points of the interviewee's responses; 2) the second section was aimed at exploring the general profile of the interviewee; through some general questions about his/her professional profile, this researcher was able to infer the degree of involvement of the informant in the different stages of the CIPs policy process. This strategy proved very useful to direct the questions and discussion towards the stages the informant possessed most information about; 3) the third section was considered the central part of the interview containing a predefined list of topics to cover during the session.

It is important to note that this list was used only as reference with the possibility to adapt it according to the themes that emerged from the responses during the interview. On many occasions some topics were discussed in greater detail given the experience of the informant; 4) the concluding part was oriented to provide a space for informants to discuss any additional information they considered relevant. I clarified that the interview ended and stated it was the last opportunity for the informant to raise awareness of a theme (or group of themes) that were not covered or overlooked during the session. On several occasions the informants of this research included final remarks expressing, mainly, their personal opinions of the different topics covered. The main aim of this strategy was to break the formality of the question-answer framework utilising a more informal approach. The results were positive in general terms, enabling this researcher to obtain new categories for the analysis and reflect these within the different narratives, and; 5) the summary part where the principal points of the session captured were discussed with the informant with the aim of avoiding possible misinterpretation of the information provided. This strategy gave the opportunity to both, researcher and informant, to confirm, clarify and/or expand the themes covered during the interview.

#### *3.6.1.1 Selection of informants*

The selection of key informants was carried out through the technique known as “snowball sampling”. This selection technique, according to Jennings (2001: 139-140) is normally used when “the researcher is not familiar with the “network connections” a key informant possesses. Once the researcher has identified one member of the population, other members are identified by this member and then by the next participants contacted until all the participants have been contacted”. This strategy allowed me to identify information-rich individuals willing to provide their knowledge of the CIPs policy process through interviews and informal conversations. As mentioned in previous sections, two key informants were identified by this research giving them the category of “gatekeepers”. Although most of the contact information was derived from these gatekeepers, other key informants also referred additional members of the network that were not originally considered. Two issues were recognised by this research as determinant regarding the size of the sample prior to the start of the fieldwork period: a theoretical saturation scenario and access to key informants. The former was related to the potential encounter of a panorama

where no new information could be obtained from selected informants. The decision to declare a theoretical saturation ultimately relied on my ability to identify repetition patterns within the information analysed from the interviews. This consideration served as a constant reminder for me to be conscious that there was no need to continue interviewing if no new information emerged.

With regards to the access to key informants, this researcher was fully aware of the need to effectively locate the appropriate gatekeepers to ensure access to first-hand information. Likewise, the development of rapport with key informants was considered a crucial strategy not only to increase the possibilities of obtaining more sincere responses but also to reach more participants for this study. Thus, I tried to establish a friendly approach with informants at all times, bearing in mind that this was an indispensable prerequisite to maintain open access to the researched network of actors.

It is important to note that an additional consideration came into view during the fieldwork period: that was, the time available to carry out the interviews. Although the research proposal considered a specific timeframe for that task, the arrangement of interviews ultimately was subject to the availability of informants. Considering the former, I attempted to optimise the time planned in order to interview as many informants as possible; the main strategy employed at this point was to produce a first list of the main key informants who presumably had more information on the subject. A second list would be only considered if the first concluded before the end of the time assigned to that task. It has to be said, however, that this research was not able to produce a second list for any of the two interviewing periods. In the case of the first period in Mexico City, more than 65% of the informants on the main list were contacted and interviewed whereas, on the second (Cancun), it surpassed 50%. In both cases, access did not represent a major constraint and theoretical saturation was reached in an important number of core topics that are discussed in this thesis.

### *3.6.2 Documental research*

In combination with the information obtained through the interviews, this research carried out an examination of a series of documents related to the process of the CIPs policy process. It included the review of a series of representative documents related to three main themes: 1) the historical evolution of the Mexican tourism sector for



the period 1930-1960 paying special attention to the construction of discourses and the configuration of networks surrounding it; 2) the CIPs policy process including the phases of agenda setting and policy formulation, and; 3) the phase of policy implementation in the case of Cancun as well as the historical evolution of this destination. There is no doubt that the consultation of different historical archives played a crucial role in collecting meaningful information for this research. Although the access to some of these archives represented a challenge, I was able to implement effective strategies of negotiation aiming to extract relevant pieces of information. These documents helped me not only to identify new themes that were not considered in the original research proposal but also to compare the information obtained through interviews with these documents. Thus, triangulation was possible within the analysis of the collected information helping to reflect on the findings obtained through the two methods chosen by this research.

With regards to the research carried out on secondary sources, this research included the review of books, articles, research reports, academic theses, government documents, and so on located in different government and university libraries. Given the great amount of sources found throughout the research process, the nature of the review was selective and the documents were ordered according to the extent of their importance. Thus, this researcher attempted to integrate the most relevant material that could inform the processes surrounding CIPs policy process.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

In order to accomplish the objectives proposed by this research, the main fundamentals of Grounded Theory (GT) (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) were adopted as the main method of analysis. This decision was based in light of GT's potential to analyse social processes helping to create interpretive understandings of the data collected during research (Stevenson, 2007). However, it has to be noted that GT is far from being a unified framework (Denzin, 2010); it can present, rather, a multifaceted appearance e.g. positivist, postpositivist, constructivist, objectivist, postmodern, situational, and so on. Despite this great diversity, these perspectives intersect at two main points: 1) they include a set of *flexible* guidelines for data analysis, and; 2) they propose the *development* of integrated *theoretical concepts* grounded in data that show process, relationship, and social world connectedness (Ibid: 455; my emphasis

in italics). In line with the methodological design proposed by this research, a constructivist perspective of GT was adopted. Such a perspective “assumes [that] society, reality and self are constructed through interaction and thus rely on language and communication...[it] assumes that interaction is inherently dynamic and interpretive and addresses how people create, enact, and change meanings and actions” (Charmaz, 2006: 13; emphasis in original). As Charmaz, I also assumed that “neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices” (2006: 19, emphasis in original).

The analysis of the data collected in this research proceeded recognising that the views and meanings of the informants as well as the researcher’s interpretation are nothing but constructions of reality. Taking that into consideration, three main fundamentals of GT were put into practice during the analysis of the data collected: 1) to study a social phenomenon using the perspective or voice of those studied (CIPs policy process from the perspective of related actors); 2) the simultaneous collection and analysis of data, adding and refining concepts, categories and hypotheses, (construction of narratives derived from key themes), and; 3) to collect complementary data including policy related documents relevant to the researched topic (documental research). The work of Stevenson (2007) and Stevenson *et al* (2008) served this research as a main point of reference to understand in which terms GT could assist in the analysis of a policy process such as the CIPs. Stevenson *et al* focused their attention to describe the issues surrounding tourism policy from the perspective of the policy-makers discussing the case of Leeds in the North of England. Utilising GT as the main method to analyse collected data, they concluded that GT had proven useful to identify key issues that would be overlooked otherwise. Above all, they claimed that GT enabled a greater reflection of negotiation and communication processes, stressing its benefits to build insightful explanations of the evolutionary pattern of the policy-making ‘process’ rather than on assessing the ‘outcomes’ of the policy *vis-à-vis* its original objectives. Learning from the experience of these investigations, I evaluated the possibility to emulate this analytical process as much as possible. Considering the great similarities between the findings generated in these investigations and those sought to be found by this

research, it was decided to employ GT's guidelines conceiving it as an analytical system that could potentially lead me to interpret the collected information in a more meaningful and, perhaps, more effective way.

It is important to mention at this point some of the factors that influenced this analytical process. For example, issues related to the credibility and reliability of the informants selected by this research. In terms of credibility, this research paid special attention to interview those informants that experienced the process themselves. It was believed that the knowledge gained through the different episodes lived by these actors enabled them to construct a version closer to the facts that occurred during the policy process. This is not to say that all informants that were selected in this study could construct a reliable description of the process. Some of them were clearly more knowledgeable about specific themes such as decision-making, negotiations, agenda setting and so on whereas for many others it was very difficult even to identify relevant episodes or turning points in the evolution of the policy process. Yet, it is important to say that it was not expected for this research to obtain a precise account of the policy process through the interviewing process but to analyse the different ways in which the selected informants made sense of their own experience focusing attention on the points they considered more significant.

It was very interesting to see a number of coincidences in the different constructions provided during the interviews according to the social sphere of interaction of the informants. For example, policy-makers with a higher rank tended to visualise the policy process as successful and unproblematic whereas policy implementers described a messier picture of the same process due to their experiences on the ground. Despite the former, no major contradictions were identified within the narratives constructed by the informants although some dissonances emerged from the analysis of all the interviews. These differences were mainly derived from the multiple visions that different groups had about the process under analysis (e.g. policy-makers, entrepreneurs, local population, NGO representatives, etc). In this sense, the main challenge for this research in terms of interpretation was to analyse how each of these groups constructed the process and identify the main differences across them. Many examples are included in different quotes throughout this thesis that reflect issues related to particular constructions such as self-justification, idealised recall, problematisation, and so on to explain actions, decisions and events

surrounding the policy process. These different views reveal, above all, the ideological attachment of the informants to these groups as well as to the agendas they pursued in the past. Thus, each group tended to construct a uniform version of the facts according to the extent of their participation and sphere of action. What is important to highlight, ultimately, is that by looking at the perception of different actors involved in one or more stages of the policy process, I was able to gain a better understanding of the subjectivity behind the construction of a policy process.

My analytical journey through GT began with the elaboration of what I called “interview reports”. These short pieces of analysis were elaborated immediately after the conclusion of each interview including the main ideas derived from these sessions as well as the general impressions regarding the reactions of the informants to certain questions. These hand-written documents became analytical snapshots illustrating the fresh impressions of these sessions. As such, they helped me to build a reflective exercise throughout the process of data collection and subsequent analysis. These reports were constantly used to identify key themes as well as to produce a “preliminary list of categories”. The primary objective of these categories - or codes- was to more effectively manage the information contained within the interviews’ recordings through its synthesis in labels. As the process of interview transcription advanced, the categorisation exercise stimulated the appearance of new ideas about the process analysed. Different themes emerged from these categories ranging from general concepts such as ‘decision-making’, ‘resources’, ‘agenda’, ‘discourses’, ‘power’, ‘agency’, ‘knowledge’, ‘interpretation’, ‘manipulation’, ‘exclusion’ towards more focalised ones such as ‘group agenda’, ‘political power’, ‘strategy of resistance’, ‘cultural divergence’ and so on. The use of these categories in important segments of collected data was aimed at summarising it and comparing it on a constant basis. In order to systematise this process of comparison, I initially considered the use of specialised software (Nvivo) under the belief that it would represent a potential advantage. However, the lack of appropriate training as well as a growing disappointment derived from the limited analytical outcomes of different practical exercises led me to abandon this idea. Since this situation was becoming a major constraint, a common text-processing program (word-windows) was used instead introducing and comparing the categories manually. Although this exercise took more time than expected, it proved useful to refine the analysis giving origin to

the emergence of new categories. At this point of the analytical process, I began to sketch the main themes that would be developed through the narratives in this thesis. Thus, for instance, I decided to focus attention to describe the construction of discourses surrounding tourism and its link to state-developmental objectives within chapter four of this thesis. Decisions such as this were not derived exclusively from the interpretation of produced categories but also from my own understanding about this social process. This, as Dey (2010) noted, implied an exercise of recognition of the fact that produced categories and interpretation entirely depends on our conceptual understandings of the world. In this sense, the reader must be aware that the construction of the different narratives in this thesis was dependent as much on the interpretation of the information collected from several sources as on my personal interpretation of the social phenomenon under analysis.

The elaboration of ‘memos’ as such was not carried out within this research. Although the former was initially considered, the process of analysis led me rather in a different direction. The continuous treatment of data generated a personal dynamic that gave origin to the construction of ‘short narratives’ instead. These pieces of analysis described, briefly, the main themes derived from categorisation constructing a storyline including circumstances, goals, actors’ interactions, discourses, and so on surrounding the CIPs policy process. I recognised that the documents produced and types of memos suggested by GT (e.g. field note, code note, theoretical note, Glaser 1998) had no apparent similarities. In this sense, although these short narratives included elements from fieldwork and categorisation, I deliberately decided not to call them memos to avoid confusion.

The conclusion of the analytical process led me to deal with ‘theoretical saturation’. The main objective of this exercise was an attempt to ground the data into the formulation of final interpretations. For this purpose, I compared the different units of analysis produced until then aiming to identify repetition patterns within them. The challenge, at this point of the analysis, was to make the claim that no new categories could emerge from these analytical units. Beyond comparison, this decision was based on a complex process of abstraction enabling me to gain a better understanding of some key historical passages. In this sense, I believed to have reached theoretical saturation within the core themes presented in this thesis. It has to be said, however, that a further exploration into other themes had to be abandoned

mainly due to the lack of sufficient information to declare the so-called saturation. It is equally important to mention that this process was highly subject to my ability to work with the data until some satisfactory explanations could emerge. Thus, this analytical process represented a journey of constant discovery through which I learnt to establish a special connection with the analysed data.

Reliability and validity of the information presented in this thesis were circumscribed to the execution of a reflexive exercise assisted by GT that proved useful in describing some of the issues surrounding CIPs policy-making. What is important to say, ultimately, is that the information presented in the empirical chapters of this thesis was derived from arguments developed through a well-founded interpretative exercise. The flexibility of this method was considered crucial for the development of a personal analytical path. There is no doubt that this circumstance helped to build an intimate relationship between this researcher and the data indispensable in any research that has the main objective of gaining a sense of understanding.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

Due to the nature of the chosen subject discussed in this thesis, a number of ethical considerations were taken into account. I was aware that some sensitive issues related to the exercise of power, decision-making, value-allocation, manipulation and so on would potentially emerge making it necessary to protect the anonymity of all informants. In every case, the quotes utilised within this thesis derived from the responses of the informants did not include any form of identification except for his/her institutional and/or organisational affiliation. Some of the informants sharing specific information that was considered sensitive by them asked it not to be disclosed. In these cases in particular, this researcher agreed with this condition classifying this information as “off-the-record” and deciding to separate this information from the themes developed in this thesis. Despite the former, this information was very helpful to expand the conceptual horizons of this researcher with regards to the inner workings of CIPs policy process.

I paid special attention to make explicit that the information discussed during the interview would only be used for academic purposes. The former was thoroughly explained before the start of all interviews clarifying the rights of informants to withdraw and refuse to answer any question at any time during the interview. I also

considered with special attention the cultural, social, and gender features of the informants of this study to adapt the interviewing approach accordingly. In this sense, different strategies were implemented to gain the trust of the informants during the encounter. For instance, oral consent was preferred over written consent in all cases due to the potential of the latter to inhibit participation. This decision was based on my cultural awareness of the Mexican context where signatures might raise some concerns in terms of their future use. In order to prevent the appearance of an environment of distrust that could affect the content and quality of responses, oral consent was identified as a more appropriate way. Likewise, I never considered the use of incentives to encourage the participation of the selected informants. All the people contacted in this study (gatekeepers, policy-makers, NGO representatives, and so on) joined in on a voluntary basis. With regards to the quotes selected from the documents reviewed, this researcher attempted to provide an appropriate prelude to contextualise them and avoid misinterpretation and/or manipulation. In these cases, a full identification of the source is included throughout this thesis in accordance with the academic rigour expected from research of this nature.

Other ethical challenges of different nature were also faced throughout the enquiry process, for example, the definition of the subject of study. The original proposal envisaged the measurement of the socioeconomic impacts of the CIPs policy. However, as the process of literature review progressed during the first year of the PhD program, the findings of recent investigations about tourism policy-making drew my attention. Interest grew in the perspectives utilised by these studies and the original idea was progressively abandoned to the point of heading in a completely different direction. This process implied a complete transformation in ontological, epistemological and methodological terms. Coming from a business and management tradition of enquiry largely dominated by a positivist paradigm, I had to reprogram my personal beliefs about the functioning of the social world as I knew it. Above all, it meant a total reinvention through which I could no longer conceive my role of researcher as a mere observer and reporter but as an active actor more aware of the influence of my own interpretations within the research process.

With regards to the information obtained through the interviews, I was fully aware of the difficulty for anyone to preserve detailed memories from experiences of the past. In this sense, a flexible interpretation of the construction of the informants was

crucial to better understand the precise meaning of their words. I encouraged participants to focus their attention on specific events and sometimes I helped informants to identify their role in the network in order to explore in greater detail the extent of their participation in the process. Although all the interviews were designed under a flexible approach, special attention was paid to maintain the flow of the discussion at all times. Nevertheless, some informants turned their attention towards other issues that were not considered important leading me to redirect the discussion.

Finally, the challenges faced during the process of analysis were related to the appropriate interpretation of GT's guidelines. Although the main elements of GT were identified through a literature review, the process of data analysis generated a personal path instead. As previously described in this chapter, the production of different units of analysis (interview reports, categories, short narratives, key themes) represented a complex exercise of abstraction for the constant refinement of ideas. This situation led me to put down my own fears and experiment with different analytical routes as the work progressed. The immediate result was the consolidation of a process of constant discovery that culminated in the elaboration of this thesis. Although, the former involved travelling through uncertain waters for several months, this journey helped me to learn invaluable and indelible lessons for conducting similar investigations in the future.

### **3.9 Conclusions**

This research agrees with Hall (1994) with regards to the claim that the choice of the research topic, methodology, and the research methods is not only the result of a rational decision-making process but also a political decision itself. The information in this chapter has attempted to discuss the path followed by this researcher throughout the research process that gave origin to this methodological proposal. It was explained that a qualitative approach was adopted in light of its potential to gain a better understanding of a social process from the perspective of its participants such as the CIPs policy-making. This argument was supported by the belief that many aspects of human behaviour and complex interactions in policy-making activities are difficult to be dimensioned through a quantitative research strategy. Thus, a qualitative approach seemed an appropriate alternative for this research to explore



the political dimension of tourism aiming to describe issues related to power, agency, structure, decisions, and so on. Considering that these issues have received little attention in related literature, the main objective of this research was to address this knowledge gap contributing to generate a discussion from a different perspective. Thus, this researcher paid special attention to reflect within the methodology proposed the main features of a qualitative form of enquiry i.e. a methodological design based on interpretive, contextual and subjective characteristics.

Likewise, this chapter also discussed the main philosophical foundations of this research. It was explained that this investigation adopted a constructivist paradigm based on relativist ontology and subjective epistemology. Interpretation comes to play a crucial role in the construction of the social world in the place where it actually exists i.e. in the mind of the constructors. The researcher's beliefs that there are no absolute truths and that social 'reality' is subject to multiple interpretations were also discussed. These interpretations thus can give origin to multiple realities leaving the task to the researcher of making sense of these interpretations and constructing a particular version of social 'reality'. It was argued that these philosophical guidelines were crucial throughout the course of this research not only to give direction to the enquiry process but also to shape the notion of this researcher about the functioning of the social world.

This chapter also included information regarding the main strategy of enquiry chosen to illustrate the issues surrounding a policy process i.e. case study. It was explained that the case of Mexico was considered appropriate in order to explore in greater detail tourism policy-making given its prominence in the international tourism market. The process selected to discuss the early phases of policy-making (agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy implementation) was the CIPs policy in light of the influential role it played in the expansion of tourism activities in the country. It was said that the principal interest of this research was to gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding these phases such as the interaction of different actors, the generation of agendas, the mobilisation of resources, the exercise of power, and so on. The case of Cancun was chosen to describe the implementation issues of this policy on the ground. A justification was elaborated explaining the main reasons behind this decision stressing the relevance of this case to gain a better understanding of the ideology and values reflected in this policy.

Finally, the last four sections of this chapter attempted to describe the enquiry process discussing the principal opportunities, problems, and challenges encountered during the periods of data collection and data analysis. This included information about the development and evolution of fieldwork stages, the research methods utilised, and the strategy of data analysis. Attention in these sections was focused on describing the principal lessons learnt during the research process as well as the main limitations encountered. It was concluded that despite periods of uncertainty, this process was determinant to transform my personal vision of the social world.

And now, your journey through the story of the CIPs policy process begins...

## **Chapter 4. The interlocking of two agendas: tourism and development, 1930s-1960s.**

### **4.1 Chapter outline**

The information contained in this chapter presents a discussion regarding the social processes that led to the interlocking of tourism and development projects in Mexico during the period 1930-1960. For this purpose, this chapter provides a description of the construction of different political agendas, the emergence and evolution of supportive discourses, and the propagation of state-private networks surrounding the tourism sector. The social interface element called “interlocking relationships and intentionalities” considered in the actor-oriented approach proposed by Long (2001) is developed here. Long (2001: 69) defines this element as “the linkages and networks that develop between individuals or parties...continued interaction encourages the development of boundaries and shared expectations that shape the interaction of participants so that over time the interface becomes an organised entity of interlocking relationships and intentionalities”. Considering the former, the main objectives of this chapter are: 1) to describe the origins and nature of the relationships developed by different actors following tourism and development objectives, and; 2) to explore the processes and circumstances that led to the convergence of these agendas into a single one. The information included in this chapter, in the end, aims to provide a discussion of the historical evolution of the political arena of Mexican tourism through the exploration of different actors’ agendas.

Following a chronological approach, the structure of this chapter is divided into six sections. Section one describes the development of two political agendas in Mexico in the late 1920s: economic growth and tourism. The second section explores the circumstances by which a first encounter of these two agendas was produced in a period of social and economic instability. It is explained that the construction of a particular discourse surrounding tourism aimed to define and negotiate other political objectives at the national level such as the construction of a national identity. The third section focuses its attention on describing how new discursive elements such as ‘progress’ and ‘modernisation’ were incorporated into the tourism discourse. This section includes information regarding the conditions of Mexico after the Second

World War (WWII) and the adoption of development discourses from abroad. The fourth section describes the main features of the policy-making practices in Mexico under a political system that was reaching a consolidation stage during the 1950s. The fifth section focuses its attention on describing the process of the institutionalisation of tourism. This section includes information regarding the development of a power struggle within the ruling elite that led to the creation of different organisations motivated by different political interests. Finally, the sixth section discusses the circumstances by which the interlocking of the agendas of tourism and development was produced. This section includes information regarding the construction and reproduction of a global discourse on development that was adopted by the Mexican government redefining the participation of the state in tourism.

## **4.2 The development of two agendas**

### *4.2.1 Building a nation*

After a series of complex conflict episodes (1910-1917 Revolution, and 1926-1929 Church-state War), the Mexican government had the big task of building a nation from its ashes. The end of the Revolution in 1917 left the country with thousands dead, agricultural and mining production in decline, communications and transport systems severely damaged, and with an image of a country with persistent social instability. The battle of the *revolucionarios* seemed to have ended after the removal from power of the dictator Victoriano Huerta and his supporters, and the next natural step was the reorganisation of a nation that was practically devastated. The legal framework considered within the 1917 Constitution seemed appropriate for the maintenance of social stability, at least in the first few years after the revolution. Three key points within the 1917 Constitution seemed to guarantee stable conditions: a plan for a more equitable redistribution of land (Article 27); the recognition of the labour unions including the social and legal protection of workers (Article 123), and; the declaration of national ownership of natural resources such as minerals and oil.

Despite the former, a power struggle ensued between two political factions in order to gain control of the post-revolutionary state. On the one hand, there was a group identified as “constitutionalists” led by military veterans such as Venustiano Carranza and Alvaro Obregón that had a project of state based on capitalism, and; on

the other, a group identified as “the agrarians” headed by peasantry leaders (Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa) who had an agenda that considered social and economic justice for the rural masses (Merrill and Miró, 1996). Both parties recognised it was time for negotiation to bridge both interests into a single common agenda. The assassination of Zapata (1919) and Carranza (1920), and the inauguration of Obregón as president (1920-1924), however, abruptly ended these negotiations as the political power was captured by “the constitutionalists” and their ideology, establishing thus the bases for the formation of the first political structures in contemporary Mexico.

The “constitutionalists” formed a governmental apparatus adopting capitalism as the main economic ideology, placing a great reliance on the actions carried out by the private sector at national and international scales (Bennett and Sharpe, 1980). In order to advance the economic plans, decision-making powers were dissolved to a small group of the ruling elite under the umbrella of a political party: the National Revolutionary Party (PNR). The creation of PNR was decisive in the institutionalisation and monopolisation of access to power expanding the room for manoeuvre of the political elite. Before the creation of this political institution, the main strategies for the maintenance of the leadership of the political elite were bribes, blackmail, corruption, and purges (Cockcroft, 1983). It was recognised that in order to achieve economic growth objectives and a stable political system, the institutional strategy functioned as a practical way to organise the relationship between the state and society; the ‘reward’ system became indispensable for those willing to show alignment and loyalty to the ruling elite. The creation of the PNR thus signified the main political strategy implemented by the “constitutionalists” to gain compliance and abolish any form of challenge to the modernisation plans. In Espinosa’s (2004: 136) words the PNR “strengthened political stability by absorbing local *caudillos* [dissidents] and giving them a political arena within their disputes could be solved”.

Along with the design of a political system dominated by a single party, the creation of structures to control important sectors of Mexican society -peasants, workers, entrepreneurs, unions and so on- was seen as indispensable to secure social and economic stability. Although the concentration of diverse interests within the PNR was seen problematic, the construction of a corporatist system proved useful to prevent major social disturbances and any form of political contestation. Likewise,

the creation of other instrumental institutions such as *Comisión Nacional de Caminos* (National Roads Commission), the *Comisión Nacional de Irrigación* (National Irrigation Commission), the *Comisión Nacional de Fuerza Motriz* (National Energy Commission), as well as a network of state-led development banks such as the Banco de Mexico played a decisive role strengthening the corporatist strategy.

Despite the eager desires of the new political elite to transform Mexico into a modern nation through capitalism, this country was mainly rural having a great reliance on the agriculture sector at the time. According to Navarrete (1959), nearly 70% of the total Mexican economy was based on agricultural activities, posing serious challenges to the achievement of the objectives considered by the ruling elite. It was clear that, in order to change the economic orientation of Mexico from the primary sector toward an industrialised one, large amounts of investment were needed especially in infrastructure and technology. The efforts of the administrations of Obregón and his successor, Plutarco E. Calles (1924-1928), were concentrated on making capitalism work through the encouragement of a more active role from the private sector in this industrialisation process; the state thus would intervene only in economic sectors where private initiative proved incapable or unwilling. This strategy, however, seemed not to have the desired outcomes due to a growing perception of economic uncertainty and social discontent (Bennett and Sharpe, 1980). The former was derived from the unfulfilled revolutionary promises translated into a better distribution of land and wealth for peasants and rural masses in general. This social discontent materialised in a counterrevolution that took place in 1926, known as “The Cristero Rebellion”.

Gledhill (1998) points out that the Cristero rebellion reflected two principal issues in Mexico: 1) a weak incorporation of the lower classes into the new political system that resulted in a substantial increase in the social power of the Church as the only institution that could provide meaning and social identity to people in conditions of economic uncertainty, dispossession and unequal violent class relations, and; 2) a generalised distrust ambiance where the government was perceived as a disassociated entity unaware of the realities of rural life and collective associations. It has to be noted, however, that the access to resources and public attention through discourses from dissidents was limited to the point of being suffocated by force.

Thus, the main strategy from the government to suppress this rebellion and any kind of objection to the political elite plans was the use of the military. Despite the former, the re-election of the President Obregón, and his immediate assassination in 1928, contributed to create an image of Mexico as a place of violence and never-ending instability. The end of this conflict, in 1929, coincidentally marked the beginning of the development of an economic sector that was not being considered by the political elite until then: tourism.

#### 4.2.2 *The emergence of a tourism agenda*

As already mentioned, the origins of tourism in Mexico can be traced back to the late 1920s. This particular period became crucial for the proliferation of state-private partnerships laying the foundations of an incipient and clearly disorganised industry. It is important to note that due to the persisting environment of violence, only a few international tourists -mainly from the United States of America (US)- considered travelling to the Mexican territory. Not surprisingly, it was mainly in north border cities such as *Tijuana*, *Mexicali*, *Nogales*, *Matamoros*, and *Ciudad Juarez* where tourism-related activities proliferated during this period (Jiménez, 1992; Merrill, 2009). A factor to consider in the growth of tourism activities in the border region was the US government decree prohibiting the production and consumption of alcohol during this period -better known as the Volstead Act- (Bringas, 1991). The first partnerships between Mexican and US entrepreneurs developed giving birth to the establishment of businesses such as gambling casinos, brothels, horseracing tracks and so on in order to solve the prohibition issue. *Tijuana* was a good example of the former attracting the attention of the ruling elite due to large profits derived from tourism-related activities. Thus, important members of the political elite participated actively owning business and establishing partnerships with private entrepreneurs<sup>1</sup>.

Despite the explosive growth of tourism related businesses in the northern border region, serious limitations in the road infrastructure prevented US tourists from

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<sup>1</sup> Bringas (1991: 17-46) discusses the case of Aberlardo L. Rodriguez, the governor of the territory of Baja California in the 1920s and President in the 1930s, who owned some businesses in Tijuana - Agua Caliente Hotel and Casino- in partnership with prominent US entrepreneurs and the case of Tivoli bar and casino owned by a US businessman Withintong, paying approximately 60,000 dollars per month in bribes to local politicians in order to operate without restrictions.

travelling beyond these cities into the rest of the country. The majority of the roads connecting the northern border with central Mexico were under construction at the end of the 1920s (Jiménez, 1992). In addition to infrastructure problems, tourism services were insufficient and of bad quality according to US destination standards (Berger, 2006). Likewise, customs requirements were excessive (entrance permits, insurance, tourist fees and so on) constraining not only tourism but also weekend commercial activities (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALR exp.505.2/55 and ALR exp.525.2/33*).

The first political discourse in favour of tourism from the Mexican government took place in the inaugural speech of the President Portes Gil to the congress in 1928; he declared:

*“The intense current of tourism that, in the last years, has been visited upon us, makes manifest the necessity that the Department [referring to migration service] dedicate most of its attention to this new source of prosperity”*(Cámara de Diputados, 1966; quoted by Espinosa, 2004: 162).

One year later (1929), Portes Gil declared during a press conference Mexico’s desire to be involved in the race for the tourist dollar (Berger, 2006: 11). Derived from these pronouncements two things are inferred: 1) the willingness and support from the political elite to tourism activities recognising its economic potential, and; 2) the intention to turn Mexico into a tourism competitor in the regional market. Two questions are pertinent to ask at this point: why was an activity such as tourism being considered when the country presented deep ideological divisions and a climate of internal war? Even more intriguing is, why were the Mexican political elite of the 1920s interested in an industry they barely knew?

There is no doubt that the first motivations of the political elite in considering tourism as a viable industry to develop had principally economic implications. After some general explorations of the functioning of the international tourism market in countries such as Canada, Cuba, the US and some strategic points in Europe like France, the political elite realised that activities related to travel and tourism generated large amounts of money in the form of foreign exchange (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALR exp. 505.3/50*). The tourism sector was recognised as an important source of capital not only to propel other sectors of the economy such



as agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce but also a way to increase the personal fortunes of certain individuals close to the power elite circle (Gómez, 2002). Moreover, considering that the main sources of capital and technology came from external sources in the form of investment and lending, tourism was perceived as a great opportunity to reduce financial external dependence as well as the opportunity to legitimise the project of a modern nation.

#### *4.2.2.1 A focus on international tourism*

The interest of the Mexican government was mainly focused on attracting international tourists due to their supposed potential to produce foreign revenue for the country. According to Jiménez (1992), domestic tourism at the time was scarce and it was seen as a privileged activity practised only by the upper classes<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, there was an interest to lure tourists from abroad paying special attention to the neighbour nation: the US. The rationale behind the interest to attract US tourists was based on two main factors: the geographical proximity of Mexico to the US, and; the fact that this country represented the largest sender of tourists in the world. By the 1920s, American travellers spent approximately 770 million dollars outside the US for the purpose of tourism (Merrill, 2009: 2). It must be noted that, although an incipient commercial aviation system already existed in the 1920s, the preferred transport method of US tourists was the automobile making Mexico a viable destination in terms of distance. However, the intention of attracting US motorists into this territory required more than good intentions; it required large investments on infrastructure -roads, electricity, public services-, adequate services for tourists -hotels, motels, fuel stations, restaurants, mechanic services-, and state organisation -legal frameworks, public-private arrangements, institutions- to facilitate the growth of this activity.

#### *4.2.2.2 The first generation of institutions and networks surrounding tourism*

The first formal political arrangement from the state to organise the incipient tourist industry was the creation of the Pro-Tourism Commission (CPT) in 1928 (Berger, 2006; Castillo, 2005; Clancy, 1999; Jiménez, 1992). This commission was formed

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<sup>2</sup> This researcher was unable to find records describing its scale or occurrence during this historical period.

by three government departments: Migration, Health and the Customs Department. The main objectives of the CPT were to identify the main impediments encountered by foreign tourists in their travels to Mexico as well as to propose a legal framework to reduce customs requirements for tourists. However, the CPT was rapidly transformed into the Pro-Tourism Mixed Commission (CMPT) in 1929 incorporating the voice of actors from the private sector. This change reflected the ideological commitment of the political elite with capitalism encouraging the participation of the private sector in the organisation of the tourism industry.

Simultaneously, the Mexican Tourism Association (MTA) and the Mexican Restaurants Association (MRA) were formed aiming to represent the interests of private businesses such as railway and restaurant companies. The main objective of these associations was to open a formal channel of communication and influence government's decisions. Likewise, the Mexican Automobile Association (AMA) was created due to the recognition of the importance of motor travel to US tourists. Berger (2006) points out that the development of cooperative networks between this association and the influential American Automobile Association (AAA) led to its formation. The AAA had a prominent role in the organisation and promotion of motor travel within the US, producing route guides, magazines and promotional brochures of US territory at the time. An example of this was found in "The Motorist Guide to Mexico" that was published in 1933 by AAA and supported by the AMA nationally (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALR exp. 830/196*). It was stated by the AMA that:

*"This book [referring to the guide] has received a great welcome in the US, being considered by the American Press as very opportune to address the need of the motorist that wishes to know an interesting country [Mexico] especially now that it has a brilliant future in tourism" (Ibid; my translation).*

The AMA thus established a close connection with AAA, emulating its promotional scheme and producing guides for US motorists within the Mexican territory. It has to be noted that the AMA became an influential group for the development of tourism activities in Mexico given the relevance of motor travel at the time. It mobilised information resources to draw the attention of the public to negotiate with government new agreements to reduce customs taxes and legal requirements for

foreign tourists travelling by car. Moreover, it acquired a real political influence once the Pan-American Highway was inaugurated in 1936<sup>3</sup>. The AMA had the ability to reunite an important number of businessmen surrounding it willing to invest in hotels, motels, restaurants, and mechanical services along the Pan-American route (Berger, 2006). The AMA thus showed its organisational power within the negotiations with the government shortening the construction time of roads and expanding motor travel within the country. Above all, the AMA consolidated a more influential role over the years due to the increasing demands of tourists for infrastructure and facilities exploiting the need of the Mexican government to maintain a good reputation internationally.

The road system in Mexico was substantially expanded and tourism activities indirectly benefited during the first years of the 1930s. During this period the roads between Mexico City-*Córdoba*, Mexico City-*Pachuca*, Mexico City-*Toluca*, Mexico City-*Acapulco*, Mexico City-*Guadalajara*, *Toluca-Morelia*, *Monterrey-Laredo*, and *Mérida-Progreso* were completed (Jiménez, 1992: 17). The existence of these roads represented an option for motorists to explore beyond the border cities. This road network was crucial to consolidate a steady growth in tourist numbers during these years. The number of international tourists increased substantially: Mexico received 75,000 visitors by 1935, contrasting with the 127,000 received by 1939 (Merrill, 2009: 66).

From 1930 to 1935 the efforts to organise the tourism industry were concentrated on two main tasks: the creation of a promotional image of Mexico and the construction of facilities to accommodate the increasing tide of tourists. Since public spending on tourism was sensibly cut after the Great Depression years, the private initiative assumed the role of promoter (Berger, 2006). The main strategy was to make use of the US media to create a good image of Mexico and encourage travel to the country. Thus, some private companies such as Wagon-Lits Cook, for example, offered to build a state-private partnership to produce and distribute one million promotional

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<sup>3</sup> The construction of this Highway took eight years. The route started in the northern border region of Mexico with the US, in Nuevo Laredo Tamaulipas passing through important cities such as Monterrey, and going down the country southward to Pachuca and, finally Mexico City. It is important to note that this highway was the first direct road connection from the US to Mexico City, and as such, it represented a major entry point for US tourists

brochures within the US with the main objective of attracting more tourists to the country (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALR exp. 502.2/46*). They stated:

*“Despite the great flow of tourists that has started in recent years, it is necessary to increase the promotional efforts to consolidate this activity [tourism] in Mexico” (Ibid; my translation).*

Another example of promotion was found in a “Tourism Bulletin” (December, 1932) produced and distributed by the “Standard Oil Company de Mexico”. One hundred thousand copies were distributed in the US, Central and South America as well as some European countries including informative articles of Mexican cities such as *Guadalajara, Puebla and Mexico City* (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALR exp. 830/91*). It was stated:

*“The objective of dedicating this number to Mexico is cooperate to draw the attention, not only of the tourists but also of businessmen to encourage them to come to enjoy the weather and beautiful landscapes as well as to cooperate in the development of this country [my translation]... Mexico is a land of amazing productivity, and endowed by Providence with untold wealth in natural storehouses of metals and minerals essential to the pursuance of the arts and manufacturing industries. The world is her (sic) potential market, and today finds her (sic) on the threshold of a new era, a wide-awake, forward-looking, united people, alert and eager to reap the rewards of her (sic) industry and trade” (Ibid).*

However, the largest and most effective spokesperson of the emerging tourism sector at the time was the network developed by US-Mexican owned railway companies (Merrill, 2009: 51). Although railway travel was not the preferred method of transportation for the tourists mainly due to the limitations of the network, it represented an important economic power in Mexico at the time (Walton, 2009). The development of cooperation agreements between the Missouri Pacific Railroad and the National Railways of Mexico was crucial to organise train journeys connecting US cities with Mexican ones<sup>4</sup> (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALR exp. 334/309*).

In addition to these promotional efforts, the need to build more accommodation facilities such as motels by the roads and first class hotels, especially in Mexico City, was recognised. Merrill (2009) pointed out that the construction of high category hotels in Mexico City such as the *Hotel del Prado* (1932) and *Hotel Reforma* (1934)

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<sup>4</sup> Such as the route St Louis-Mexico City, a journey that lasted approximately 62 hours.

were crucial to consolidate the image of Mexico as a modern and appropriate destination with the standards required by US tourists. The role of the state in this process, however, did not go unnoticed. The construction of the *Hotel del Prado*, for instance, was commissioned by the Banco de Mexico establishing the bases of the first joint ventures in tourism businesses between the Mexican government and private capital. The intervention of this institution had its origins on the personal interest of influential actors of the ruling elite in tourism.

Although the primary functions of the Banco de Mexico were to achieve economic stability and regulate currency, this institution started to develop a long-lasting connection with the tourism industry supporting its growth. Through this institution, the National Tourism Commission (CNT) was created with the main objective of providing financial and promotional support to this sector. The President Abelardo L. Rodríguez declared (1932-1934) in this respect:

*“The office of tourism was established with the purpose to place Mexico among the countries that offer its natural resources to the tourists...the relevance of tourism for our country is crucial, not only for the short-term economic benefits translated into greater revenues in commercial activities and transportation but also for medium-term benefits that could be translated into attracting more foreign investment to Mexico” (Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALR exp. 505.3/50).*

This political move represented the beginning of the participation of actors from the government in the organisation of the tourism sector in the years to come. Thus, some influential politicians such as Alberto Mascareñas (Banco de Mexico Director, 1925-1938), Julio René (CNT's office director), Antonio Rodríguez (former ambassador in London) Alberto J. Pani (Finance Minister) among many others, assigned the necessary public budget for the construction of infrastructure, hotels, production of Mexico's brochures, guides, and radio programs in English as well as promotional postal stamps (Berger, 2006). During this period, it was very common to see how politicians close to the political elite circle got involved in tourism-related businesses blurring the state and private objectives and opening the door to the proliferation of corruption practices surrounding this industry.

#### **4.3 The first encounter of two agendas**

Despite all the actions executed during this preliminary stage, the Great Depression (GD) that started in the US in 1929 would have a profound negative impact, not only

on the plans to organise a tourism industry, but also to the national economy of Mexico in the first half of the 1930s. Cárdenas (2000: 178-179) specifies that the negative impacts of GD included a substantial decrease in oil and mining exports, a profound trade deficit, a reduction in government spending especially on investment, a fall in GDP of 18% between 1929-1932, an increase in unemployment and real wage declined, and a depreciation of the exchange rate in 1932. This crisis led the political elite to reconsider its economic plan; as the price of imports changed drastically derived from currency depreciation, demand was directed toward the domestic market. Domestic industrial production increased by 118% from 1932 to 1940, with an average annual rate of 10% and, the domestic industrial sector became the engine of economic growth increasing its share of GDP from 15% in 1929 to 19% in 1940 (Cárdenas, 2000: 180).

Although the main interest of the Mexican government in tourism relied on its economic potential, other political advantages were identified by the political elite according to the historical circumstances of the time. Under the argument of reducing the economic dependency of Mexico on external finance sources and the challenges derived from the GD, the construction of a discourse emerged linking the agendas of tourism and economic growth. This discourse utilised rhetorical elements surrounding “national sovereignty” proposing to develop a tourism industry by Mexicans and for Mexicans (Berger, 2006). A nationalist language was utilised in order to create a sense of pride for the tangible and intangible cultural manifestations and natural landscapes that belonged to Mexico. The discursive elements included the exaltation of the indigenous past through the rescue of historical and cultural sites as well as the promotion of cultural expressions inspired by grassroots elements (Merrill, 2009). In this sense, “tourism emerged as another opportunity for revolutionary leaders [political elite] to define, negotiate and preserve national identity” (Berger, 2006: 15). However, it seemed that the main objective of the state to systematically reproduce this discourse was to use tourism as a cohesiveness element in a clearly divided country. Given the fact that interest was focused on attracting foreign tourists, this strategy seemed appropriated to provide tourism with a beneficial appearance weakening any form of social resistance to these plans. Thus, investment in tourism would be portrayed as ‘necessary’ to provide a short-term solution for the economic problems of the country.

#### 4.3.1 *An ideological impasse*

The administration of President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) played a decisive role not only in the development of the tourism industry but overall in the historical evolution of Mexico as a country. When Cárdenas assumed the presidency, the first tactical move was to make public a political rupture with his predecessor Calles and his group -including former presidents Portes Gil, Ortiz Rubio, and Rodríguez-, sending him into exile in the United States (Merrill, 2009). This political emancipation was interpreted as a sudden change of direction in the purposes of the political elite. Since the political apparatus surrounding Calles was dismantled, Cárdenas proposed the adoption of a different vision of the state aiming to produce profound transformations in the socioeconomic landscape of Mexico.

The political agenda of President Cárdenas, according to Navarrete (1959) was famous for being closer to social justice objectives. Cárdenas' agenda paid special attention to generate structural changes related to land redistribution, industrial reform, the promotion of national industry, and more importantly, the nationalisation of natural resources such as oil. Thus, the first agrarian reform took place redistributing massive portions of land to landless peasants under the collective productive model called *ejidos*<sup>5</sup>. Assies (2008: 43) says that more than 20 million hectares were redistributed benefiting 800,000 peasants during this period. To put this into perspective, only 950,000 peasants benefited from land assignation during the period 1917 to 1934. This land reform was largely supported by the state with material, technical, and financial assistance directing public policies towards the economically disadvantaged sectors of Mexican society.

At the same time, oil expropriation was carried out affecting principally the economic interests of British and American companies. This political move according to Gledhill (1998) was well received by large sectors of Mexican society. It helped to generate credibility in the government particularly in economically disadvantaged social sectors. The combination of these measures enabled President Cárdenas and the group around him to regain civil support that other administrations had largely ignored. Despite Cárdenas' recognition of the possible adverse effects

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<sup>5</sup> The *ejido* is a system of whereby the government promotes the use of communal land by the inhabitants of a community.

that the adopted measures could bring, especially in international relations terms, he was confident in the fact of having created the bases for the development of the agricultural sector, the promotion of a national industry and a base of social support that would sustain the political regime in the future<sup>6</sup>.

Not surprisingly, tourism was not regarded as a top priority in the national political agenda at the time. Consistent with the rupture with Calles, Cárdenas had two main objectives regarding tourism: 1) to weaken the economic power of the groups close to Calles that were benefiting from the proliferation of tourism-related businesses preventing them from regaining control of the northern border region in cities like *Tijuana*, and; 2) to build a new sense of morality surrounding tourism activities exalting any expression of nationalism (Merrill, 2009). Despite the former, the economic relevance of tourism to achieve the objectives of the national industrialisation project was still widely recognised. President Cárdenas declared the following on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1940 referring to tourism:

*“I consider it very important to promote the flow of visitors between the countries of America. The flux of travellers helps to open new markets for industrial and agricultural activities, accelerating the commercial exchange... these economic benefits being so important for our country, there are other benefits that are derived from the mutual understanding among men (sic)...[tourism] contributes to form a public conscience more accurate, free of prejudices, suspects, and resentments; it helps to sow the seeds of goodwill; it reduces the language and cultural differences, and contributes to unify the forces of our countries to face common problems , that can be resolved in an environment of mutual respect, equality, and self-determination” (Archivo General de la Nación, colección LCR exp. 111/4067; my translation).*

The tone of this discourse reflected the existence of a conflictive environment derived from the oil expropriation decree. The negative effects on the tourism industry could be felt almost immediately. The number of motorists travelling to Mexico was clearly affected by a fierce campaign to discredit Mexico mounted by the affected oil companies such as CONOCO and Texaco (Berger, 2006). Motorists were advised in US petrol stations to avoid motor travel to Mexico due to supposedly unsafe conditions, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of good quality fuel. In order to reverse the negative effects of this campaign, several organisations from Mexico and the US mounted a counter-campaign to raise the awareness of travellers

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<sup>6</sup> The *ejido* system would serve as an effective mechanism of political control and peasant representation in the years to come.



stating that the image of Mexico published by oil companies was not accurate. Thus, organisations such as “The Mexican Chamber of Commerce in the United States Inc” supported the publication called “Modern Mexico” aiming to distribute two million copies throughout US cities in 1940 (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección LCR exp. 111/4067*). It was stated that, given the prevailing environment of tension, there was a need to:

*“Fight the insidious and false campaign from oil companies to deviate the flow of tourists...these negative versions of Mexico lack sufficient arguments...tourists can be sure that Mexico is still a peaceful country (Archivo General de la Nación, colección LCR exp. 548/14; my translation).*

Other promotional strategies included the purchase of spaces on US informative channels such as the “Daily New Deal”, and “NBC radio” (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección LCR exp. 111/4067*). Likewise, at the national level, the new national oil company *Petróleos Mexicanos* (PEMEX) organised printed material called *Club de Viajes* PEMEX with the same purpose of restoring the good image of Mexico (Jiménez, 1992). The CNT, in turn, aligned the promotional resources of influential actors such as the AMA, National Railways, Mexican Railways, Missouri-Pacific Railways, Mexican Aviation Company (Pan-Am subsidiary), Mexican National Bank, American and Mexican Chambers of Commerce, a group of hoteliers, and so on (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección LCR exp. 548/14* ).

Although tourism was not a priority of the Cárdenas administration, some actions reflected the willingness of the state to provide some support to tourism development e.g. through the creation of a credit line and fiscal incentives mainly for hotel construction. The creation of the government bank called *Crédito Hotelero*, a subsidiary of the Banco de Mexico, was crucial to channel credits for the hotel sector (mainly in Mexico City) and infrastructure in the port of Acapulco on the pacific coast (Jiménez, 1992). It must be noted that behind the creation of these credit strategies was the influential figure of the Director of the Banco de Mexico, Luis Montes de Oca, who had developed a special interest in tourism-related affairs. His close personal connections with some members of the hotel sector and government officials with businesses within this industry were crucial to generate the conditions to continue state support (Berger, 2006).

### 4.3.2 *The war factor*

The international political environment at the end of the 1930s and at the beginning of the 1940s was very turbulent due to WWII in Europe. A climate of uncertainty and expectation was spreading towards the American continent despite the alleged neutral position of the US. The possibility of the participation of the US in the war was latent and some political arrangements should have been made. Although some political frictions remained between the US and Mexico derived from the conflict of interests in the nationalisation of oil, the agenda of the US President Roosevelt considered a plan to maintain the continental leadership under a foreign policy called “Good Neighbour Policy”. This policy, according to Espinosa (2004), had two main objectives: 1) to gain Latin American support and cooperation in the eve of a possible participation of the US in WWII, and; 2) to maintain its influence over the continent through economic and cultural penetration. This political strategy thus became crucial in restoring diplomatic relations especially with Mexico after the oil conflict. Merrill (2009: 96) says in this respect “[the policy] meant a willingness to pursue a peaceful settlement of ongoing property and debt disputes, to fend off oil demands for retribution against Mexico’s nationalist government, and to enhance cultural exchange, including tourism”.

The decision, in 1941, by the US to participate in WWII dramatically changed productive and diplomatic relations between these two countries. The exports of agricultural products and manufactured goods from Mexico to the US increased 850% during the war period, reporting a constant 5.2% growth in GDP from 1939-1945, and a 7.6% growth in the industrial sector overall (Cárdenas, 2000: 182-183). The levels of imports increased substantially as well, producing the effect of massive public investment in the industrialisation program. The subsequent presidential administrations after Cárdenas reinvented the vision of the state according to the new economic circumstances. “With the idea that economic prosperity was synonymous with industrialization, urbanization became widespread among the *postcardenista* regimes, and most efforts were centred on expanding economic infrastructure for the benefit of industry, commerce and the cities” (Cárdenas, 2000: 182). Thus, the administration of President Manuel Avila Camacho (1940-1946) largely benefited from the expansion of the national economy especially during the war years. The

Mexican government thus showed a collaborative attitude with the US maintaining its borders open for commercial and military purposes. The ideology of social justice promoted by the Cárdenas administration was progressively abandoned leading to the re-adoption of the political project of building a modern nation.

The positive effects that WWII brought to Mexico's economy were also reflected in the tourism industry. The conflict in Europe compromised the numbers of international travellers to that region mainly due to personal safety reasons (Jiménez, 1992). This situation led US tourists to turn to Latin America, especially toward its closer southern neighbour, Mexico. Mexico became a viable alternative destination for American tourists during the war years because the image of a peaceful nation that sympathised with the political objectives at home was carefully constructed. Thus, joint publicity was supported by both governments and tourism-related actors to promote travel activities between Mexico and the US. An example of the type of publicity distributed at the time can be found in the promotional campaign ("South of the border, too, our war trains roll") produced by the company Southern Pacific Railways in 1944 reflecting the following:

*"We cannot ask you to travel now, because of our great war load. But when peace comes again we hope you'll ride with us to Mexico [...] invest in War bonds now. For War Bonds will make possible fine train trips after the war, when you can make such trips with a clear conscience" (Archivo General de la Nación, colección MAC exp. 704/486).*

According to Merrill (2009), the constant depreciation of the Mexican currency during these years also became a decisive factor in attracting more tourists into the country. However, the findings of a study from the Banco de Mexico in 1941 ("*El Turismo Norteamericano en México*") tell a different story (Archivo General de la Nación, colección MAC exp. 548.2/1). The primary objective of the Banco de Mexico's study was to gain a better understanding of the contribution of tourism to the national trade account. The main conclusions of this study established the following points:

- 1) *The optimism regarding the economic performance of North American tourism in Mexico is unjustified...representing less than 4% of the export revenues;*

- 2) *The current tourism movement in the country does not allow to foresee a tourism development similar to consolidated destinations in the US and Europe, and;*
- 3) *The constant currency depreciation has not been a factor to attract more tourists into the country (Ibid: 69-70; my translation).*

Although the administration of President Avila Camacho (1940-1946) has not been historically recognised as active in the development of the tourism industry, it is fair to say that some support was provided to this activity through the implementation of specific governmental actions. Due to the prevailing climate of cooperation during the WWII years between Mexico and the US, a number of official tourist offices were opened in cities such as New York, San Antonio, Los Angeles and Tucson (FONATUR, 1988). Other measures included support speeches in diplomatic visits by members of the Mexican government (*Archivo General de la Nación*, colección MAC exp. 548.2/1) and the implementation of public policies such as “Peso-for-Peso” whereby the Mexican government offered to allocate a Mexican “peso” to match each “peso” invested by the private sector in the promotion of national tourism (Jiménez, 1992).

Promotional campaigns in the US from the private sector continued including printed material such as articles in magazines and newspapers as well as visual material such as cinema (*Archivo General de la Nación*, colección MAC exp. 548.3/4). According to Berger (2006), the Hollywood movie industry largely contributed to construct an image of Mexico as a viable tourism destination during these years. Espinosa (2004: 184) pointed out “the subtle use of mass media, especially cinema, came to assist US war propaganda, the expansion of Mexican tourism and, in the end, to refashion the image of Mexico”. In this sense, the images presented in movies such as *Viva Mexico*, *Highway to Friendship* and *Holiday in Mexico* (Ibid) helped to build a cultural identity of Mexico in the minds of potential tourists creating a number of expectations to fulfil through their travels. Espinosa (2004: 186) writes in this respect “the picture of Mexico to be consumed by the tourist market came to be deliberately composed of friendly *mariachis*, beaches, pyramids and cosmopolitan grandeur”.

The combination of these actions helped Mexico to receive 207, 000 foreign tourists and 270 million pesos in revenue by 1943 (MTA, 1944, *Archivo General de la*

*Nación, colección MAC exp. 704/170-3*). Despite the apparent favourable panorama that tourism enjoyed, it is important to note that 98% of the tourists came from the US and 68% of tourism revenue stayed in border cities (Ibid). The former meant tourism was still highly dependent on the activities happening in border cities. It was clear that in order to redirect the flow of tourists into the country, other measures had to be taken leading the government to adopt a more active role in this sector increasing the investment on infrastructure (road and rail network, ports, airports), producing a better legal framework (migration, customs, safety and health issues) and implementing a series of policies to encourage private participation (tax exemptions) (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección MAC exp. 548.2/2*).

#### **4.4 Discourses of progress and modernisation**

The situation of Mexico after the end of WWII changed dramatically in economic terms. In order to complete its modernisation project, industrial imports increased considerably. According to Cárdenas (2000: 186) by 1947, imports were 93% higher than in 1945, and 444% more than in 1940. A severe decline in manufacturing exports was expected as a consequence of the end of the war and the normalisation of US productive activities. Garcia (2007) says that the Mexican government had to actively intervene to make the Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) strategy work implementing a scheme of tariffs and quotas for imported goods. This measure had the objective of protecting and encouraging the development of a national industry to replace imported goods with those produced domestically. Cárdenas (1996) suggests that the protectionist posture of the Mexican government produced negative effects on the economy such as the reduction of technology transfer, low quality products, low competitiveness and the creation of black markets mainly in the northern border region with the US. Thus, the state dramatically changed its role having almost absolute intervention over the economy (Bennett and Sharpe, 1980). The state fully subsidised the steel industry, mills, cement plants, railway construction, banking, sugar, and so on and due to the former, Mexico seemed to have achieved relative economic stability having absolute control over its productive system.

The administration of President Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952) paid special interest to the promotion of tourism, considering it crucial for the objective of

transforming Mexico into an industrialised nation. Espinosa (2004: 194) writes in this respect “state support for tourism... was shaped by a notion of *progress* and *modernization* of the country symbolized by rapid economic growth brought by *industrialization*” (my emphasis in italics). It is assumed that the adoption of a notion of “progress” and “modernisation” by the Mexican political elite was influenced by the reproduction of Truman’s discourse during the 1940s. This discourse, according to Escobar (1995: 3-4), had the intention to implant an ideology in economically disadvantaged countries for creating the conditions “to replicating the world over the features that characterized the “advanced” societies of the time –high levels of industrialization and urbanization, technicalization (sic) of agriculture, rapid growth of material production and living standards, and the widespread adoption of modern education and cultural values”.

Considering the former, the actions of the administration of President Alemán were oriented towards the construction of a supportive discourse to tourism portraying it as an indispensable tool for the industrialisation project. Alemán Valdés declared in 1946:

*“At a time when we foresee the need to increase imports due to the possibility of declining exports, it is logical that our interest should be directed toward the activity [referring to tourism] that already constitutes one of the most important sources of earnings for our balance of payments”* (FONATUR, 1988: 8).

Government actions during Alemán’s administration were thus focused on improving the conditions of infrastructure including the construction of new roads -especially those that connected the ports of *Veracruz*, *Acapulco* and *Puerto Progreso* on the *Yucatán* Peninsula for trade and tourism purposes-, the opening of new international aviation routes with the US and Europe, and the improvement of airports’ facilities in cities like *Mexico*, *Acapulco* and *Tijuana* (Jiménez, 1992). Likewise, a legal frame was devised giving birth to the first Federal Law of Tourism in 1948. Derived from the introduction of this law, a Committee<sup>7</sup> (*Comité Nacional Pro-Turismo*, CNPT) of tourism promotion was formed with the objective of organising the promotional campaigns of the public and private sector as well as regulating the prices of services and practices related to tourism activities. The integration of this committee, however,

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<sup>7</sup> This committee included the voices of different tourism-related associations i.e. hotels, restaurants, transportation companies and so on.

represented a difficult task given the confluence of diverse interests and agendas surrounding the tourism industry (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección MAV exp. 545.22/187*)

Despite the intense tourism promotional campaigns during war times, Mexico had a negative perception in the US as a tourism destination. At the end of the 1940s, Mexico was still perceived as “a country with fuel scarcity problems, elevated prices in hotels, bad sanitary conditions, and with insufficient tourism-information offices” (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección MAV exp. 548.3/4*). A report written by the “World Information Agency Mexico” detailed the main impediments for Mexican tourism at the time. It was stated:

*“The reduction of tourists in Mexico had been caused by the adverse conditions generated at international level, for example economic uncertainty, the resumption of the trips to Europe, and general difficulties to make reservations in hotels” (Archivo General de la Nación, colección MAV exp. 564.2/18; my translation).*

In this sense, promotional campaigns carried out by different actors (e.g. MTA and CNPT) were intensified abroad recognising the importance to effectively compete against European destinations that were regaining spaces after WWII. The MTA declared in 1949:

*“In order to maintain the current flow of tourists toward Mexico, it is indispensable...to continue with a joint promotional labour abroad between the different associations related to the tourism industry and the government especially now that European competition is more intense” (Archivo General de la Nación, colección MAV exp. 545.3/169; my translation).*

#### *4.4.1 Acapulco: the crown jewel*

During this period, Alemán Valdés was very active in the consolidation of *Acapulco* as a tourism destination. The government invested important financial resources in the construction of a highway that connected this destination with Mexico City (Jiménez, 1992). *Acapulco* was publicised nationally and abroad as a place with exceptional natural landscapes and high-class hotels where famous people such as Hollywood luminaries met (Espinosa, 2004). The explosive growth and economic success of this destination rapidly ignited the ambitions of influential people in the state and private spheres. The personal dedication of Miguel Alemán in promoting

Acapulco from his position of president was propelled by the interest to obtain large economic benefits for himself and his close business and friendship networks.

Evidence of the former can be found in several examples: 1) Alemán owned a real estate company selling *Acapulco's* land during his administration in a joint venture with an influential media businessman, Emilio Azcárraga; 2) an official expropriation of a massive portion of *ejido* land in *Puerto Marqués* was carried out in 1947 that was subsequently sold to government officials and their relatives; 3) he maintained hotel partnerships with prominent hoteliers -national and foreign- such as Conrad Hilton in several parts of the country; 5) the evidence of bribery practices in public contracts in the production of energy and transport systems, and; 6) the existence of obscured practices in the public administration with the purpose of self-enrichment for the political elite close to Alemán's circle (Espinosa, 2004: 210-211; Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, December 2008).

Despite the corrupt environment that surrounded Alemán's administration, he was recognised as the mastermind behind the construction of a supportive discourse to tourism development. This discourse aimed to portray tourism as a crucial component within the political agenda of transforming a rural country into a modern one (Jiménez, 1992). Alemán's pronouncements thus aimed to convince public opinion of the potential of tourism to change the economic conditions of deprived areas in several parts of the country. He declared at the end of his administration:

*“Domestic as well as foreign tourism will be very useful for developing many parts of our country, raising the income of the local residents, fostering other economic activities and invigorating unproductive regions” (FONATUR, 1988: 9).*

Despite the apparent success of *Acapulco* in attracting important numbers of domestic<sup>8</sup> and foreign tourists, the model of tourism development adopted in destinations such as this reflected a clear unequal distribution of wealth. In this sense, the future expansion of Mexican tourism would be distinguished by the concentration of benefits in few hands as well as in few areas. The systematic reproduction of the

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<sup>8</sup> Nationals from middle and upper classes were encouraged to become tourists visiting destinations such as *Acapulco* in order to take advantage of the expanded road network within the country.



beneficial discourse of tourism was decisive to create a ‘smoke screen’ to conceal inequality-related issues from the public. In this sense, the basis for the expansion of the tourism industry in Mexico were established in destinations such as *Acapulco*, and the functioning of the tourism sector would rely on the plans and decisions envisioned by the ruling political elite and its networks.

#### 4.5 The consolidation of policy-making practices

During the 1950s, the political system devised in the previous decades of the 1930s and 1940s by the political elite was reaching a consolidation stage. The highly secretive political regime, centralised around the presidency and some actors, was proving to be adaptable, coordinated and private regarding the urban-based corporatist pattern (Lehoucq *et al*, 2005: 3). The successful introduction of a new set of policies and the expansion of the room of manoeuvre in policy-making activities made clear that only the privileged elite -and their interests- would be in the position to decide the fate of a nation. **Table 4.1** (see below) summarises the evolution of the Mexican political system within the period 1920-1952 discussed in previous sections of this chapter.

Period	President	Political adscription	Economic ideology
1920-1924	Álvaro Obregón Salido	Constitutionalists	Capitalism
1924-1928	Plutarco Elías Calles	Creation of a political elite surrounding the PNR	Capitalism
1928-1930	Emilio Portes Gil	Calles’ group	Capitalism
1930-1932	Pascual Ortíz Rubio	Calles’ group	Capitalism
1932-1934	Abelardo L. Rodríguez	Calles’ group	Capitalism
1934-1940	Lázaro Cárdenas del Río	Reformulation of the PNR surrounding the PRI	Social Justice
1940-1946	Manuel Ávila Camacho	PRI	Capitalism
1946-1952	Miguel Alemán Valdés	PRI, development of political factions within the ruling elite	Capitalism

**Table 4.1** Evolution of the Mexican political system, period 1920-1952.  
Source: Own elaboration.

Turrent (2007) points out that during this period the formation of two groups within the political elite became evident: on the one hand, the “politicians”, who were responsible for the political operation of the regime, and; on the other, the “technocrats”, who were in charge of the definition of the economic policy. This process of division led to the specialisation of functions within the political elite giving a special prominence to the second group -the technocrats- commanded by influential actors in consolidated institutions of the Mexican Government such as the Banco de Mexico and the Ministry of the Treasury (SHCP). This group assumed the role to formulate, implement and execute a set of policies in order to transform the economic landscape during the 1950s and 1960s.

The main resource of ‘technocrats’ to negotiate the objectives of their agenda with the ‘politicos’ was their accumulated knowledge of the functioning of domestic and international economy. In order to guarantee an environment of economic stability for the political regime, the ‘technocrats’ requested special conditions of political manoeuvre. Turrent (2007: 28) wrote in this respect: “a political operation [from the technocrats] free of any interference was, according to them, the required formula to achieve fast economic growth”. Thus, with a well-defined economic doctrine based on price stability and solid public finances, the ‘technocrats’ packed and sold the idea of a necessary political independence for the successful execution of economic policies that would subsequently contribute to the perpetuation of the political system.

#### *4.5.1 The Mexican Miracle*

The period in which Mexico achieved the most remarkable economic growth was called *Desarrollo Estabilizador* or *El Milagro Mexicano* (Stabilising Development or Mexican Miracle). The technocrats portrayed this episode as the economic success of the ISI (Import Substitution Industrialisation) strategy that seemed to lead Mexico towards the route of the so longed modernisation. The administration of President Adolfo Ruíz Cortines (1952-1958) was characterised for adopting a more active role implementing protectionist measures to stimulate domestic industry and sustain economic growth (Anglade and Fortin, 1985). During this period, a major boom in investment -domestic and foreign- took place producing an annual average rate

growth of 17% (Cárdenas, 2000: 189). Mexico thus experienced a great influx of foreign capital in the first half of the 1950s. The government's response to this phenomenon was to protect domestic producers and stimulate the growth of the national industry. Cárdenas (2000: 187) points out that some industrial sectors such as the textile, food, beverage, tobacco, shoes, soap, rubber, alcohol and glass were on average 95% supplied by domestic firms.

The National Development Financing Bank (NAFINSA, subsidiary of the SHCP) played a significant role in the consolidation of this strategy of protection. According to Bennett and Sharpe (1980: 176) NAFINSA served as a “creditor, investor, and guarantor for 533 businesses of all kinds...it held stocks in 60 industrial firms...and it was a majority stakeholder in 13 firms producing steel, textiles, motion pictures, paper, fertilizers, sugar and refrigerated meats”. The role of NAFINSA in the protection of the national economy became more prominent due to the inability - intentional or not- of the private sector to run successful businesses during this period. In this way, an important number of state-owned enterprises proliferated in Mexico under this environment of protectionism proposed by the technocrats, ensuring thus the control of national productive means.

The most aggressive protectionist policy implemented during Ruíz's administration was the ‘stabilised development policy’ established in 1954 in which price controls were instituted to a number of basic commodities (Bennett and Sharpe, 1980). The effects of this policy and the gradual industrialisation were reflected in the transformation of the economic and social conditions of the country: it produced a phenomenon of massive migration of people from the rural to the urban centres in search of better living conditions. Although the control of prices intended somehow to ameliorate the conditions of the urban incomers, neither the jobs nor the services infrastructure were sufficient to cover the growing demand. Cárdenas (1996) says that the lack of employment, massive migration, low wages (under the inflationary line), and the propagation of informal employment as the only viable source of income under the prevailing unequal conditions, produced a general feeling of social discontent that would be expressed in public demonstrations at the end of the 1950s.

Although the strategy of the state of isolating the market for domestic producers was expanding national industry, imported inputs for the production of many products were still considerable. Evidence of this can be found in 40% of the total private investment in Mexico was being captured by imports on industrial equipment and machinery (Cárdenas, 2000: 190). The dependence on imports required constant investment by the government in the form of foreign exchange. According to the records at the time, Mexico's trade account was being compensated by regular exports of cotton, some agricultural commodities, and foreign exchange sources from the services sector in activities such as tourism and border transactions (Ibid). Thus, the interests of technocrats were principally focused on controlling trade's account and on preventing any negative effect produced for the increasing need of foreign exchange.

#### *4.5.1.1 The currency devaluation factor*

The technocrats' faction suggested an atypical economic measure with the main objective of producing constant economic growth. The adoption of a new exchange rate was proposed leading to the devaluation of the Mexican currency in 1954. This devaluation was very different from previous (1938, 1949) because this one was voluntarily induced by the state without any apparent reason. Turrent (2007: 31) explains this measure as follows: "[the currency devaluation] was suggested and executed anticipating a capital speculation and an exhaustion of national financial reserves, restricting a possible capital leakage and imposing a rigorous monetary policy". The expected effect of this decision was the consolidation of a solid economic system by which Mexico could have more control over the national trade account. The expansion of the role of the state in controlling the national economy was considerable and one of the most significant outcomes derived from the protectionist orientation was industrial development that led towards rapid growth in the economy -6.6% annual average growth rate- from 1950 to 1962 (Lehoucq *et al*, 2005: 8)<sup>9</sup>.

With regards to tourism, this measure seemed to favour this sector due to the apparent advantages gained by the new exchange rate: Mexico suddenly became a

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<sup>9</sup> Investment into the agricultural sector during Ruíz's administration was reduced considerably. The agricultural sector reported an annual rate of growth of 4.1% during the period of 1950-1970, and its overall contribution to the national GDP fell 5% during the 1950s (Cárdenas, 1996: 55).

cheaper place to visit in comparison to other destinations within the region. Not surprisingly, printed media largely publicised the former throughout the US. Examples of this were found in newspapers such as the “New York Times”, “The Herald” of Utah, the “Plain Dealer” of Cleveland and, the “Sun” of Hanover throughout 1955 (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ARC exp. 548.1/252*). It was common to see headlines such as the following: “Tourists are lured by a Devaluated Peso”, “20% more tourists will visit Mexico by a devaluated peso”, “Devaluation will increase tourism in Mexico”, “Tourism in Mexico will bring more dollars than any other industry” and so on. Thus, these newspapers became the main source of information about this measure for potential visitors helping to shape, to a certain extent, their travel preferences.

## **4.6 Institutionalisation of tourism**

### *4.6.1 A moral discourse surrounding tourism*

By 1952, the tourism industry seemed to be consistently growing: Mexico received an average of 450,000 international visitors surpassing the historical numbers achieved in 1946 by 57% (Merrill, 2009: 102). The vision of Ruíz Cortines of the tourism industry, however, would be completely different from his predecessor Miguel Alemán. For President Ruíz, the role of the state in the development of the tourism industry should be minimal and the private sector should assume major planning and financing responsibilities (Interview, Ex-Banco de Mexico official, February 2009). Ruíz transformed the political discourse of tourism constructing a moralistic tone surrounding it. President Ruíz Cortines declared the following when he was announcing his strategy for the tourism sector:

*“While it is my aim to promote this major source of income [referring to tourism], it is also necessary for tourist activities to respect our customs and ethical principles. We must maintain good moral standards at our tourist resorts, emphasizing the enjoyment of places of natural beauty and making wholesome recreational activities for visitors. We must prohibit the sort of profiteering that comes from coarse commercialization of activities catering to low human passions and vices, and avoid giving our country a false and distorted image. We have a history like few other nations possess; that is what we should show to the world” (FONATUR, 1988: 9).*

This public statement reflected Ruíz’s vision of tourism: that is, an economic activity with high costs for the country especially in social and cultural terms. Merrill (2009) suggests that his reluctance to support the proliferation of activities such as the

gambling and prostitution was due to his awareness of the negative impacts of these in destinations such as *Acapulco* and in countries such as Cuba under Batista's regime<sup>10</sup>. Above all, this statement reflected the re-adoption of a nationalist discourse exalting the cultural expressions through symbols and images of the past. The message, ultimately, was that support to tourism development from the state was going to be minimal due to the lack of confidence of Ruíz in the benefits that tourism could bring to the country (Jiménez, 1992). Despite the former, the technocrats considered tourism development as a crucial element within their agenda prompting the creation of a stronger institutional base for the development of this sector especially during this period. The former is reflected in a report elaborated by the "Commission of Economy and Industrial Policy" of the Banco de Mexico. It was stated:

*"We should not forget that tourism has a special relevance to address the deficit in the national trade account...it is expected that tourism activities will increase by 30% in the following years. Due to the former, it is suggested by this commission to strengthen the institutional presence of the state through the establishment of more promotional offices abroad, an increment to the tourism budget, the creation of a credit line for hotel construction...and the creation of a National Tourism Institute able to manage and incorporate those goods that can contribute to tourism activities in the country"* (Archivo General de la Nación, colección ARC exp. 548.1/429; my translation).

#### 4.6.2 Institutionalisation process

The strategy from the technocrats to expand the presence of the state in tourism was materialised through the creation of institutions such as the Tourism Guarantee and Promotion Fund (FOGATUR) in 1956. According to Castillo (2005: 137) FOGATUR was created "with the aim of studying and developing new tourist centres, to stimulate a domestic and foreign tourism demand, as well as to promote and encourage the development of tourism enterprises through financing mechanisms" (my translation). Jiménez (1992) argues that the creation of this institution obeyed, principally, to the lack of interest of the private sector in engaging in tourism developmental tasks. Unlike its predecessor *Crédito Hotelero* (during the 1940s) which had operated with a modest budget and with a well defined target of hotel construction in cities like *Acapulco* and Mexico City, FOGATUR expanded the

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<sup>10</sup> Gambling, drug trafficking and prostitution activities proliferated in Cuba during the dictatorship regime of Fulgencio Batista (1952-1959) receiving a great influx of US tourists (see Schlüter, 1992 for a detailed discussion).

government's scope in terms of clientele and businesses orientation in other regions of the country in states such as *Coahuila, Colima, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, and Veracruz* (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ARC exp. 547.1/119*). The creation of this institution was well received by the different associations related to the tourism sector (MTA, CNPT, Hotel Associations, and so on) considering it appropriated for the attainment of different projects.

In this sense, it can be said that FOGATUR -a subsidiary of SHCP- was the first formal step in supporting a national tourism policy based on a planning and technical vision. This vision was supported by a political discourse portraying the need from the state to intervene providing a better institutional framework in order to address the recurrent problems of the tourism industry as well as to prevent the negative effects of tourism in destinations such as *Acapulco*.

Through a report elaborated by the MTA at the end of the 1950s, the conditions of the tourism industry were detailed. It was explained that several problems prevailed in Mexico regarding tourism such as excessive procedures in customs, the bad conditions of roads, a lack of official promotion, and a weak regulation of the tourism services (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ARC exp. 548/2 and ARC exp. 151.3/1020*). In addition to the former, it has to be noted that tourism activities in Mexico during this period were concentrated only in four main destinations: *Acapulco, Ciudad Juárez, Mazatlán, and Tijuana* (Collins, 1979). The lack of planning in these tourist centres was recognised as the main problem producing a considerable number of negative effects such as uncontrolled growth, massive migration, lack of basic infrastructure and public services, economic inflation, unemployment, slum creation, and so on. In this sense, FOGATUR's creation was portrayed as a response to address these problems proposing to implement a more rigorous approach through planning and appropriate financial backing.

The administration of President Adolfo López Mateos (1958-1964) continued this institutionalisation process, creating the Tourism Department in 1959. This new government office according to Jiménez (1992: 72) represented a "new stage in the

management policy of national tourism affairs”. Unlike FOGATUR, the Tourism Department was an office subsidiary of the Ministry of the Interior (*Secretaría de Gobernación*) being closer, in this way, to the interests and political agenda of the ‘políticos’ group. This move is interpreted here as the recognition of this group for the need to participate more actively in the organisation of the tourism industry. It meant a greater disposition from ‘políticos’ to embrace the agenda proposed by the ‘technocrats’ in tourism development terms. However, the creation of the Tourism Department can also be read as the políticos’ intention to balance decision-making powers in tourism planning captured by technocrats through institutions such as FOGATUR.

Under this political environment, a Second Federal Tourism Law was proposed by the Tourism Department in 1961. Unlike the previous law (created in 1949), this new regulation was oriented to provide the state with a more comprehensive legal framework to expand its operational powers (*Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALM exp. 548/29*). Likewise, an additional institution was created by the ‘políticos’ to oversee the tourism promotional activities of the state in 1961: the National Tourism Council (CNT). The CNT, in coordination with the Department of Tourism, had the assignment of planning tourism promotion internationally (Jiménez, 1992). At the head of this new office was the influential figure of the ex-president Miguel Alemán who was still recognised by the ruling elite (and especially by the políticos) as an influential actor to carry out this task due to his national networks in the tourism industry. Taking advantage of his personal and economic ties within the tourism sector, Alemán undertook the labour of promoting Mexico as a tourism destination internationally holding this position for many years. It was clear, however, that his powers to influence the decisions over national tourism policy were minimal under this position. Even so, he was able to maintain a political presence within the PRI structure due to his position as a negotiator of private interests with the government (Interview, former official Banco de Mexico, November 2008). Independent of the different interests surrounding the creation of this institutional framework (FOGATUR, Department of Tourism, and CNT), they helped to create the bases for the appearance of a new political strategy that would change tourism functioning and scale in the years to come.



## **4.7 Jumping on the ‘development’ bandwagon: the interlocking of two agendas**

### *4.7.1 A period of social and political unrest*

The economic situation of Mexico during the administration of López Mateos was perceived as prosperous in macroeconomic terms: the real GDP increased by an average of 7.1%, the inflation rate was maintained below 3%, and output per capita grew by 3.6% (Cárdenas, 2000: 191). The industrial sector reported important rates of growth as well: manufacturing sector (9.3%), power infrastructure (14.2%), and the construction sector (8.3%) (Ibid). However, the declining trend in agricultural and mining activities continued to the extent of losing about 25% of its share in GDP (Ibid). The former reflected a strong commitment within the economic policy prescribed by the technocrats that favoured industrial growth over primary sector activities thus consolidating their political agenda.

Despite the apparent positive outcomes in the national economy during this period, a generalised social discontent was growing derived from the unequal distribution of the produced wealth and the misrepresentation of important labour sectors within the political system. Espinosa (2004) argued that the basic demands of these groups consisted of a substantial increase in minimum wages and the creation of a real negotiation channel between the labour sector and the government, away from the leaders of the official unions that were systematically bribed to prevent any opposition movement. An important number of public demonstrations took place at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s with the objective of communicating this message. Independent unions of teachers, railway workers, telephone operators and oil workers emerged outside the traditional corporatist system posing a serious threat to the stability of the political system. Unlike in the past where the political elite could make use of its co-optation strategies with traditional union leaders and suppress the opposition, the independent nature of these unions made any form of contention very difficult. The response of López Mateos’ government thus was one of repression. The repression strategy aimed to prevent a contagious effect on the rest of society sending a clear message: the ruling elite would not tolerate any expression of opposition to their plans of building an industrialised country.

The former coincided with the presence of a complex political landscape internationally at the beginning of the 1960s. The tensions derived from the Cold War evident in the Berlín Crisis (1961), Vietnam War, the Missile Crisis in Cuba (1962), the Cuban revolution (1958) and its effects -a trade embargo (1961) imposed by the US on Cuba- led to the radicalisation of ideological postures of the different economic blocks in the world (Jiménez, 1992; Merrill, 2009). Under this environment of struggle, the US government was very active in the construction of a political discourse supporting the ideas behind a capitalist economic system and discrediting the ideas derived from socialist and communist regimes. Thus, the Mexican government faced the challenge of defining a posture within this ideological battle at the global level, taking into consideration all the possible political and economic implications of making such a decision.

#### *4.7.2 The creation of developed and developing worlds*

The administration of the US President John F. Kennedy was very active in the construction of a developmental discourse under a policy called “Alliance for Progress” in the early 1960s. This policy had the main objective of formulating a development program based on a plan of financial assistance from the developed countries to the developing ones, especially in Latin America (Espinosa, 2004). In this sense, concepts such as ‘underdevelopment’, ‘material progress’, and ‘freedom’ were integrated within this discourse in order to gain the support of countries particularly from the southern hemisphere. This initiative was interpreted as a continuation of Truman’s discourse (late 1940s) reflecting the interest of the US to spread its political power beyond its frontiers. If, in the late 1940s and during the 1950s, poverty was portrayed within political discourses as the main obstacle for developing countries to catch up with the ‘progress’ and ‘prosperity’ of the developed ones being modernisation the apparent solution, then financial aid and a total commitment to the capitalist system in the 1960s were portrayed as the main components to achieve an ideal stage called ‘development’ (Escobar, 1995).

In this context, tourism development was publicised internationally as a vehicle to achieve the objectives envisaged within this developmental vision. Jiménez (1992:

52-53; my translation) wrote in this respect: “the US considered that encouraging communication through international travel was the best way to consolidate its ideological position, adopting the necessary measures whereby tourism and other communication means could penetrate economically and culturally the livelihoods of developing countries...thus, these countries [developing ones] were invited to open their frontiers to tourists, and give tourism priority within their economies”. The administration of President López Mateos supported the reproduction of this discourse, portraying tourism not only as a vehicle of development but also as an instrument of international integration. He clarified his political position in respect to tourism through statements such as the following:

*“For Mexico, tourism is not only an industry that is basic to economic development, but also a significant means for strengthening ties of human understanding and international intelligence. For us, tourism also contains the dimension of bringing different peoples closer together. Our goal is to provide foreign tourists with the correct idea of what our history has been and what our customs are. We tried to improve the quality of what is offered to the tourist...We believe that tourism should not be based on the exploitation of vice, but rather on a loftier concept that leads us to cultural ties and better understanding among peoples” (FONATUR, 1988: 9).*

This quote reflected the political alignment of Mexico with the US incorporating some discursive components such as international cooperation, understanding, and integration. Tourism development was thus portrayed not only as a crucial instrument of international cooperation but also a vehicle of peace given the prevailing international environment of political tension at the time. It is important to note that the reproduction of moral elements within the political discourse continued, although the emphasis this time was focused on reinforcing an ideological position in the creation of developed and developing worlds.

#### *4.7.3 International Tourism boom*

Coinciding with the reproduction of the discourse linking tourism and development, tourism-related activities experienced an explosive expansion worldwide during this period. Keyser (2002) points out a number of factors that had a direct effect on the growth of this phenomenon such as the introduction of jet travel in 1958, the specialisation of tour operators, and the development of more affordable family cars, an increase in business travel and, above all, the substantial increment in the holiday

time and income of travellers. Unlike the previous decades where the automobile and train were the main transportation method for travelling, the jet phenomenon came to break the travel notion of space and time as it had happened with motor travel in the past. In addition to the former, the economic recuperation after the WWII period was more evident and more workers from different countries were able to use their leisure time and money in tourism-related activities. The conjugation of these factors gave origin to what is known today as the phenomenon of ‘mass tourism’ where the numbers of travellers and regions visited were expanded exponentially. It was in this international context that the Mexican political elite prepared the ground to propose a more ambitious strategy to obtain a larger share in the market and increase the economic benefits at the national level.

#### *4.7.4 Setting the political ground for a new strategy of tourism development*

The agenda of the Mexican government to have more control over tourism development was being revealed during this period. The economic value of this industry was widely recognised by the López Mateos government in statements such as the following:

*“With regards to tourism, the goal is to increase, with modern methods, the number of foreign and national tourists visiting different regions of the country in order to increase the raw income derived from this activity that is calculated now at 500 million dollars per year” (Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALM exp. 606.3/22; my translation).*

Considering the former, the design of a more comprehensive framework for tourism development was portrayed as indispensable. Thus, a National Plan of Tourism Development (PNDT) was elaborated for the first time in Mexico in 1962. The document was elaborated by the Department of Tourism and the Mexican Institute of Tourism Research (IMIT) (a subsidiary office of this department) following the political agenda pursued by the ‘políticos’. Taking into consideration the tourism development strategies applied in other countries such as France, the US, Spain and so on, the main objectives of the PNDT were designed. The objectives were: “to establish the bases to develop basic infrastructure and build *new tourist centres*...to carry out specialised studies to evaluate potential tourist centres and, to condition the development of these areas supporting the production of handcrafts and any artistic and cultural manifestations” (SECTUR, Plan Nacional de Turismo, 2001: 25; my

translation, my emphasis in italics). Furthermore, the PNDT document included three fundamental premises:

- 1) *To establish national unity and spread friendship ties with other countries...as well as to coordinate the efforts of the state and the private initiative;*
- 2) *Tourism in the past few years has been the most dynamic factor in the trade account balance and, because of that, it is required to finance its growth to achieve the economic and social development of the country, particularly in the industrialisation field;*
- 3) *It is necessary to create and strengthen tourism awareness to increase visitors' numbers (Departamento de Turismo, PNDT, 1963: 2; my translation).*

The strategic points contained within this plan considered that state actions should be concentrated in a larger exploitation of tourism resources in the country, carrying out major public investment in the communication and transport sectors as well as major investment in the provision of tourism services and promotional campaigns (PNDT, 1963: 3). The most important point identified for the objectives of this research was the pronouncement of the possibility for the creation of new tourist centres in addition to the existent ones. It was stated:

*“for the particular case of the **creation of new tourist centres**, specialised studies will be carried out with the aim of more accurately evaluating the potential of each place” (PNDT, 1963: 4; my translation, my emphasis in bold).*

*“Considering that tourism requires special attention to address its related problems, the President has decided to support the elaboration of a program of tourism development including a full evaluation of the possibility to develop new tourism centres in the country...the execution of a program such as this would signify a further step of the state to consolidate the organisation of this industry” (Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALM 548/62).*

Thus, the PNDT became an instrument of communication defining the degree of participation pursued by the state. It is important to note, however, that the Tourism Department did not enjoy the credibility from different tourism associations at the time, making the application of the plan difficult. Statements in newspapers such as the following reflected the former:

*“We think that the Tourism Department does not possess the necessary expertise that are required to lead a sector [tourism] that needs the implementation of effective measures from the state...the ineptitude showed by the different persons that have occupied the position of*

*Director is reflected in their lack of preparation and credentials...these people do nothing but get public attention and large sums of money that are used for their personal interests without taking into account the future of Mexico...”(Archivo General de la Nación, colección ALM 548/10).*

Considering the former, it seemed it was time to negotiate a common agenda of tourism development between the ‘politicos’ and the ‘technocrats’. On the one hand, the ‘politicos’ had shown their capacity of political operation to create an institutional framework parallel to the ‘technocrats’ one in order to balance decision-making powers in the tourism arena whereas, on the other hand, the ‘technocrats’ had built around them a group of strong economic institutions giving them sufficient credibility and room for manoeuvre in policy-making. In this sense, both groups recognised the need to unify their interests and resources surrounding a tourism agenda that could benefit all. The main objective of this agenda had to be focused principally on expanding the role and the powers of the state in tourism development in order to obtain larger benefits. Thus, the political ground was being prepared to give origin to a policy process that changed the vision, functioning and scale of this sector in the years to come. **Table 4.2** (see below) shows the evolution of the Mexican political system during the 1950s and 1960s. It reflects the consolidation of the main features of this structure that was based on the control of one political party (PRI), the influential figure of the president, and the formal division of the powers of the state i.e. executive power (president), legislative power (congress) and judicial power (supreme court). Despite this division, the presidents acted as active legislators during this period without any major constraint due to the control over the decisions made on the congress.

Period	President	Political adscription	Economic ideology	PRI’s % of seats in Chamber of Deputies	PRI’s % of seats in the Senate
1952-1958	Adolfo Ruíz Cortines	Politicos faction	Capitalism	93.8	100
1958-1966	Adolfo López Mateos	Politicos faction	Capitalism	94.4	100

**Table 4.2** Mexican political system and balance of power, period 1952-1966.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from Lehoucq *et al* (2005).

Historical period	Tourism Development features	Main actors	Structural features	Contextual issues
1930s-1940s	Rapid growth of tourism-related businesses in the North border and central Mexico cities (Tijuana, Mexicali, Ciudad Juárez, Nogales, Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, Monterrey, and Mexico City).	AAA, AMA, Banco de Mexico, CPT, CMPT, CNT, MTA, MRA, Missouri Pacific Railways, National Railways.	<p>State operation under PNR.</p> <p>Emergence of the first generation of tourism-related state institutions.</p> <p>Main function of the state through formal channels as promoter.</p> <p>Creation of public-private partnerships through informal channels.</p>	Volstead Act, expansion of the road network, Economic Great Depression, land reform and oil expropriation.
1940s-1960s	Spontaneous coastal development in Acapulco, Cozumel, Isla Mujeres, Mazatlán, Puerto Progreso, and Puerto Vallarta.	AMA, American, Banco de Mexico, Chamber of Commerce, CNPT, CNT, DT, FOGATUR, Mexican Aviation Company, Mexican Chamber of Commerce, Mexican Railways, Missouri Pacific NAFINSA, National Railways Railways, and the SHCP.	<p>State operation under PRI.</p> <p>Emergence of the second generation of tourism-related institutions.</p> <p>Main function of the state through formal channels as creditor and promoter.</p> <p>Expansion of public-private partnerships at the margins of the state.</p> <p>The PNDT as a guide for tourism development in the 1960s.</p>	WWII, US “Good Neighbour Policy”, ISI economic strategy, rapid growth of tourism activities in Acapulco, Truman’s discourse on poverty and modernisation, the Mexican Miracle, international tourism boom, introduction of jet travel, international support of tourism as a development vehicle, global reproduction of a development discourse based on growth and progress.

**Table 4.3** Main stages of tourism development in Mexico, period 1930-1960.  
Source: Own elaboration.

## 4.8 Conclusions

The information contained in this chapter has attempted to present a discussion about the interlocking of tourism and development agendas in Mexico. In doing so, information related to the historical evolution of the arena of tourism was included during the period 1930-1960. The formation of a political system surrounding a ruling elite played a crucial role determining the orientation and participation of the state not only in tourism but also in the whole economic apparatus. The emergence of the tourism agenda signified the recognition of the economic potential of this industry to accomplish the modernisation objectives of Mexico as well as to build the personal fortunes of some influential actors related to the ruling elite.

This chapter paid special emphasis on describing the main features of the Mexican political system in order to better understand the policy-making practices during the period analysed. It was discussed that policy-making practices and political operation in Mexico reflected a governmental structure that functioned in a secretive, centralised and corporatist fashion surrounding the influential figure of the president. It was illustrated how decision-making was concentrated in the hands of a well-defined elite group from a hegemonic political party (PRI) utilising several resources such as representation (presidency, congress, supreme court) co-optation strategies (union and private sector leaders), and ideological justifications (discourses) to maintain political control. The consolidation of these features in this political system led to the division of the ruling elite provoking the appearance of new agendas. Through different strategies of political operation, the main objective of the different groups was to obtain greater control of the regime through the enlargement of their decision-making powers. The institutionalisation process of tourism, for instance, reflected the development of this power struggle leading to the implementation of a number of strategies to more effectively control the decisions of this sector.

This chapter illustrated the importance of the reproduction of a discourse to construct a positive image of tourism in Mexico. Portrayed as a crucial source of capital to complete the transformation of Mexico from an agricultural country into an industrialised one, tourism progressively gained a favourable place in the policy-making agenda at the national level. It was discussed that the reproduction of this discourse also contributed to the proliferation of cooperative networks that helped to



establish the bases of a long-term relationship between the state and the private sector in this sector. Likewise it was shown how tourism and development discourses were constantly transformed according to the prevailing contextual features. These changes reflected the social function of these discourses given the particular conditions of the period analysed. The recognition of the instrumental role of discourses in this period helped to gain a better understanding of how a bridge between two apparently disassociated agendas were constructed. The interaction of different actors within the tourism industry contributed to strengthen this connection giving origin to a common agenda interlocking tourism and development objectives. This connection contributed to the formation of a common discourse portraying tourism as a vehicle of development indispensable to solve the issues related to underdevelopment and prepared the political ground for the expansion of the powers of the state in tourism adopting a more interventionist role.

The next chapter will present a discussion of the policy process focus of this research -*Centros Integralmente Planeados* (CIPs)- in order to illustrate the issues surrounding the introduction of a long-term state strategy for tourism development in Mexico. Attention will be focused on describing the phases of agenda setting and policy formulation exploring in greater detail the role that knowledge played in this process reflecting issues related to control, authority, and power.

## Chapter 5. The emergence of the CIPs policy process

### 5.1 Chapter outline

Chapter five presents a discussion of the emergence of a policy process in the political arena of Mexican tourism. The information in this chapter focuses its attention on describing the phases of agenda setting and policy formulation in the case of the *Centros Integralmente Planeados* (State-Planned Tourism Destinations, CIPs acronym in Spanish) tourism policy during the 1960s. The social interface element related to “the centrality of knowledge” of the actor-oriented approach proposed by Long (2001) is developed here. Long (2001:71) points out that “knowledge is present in all social situations and is often entangled with power relations and the distribution of resources. But in intervention situations [such as the implementation of public policies] it assumes a special significance since it entails the interplay or confrontation of ‘expert’ versus ‘lay’ forms of knowledge, beliefs and values, and struggles over legitimation, segregation and communication [...] knowledge emerges as a product of interaction, dialogue, reflexivity and contests of meaning, and involves aspects of control, authority and power”. Considering the former, this chapter explores the role that knowledge played in tourism policy-making activities assisting in the construction of the social ‘problems’ that gave origin to this policy process. Special attention is paid to illustrate the different discursive tools used by policy-makers to legitimate the intervention of the Mexican state in the tourism sector portraying it as an economic panacea to solve the problems associated with so-called underdevelopment.

The structure of the chapter is thus divided into five sections. The first section provides a discussion of the role that social constructions play in policy-making activities. The relevance of knowledge is explored in this section to shed some light on how actors’ participation is determined through these constructions. It is argued that this information can help to gain a better understanding of how political power is allocated and how public policies are designed derived from the production and reproduction of actors’ ideologies, values and interests. The second section focuses its attention on describing the phase of agenda setting in the political arena of

tourism. Special attention is paid to analyse how state's intervention in tourism gained the attention of the public in the political debate where different ideas were included and others excluded. The information in this section principally describes the institutional and power arrangements set by related actors that gave origin to the CIPs policy process. The third section provides a discussion of the construction of a local discourse to support state-led tourism development in Mexico. This section includes information related to the assemblage of a narrative of economic decline with the main objective of legitimating a greater intervention of the state in this sector. It is explained how developmental and tourism objectives were deliberately connected helping to depoliticise policy-makers' actions and decisions.

The fourth section centres its attention on describing one of the discursive tools employed by tourism policy-makers to support their arguments: the measurements. This section includes information about the use of statistics from policy-makers to provide 'hard' evidence of the existence of an economic decline. Since numbers have become symbols of precision, accuracy, and objectivity in our societies, their interpretation and use in policy-making activities are little questioned helping policy-makers to build more credible arguments. Furthermore, this section explores another discursive tool employed by tourism policy-makers related to the construction of 'causes'. It provides relevant information to analyse how policy-makers built an argument justifying the need of the state to increase its presence in tourism development tasks. The historical lack of attention from the state as well as the absence of a comprehensive planning framework to develop this sector was portrayed by policy-makers as the main causes to intervene. Additionally it describes another discursive tool employed by policy-makers related to the construction of a common interest in tourism. It is explained how economic and developmental objectives were included within this discourse to mobilise the support towards the goals considered in the tourism agenda. It is argued that the supposed representation of a broad range of interests ensured the advancement of the plans envisaged by policy-makers. Finally, the fifth section presents relevant information related to the phase of policy formulation in the case of the CIPs. This section explores how this policy emerged as a result of an incremental process portraying it as the 'best' option to solve the problems considered within the narrative. Special attention is paid to describing the power struggles and mobilisation of resources from different actors in

this political arena aiming to control the decisions of Mexican tourism development in the years to come.

## **5.2 Social constructions and policy process**

According to Schneider and Ingram (1993), policy-making activities are largely dependent on the social ‘constructions’ that policy-makers can produce during a policy process. The ‘construction’ of problems in a policy process is central to generate the agendas that would subsequently lead to the design and implementation of public policies. This exercise has several implications determining how political power is allocated as well as how benefits and burdens are distributed among target populations. Ingram *et al* (2007: 94) point out that “policy design has fundamental social and political consequences, not only in material welfare but also in social reputation and how segments of the population view their relationship with their government”. In this sense, the analysis of these constructions can help to explain “how and why particular kinds of policies are produced in particular contexts and how these shape subsequent participation patterns, political orientation, meanings of citizenship, and the form of democracy that prevails” (Ingram *et al*, 2007: 119).

It is important to note that the formulation of ideas behind these social constructions is normally derived from the different interpretations that policy-makers have about a particular social reality. These interpretations inevitably reflect the values, ideologies and interests of these actors defining the way in which a policy is delivered to the public. Thus, it can be said that actors’ knowledge -expressed through the mentioned elements- plays a crucial role defining the objectives, direction and scope of policy. The main objective of analysing actors’ knowledge through these constructions is to illustrate how tourism advocates gained the necessary acceptance in political and public arenas that gave origin to the CIPs policy process. It is important to mention that these issues have received little or no attention in the literature related to the CIPs policy. Attention has been focused, rather, on describing the policy effects in the different contexts where it was implemented. Therefore, the analysis of these issues in this chapter acquires special relevance when it comes to shed some light on how social ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’ were constructed in the political arena of Mexican tourism.

It is believed that the exploration of these issues can help to answer some of the questions that oriented the objectives of this research such as, who ‘won’ and who ‘lost’ in the process surrounding the formulation of the CIPs policy?, how the participation in this process was framed and why? and, what was the effect of this policy on transforming or reproducing the political and power structures of the state?. It is expected that the information in this chapter can help to gain a better understanding of the different forms of knowledge that interplayed in the debate with the main objective of controlling the whole policy process. For this purpose, this chapter describes how different resources (political, economic, power) were used by policy-makers to dominate the tourism industry revealing, in the end, “why some groups are advantaged more than others...and how policy designs reinforce or alter such advantages” (Schneider and Ingram, 1993: 334).

### *5.2.1 Discursive resources*

It is argued that discursive resources are used by policy-makers as the main strategy to control the negotiations during the phases of ‘agenda setting’ and ‘policy formulation’. Developing the theoretical proposal of Deborah Stone (2002), this chapter focuses its attention to explore the type of language that was used within the discourses as well as the array of ‘tools’ that were employed to portray tourism policy-makers’ choices and decisions as the ‘best’ way to solve public problems. Discursive tools in policy-making, according to Stone (2002), include the use of *symbols, numbers, causes, interests, and decisions* that facilitate the process of the introduction of policies reflecting a particular form of knowledge. It is important to note that these ‘tools’ are employed with the main objective of assisting policy advocates to elaborate credible arguments justifying, in this way, state interventions in a given sector. For the case of the CIPs policy, these arguments helped policy-makers to create an argumentative route whereby a technocrat vision of tourism development was legitimised imposing the ideology, values and interests of this particular group of actors.

Several sections are developed in this chapter to illustrate how these discursive tools were employed in the practice. Relevant information is included regarding the definition of a social problem, the symbolic representation of the problem, the dimension of the problem, the causes of the problem, the creation of a common

interest, and the formulation of a solution in the form of policy-making. This information reflects the incremental nature of the CIPs policy process derived from the constant interplay of ideas and the evolution of the debate that led to the consolidation of an agenda in tourism development. These sections show how the technocrats group deliberately portrayed a scenario of economic decline to the public in order to impose a political agenda embraced by these actors. The main purpose behind this discursive strategy was to gain a favourable position in policy-making activities increasing their decision-making powers under a political scenario of low contestation. These sections aim to reflect the power arrangements through which tourism advocates shaped the perceptions, preferences of actors related to policy-making activities conditioning the direction and flow of negotiations in this particular arena. In this sense, this information aims to help the reader to comprehend the different arrangements (institutional and power) implemented by policy-makers in order to successfully achieve the objectives envisaged by this group of actors.

### **5.3 The phase of agenda setting**

Commonly, the first stage considered by the analysts of policy-making processes is called 'agenda setting'. A debate has taken place over the years about the difficulty of determining when policy-making activities do actually begin. It is argued by some policy analysts that the appearance of public policies is regularly the result of an incremental long-term process rather than the 'sudden' realisation of the solutions for the issues that require government attention through policy-making. This work recognises the former establishing that the phases of 'agenda setting' and 'policy formulation' are closely interrelated due to the iterative nature of their operation. 'Agenda setting', according to Birkland (2005: 109), is defined as "the process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public attention". He explains that in order to gain a better understanding of how the phase of 'agenda setting' materialises in a policy process, it is necessary to examine how different ideas are kept on or off the agenda, how the debate around the established 'problems' evolves and, how these social constructions advance in the agenda proposed by policy promoters. However, it is not only the existence of public issues in society that is important to analyse, but also the particular way in which they are portrayed to the public as well as the motivations and interests of the actors related to this process. In this sense, Hill (2009: 151) points out that 'agenda setting' should be understood as

“a collective construction directly to the perceptions, representations, interests and values of the actors concerned...[it is] a construction [that should be] situated in time and space”. Therefore, the definition of a problem as public is essentially political and is profoundly connected to the existing ideological, social, and political structures in the period when an issue gains recognition. This research adopted the concept of ‘agenda setting’ developed by Stone (2002) where it is stated that:

*“[agenda setting is] a strategic representation of situations...because every description of a situation is a portrayal from only one of many points of view...groups, individuals, and government agencies deliberately and consciously fashion portrayals so as to promote their favoured course of action...representations of a problem are therefore constructed to win the most people to one’s side and the most leverage over one’s opponent” (Stone, 2002: 153).*

The representations of public problems are thus constructed through a number of resources employed by policy-makers in order to obtain public support and, above all, political support to get access to the implementation phase of the policy process. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that policy-makers’ decisions and actions totally rely on the agency and personal agendas of these actors; the role that structures and contextual factors in policy-making activities play generating a myriad of internal and external pressures of different types is widely acknowledged. Likewise, it is also recognised that policy-making activities are normally interrelated with other overlapping agendas and interests within the political arenas where different public policies are brought to life.

In order to gain a better understanding of the particular ideologies, values, as well as the institutional and power arrangements that prevailed in the phase of agenda setting of the CIPs policy process, the next section provides a description of these issues. This information illustrates the political panorama surrounding the tourism arena prior to the appearance of the CIPs policy as well as the inner workings of policy-making practices within the Mexican state that reflected a particular ideological framework to address public problems.

### *5.3.1 Ideologies, values, interests: institutional and power arrangements*

It can be said that the features of the Mexican political system in the 1960s had a direct effect on the definition of the government’s policy-making practices whereby the CIPs policy emerged. The organisation of the Mexican political system seemed

very stable, flexible and able to manage any challenge to the *status quo* of the regime. Lehoucq *et al* (2005) pointed out that the Mexican political system was highly centralised around a reduced group of influential actors –president, assessors, cabinet members, political party members, entrepreneurs, and corporative leaders- whom had effectively colonised decisions over public policies since the establishment of a political regime based on a single-party government structure in the 1930s. This fact helped to configure a close decision-making circle of actors whereby only specific members had access to it. Under this scenario, the Mexican ruling elite had been able to effectively dominate and control the important decisions surrounding the economic and political direction of the country. Although it is assumed here that political competition remained at very low levels at this time, the structure of this political system was increasingly subject to more pressures of a different nature (political, economic, social) due to the incorporation of more interests within the different political arenas leading to the allocation of more privileges and benefits for a greater number of actors.

It can be said then that the Mexican political structure at the time reflected the features of an elitist state through which political power was clearly concentrated in the hands of a small elite. According to Cudworth *et al* (2007), in order to sustain the claim of the existence of an elitist state, three features must be verified: 1) access to the political structure is restricted to a small group with common interests that are not shared by the majority of the citizens; 2) office-holders are rarely responsive to the opinion and interests of the general public and are able to use coercion, persuasion and manipulation in order to induce public compliance, and; 3) office-holders take decisions in line with the interests of a privileged group (capitalist class) (Ibid: 63). In this sense, the consolidation of these features within the Mexican state in the 1960s was evident, largely determining the way in which policy-making practices were carried out (Lehoucq *et al*, 2005). The argument of an elitist political operation by the Mexican government is not suggesting the absence of conflicts or struggles to control decision-making activities within the structure of the ruling elite; the existence of a myriad of interests and agendas is widely recognised here<sup>11</sup>. The Mexican ruling elite had been able to maintain a cohesive and compact structure over

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that Mexico was involved in a period of social unrest during the 1960s that led to the appearance of several conflicts between the leaders of the state and the leaders of the main corporatist pillars of the regime i.e. peasants and labourers.



time despite the appearance of power disputes between different groups aiming to control the direction of the political agenda of the state. The former was possible due to the existence of an ideological code developed by this political network over the years based on two main premises: 1) an unconditional political discipline surrounding the president's agenda and decisions, and; 2) the utilisation of the necessary resources to ensure the perpetuation of the network in power.

Institutional arrangements were indispensable to provide a framework through which the Mexican state could operate. Hall and Jenkins (1995) argue that these arrangements should be seen as a filter that “mediates and expresses the play of conflicting social and economic forces in society” (Ibid: 18) and that they “influence the process through which the policy agenda...is shaped, the way in which problems are defined and alternatives considered, and how choices are made, and decisions and actions taken” (Ibid: 19). For the specific case of Mexican tourism, prior to the creation of the Tourism Ministry (SECTUR) and the National Tourism Development Fund (FONATUR) in 1974, Mexico's government had not been able to consolidate a strong institutional representation surrounding this sector (see previous chapter for more details). The creation of institutions such as the Tourism Guarantee and Promotion Fund (FOGATUR), the Department of Tourism (DT) and the National Tourism Council (CSNT) in the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, made the interest from the Mexican government to increase its participation more evident. In this sense, the increase of the presence of the state through these institutions unveiled the intention to transform the traditional role of the state of coordinator and promoter in tourism. Despite the existence of different organisms -state and private-surrounding tourism activities in previous decades, it is important to note that none of these enjoyed sufficient recognition, budget, or political power to coordinate the actions surrounding this sector at the national level. In this sense, the appearance of more state institutions sent a clear message to related actors of the state's objective to assume a leadership role.

A crucial actor in the construction of this renovated role in tourism was the Banco de Mexico, one of the institutional bastions of the technocrats group. It is important to note that, in addition to its normal functions of currency regulation, the Banco de Mexico assumed other attributions regarding the formulation and implementation of national economic and social policies at the time (Turrent, 2007; Interview, former

Banco de Mexico official, February 2009). The Banco de Mexico fully entered into the tourism arena during the 1960s as part of a political strategy aimed to reinvent the economic policy of the country. The argument from the technocrats behind this intervention was the apparent exhaustion of the economic model followed until then (Import Substitution Industrialisation, ISI) leading them to design a different strategy to ensure the continuation of the economic growth of the country as had happened during the 1950s. This strategy included the creation of a number of ‘specialised technical offices’ within the Banco de Mexico to analyse the pertinence of intervention from the state in a number of economic sectors. These offices were created in the 1950s -such as the FOGAIN and the FIRA, Promotion of Industrial Capacity and Agriculture respectively- and the 1960s -such as the case of FOVI (Housing), FOMEX (Promotion of Exports), FONEI (Industrial Equipment), FIDEC (Commercial Development) and INFRATUR (Tourism Infrastructure and Development)- under the legal figure of public trusts.

The emergence of these institutions in a relatively short period of time was the result of a coordination strategy between some influential members of the technocrats’ group based in economic-oriented institutions such as the Ministry of the Treasury (SHCP), the Banco de Mexico, and the National Development Bank (NAFINSA). The strong connections across these institutions (personal and programmatic) served to construct a common agenda over the years sharing a particular economic ideology where the state had to assume a primary role in productive activities. Hall and Jenkins (1995: 35) pointed out that an ideology can be considered as “a system of belief about some important social area or issue that has strong effects in structuring and influencing our thought”. However, an ideology cannot be considered merely as sets of beliefs but “socially shared beliefs” as van Dijk (1998) suggests. He explains that “these beliefs are acquired, used and changed in social situations, and on the basis of the social interests of groups and social relations between groups in complex social structures” (van Dijk, 1998: 135). Thus, it can be said that the ideologies behind the actions of the ‘technocrats’ were spread among their members unifying somehow their interests under the political flag of state intervention.

It is important to note that a great number of high-ranking government officials related to economic-related institutions enjoyed a public and political reputation as ‘efficient’ policy-makers derived from the economic outcomes achieved in the period

referred to as the “Mexican Miracle” (see previous chapter). In this sense, the room for manoeuvre in policy-making for these actors was considerable reflecting an image of expertise that had been carefully constructed around their actions and decisions (Bennett and Sharpe, 1980; Golob, 1994). The Banco de Mexico thus embarked on the task of investigating the functioning of the tourism industry through the “technical office of tourism”, directed then by the sub-director of the Banco de Mexico. The experience of this actor in tourism affairs was limited to some studies he conducted in the 1950s about the contribution of tourism and border transactions to the national trade balance (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, February 2009). This actor formed a reduced group of professionals (ten people approximately, including economists, lawyers, engineers and architects) in order to produce insightful information about the functioning of this industry. The main objective of this group was to gain a better understanding of the conditions of this industry at the national and international levels so as to explore the feasibility of increasing the functions of the state.

This group started its investigations in Mexico and overseas in 1966 (Interview, former INFRATUR official, November 2008). It has to be said that despite the existence of tourism-oriented institutions -i.e. FOGATUR, DT and CSNT- in Mexico prior to the appearance of this trust, its actions were oriented to operate in an independent manner. The objective behind this form of political operation was to build a strong ‘knowledge community’ to control policy-making activities in this arena. Sutton (1999: 6, 27) points out that these communities are normally composed of

*“a group of technical **experts** who have access to privileged information...’the **experts**’ role in defining problems is more than an analytical activity. It is also the ability to bring to political consciousness, such as poverty, that would otherwise be accorded little attention by either politicians or the public...the fact that **experts** tell people a problem exists sets up a ‘social disequilibrium’ which can be translated by politicians into a political demand for compensatory action. In this way...[these communities] can have a substantial influence over policy-making” (my emphasis in bold).*

Thus, the actions of this group were oriented to accumulate relevant information of the functioning of the tourism sector not only to build convincing arguments in favour of the expansion of the role of the state but also to create a knowledge barrier

restricting the access for other actors to the debate due to their supposed lack of expertise in that particular field.

It was clear that a proposal to expand the powers and influence of the state may have implied a potential source of conflict in the interests that converged in this arena at the time. Although the main characteristic of the Mexican tourism industry prior to the 1960s was self-organisation, the former did not mean an absence of interests upon its development. Influential figures from the private sector had played a crucial role in the configuration of this industry over time (see previous chapter), and a sudden change in the 'rules of the game' would not be embraced easily. Moreover, a progressive increase in the presence of a private sector (banks, local groups and multinationals) in politics was representing a greater challenge for policy-makers to operate reducing, to a certain extent, their room for manoeuvre. Therefore the policy process initiated by the Banco de Mexico was treated in relative secrecy (Interview, former official Banco de Mexico, December 2008). One of the main reasons to do so was to prevent the proliferation of coalitions against any initiative giving origin to a debate that might interfere with the decisions and vision considered by this group of actors. Once the information was collected and analysed, the next step was to construct a picture of the tourism sector aimed at influencing and dominating the public and political debate in the different social spheres. The main resource employed to do the former was the construction of a beneficial discourse of tourism development. However, it was not only the content of the discourse *per se* that made the interventionist ideology prevail but also the control over the flow of information in the spaces where this particular discourse was reproduced i.e cabinet meetings, media, public speeches, and so on.

What were the arguments the policy-makers presented to influence the perception of the public about the need to intervene in this sector? What was the main narrative they employed to persuade other actors? What were the main discursive tools deployed to prevent any form of opposition? The next sections of this chapter will be concerned with providing some answers to these questions describing the processes surrounding the construction of a narrative of economic decline, the setting of the tourism agenda in the national political arena and the formulation of the CIPs policy. Special attention is paid to explain the different motives, resources, and tactics employed by policy-makers to succeed in the appropriation of the debate, and the

formulation of a tourism program aimed at expanding the role of the state for the last quarter of the twentieth century in Mexico.

#### **5.4 Discourse in the making: state-led tourism development**

##### *5.4.1 The problem definition: a tale of development*

As already mentioned, the public trust created to initiate a policy process in tourism was named the Tourism Infrastructure Development Bank (INFRATUR) in August 1969. The appearance of INFRATUR in the tourism arena was the result of the formalisation of the Banco de Mexico's activities that started in 1966. The main objective of this new trust was to generate a public debate to determine whether a further intervention of the state into this sector was needed. It was claimed that Mexico needed to develop a more comprehensive tourism agenda due to the supposed potential of this sector for the achievement of broader objectives considered in the national 'development' agenda. The use of the word 'development' within this discourse was far from accidental i.e. it was oriented to create a base of political support for tourism. The meaning of this word, however, was not clear as it was indistinctly associated with industrialisation, modernisation, and/or economic growth at the time (Interview, former INFRATUR official, December 2008). It is important to note that the term 'development' in political discourses had evolved over time acquiring different facades according to the different circumstances and contexts where it was used. Pearce (1989) mentioned that the term 'development' has been historically related to different ideas embedded in concepts such as economic growth, modernisation, distributive justice, socioeconomic transformation, spatial reorganisation and so on<sup>12</sup>.

The use of this term in the Mexican context during the 1960s seemed to be coinciding with a historical moment in which a number of internal and external political factors intermingled. The idea of the expansion of tourism activities as the panacea to address the problems of the countries with 'underdevelopment' problems was largely spread worldwide by influential supranational actors such as the World Bank (1950s) and the United Nations (1960s). Jiménez (1992: 51-52) pointed out that the construction of this coordinated discourse was supported by the argument

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<sup>12</sup> It is important to note at this point that it is not the intention of this work to provide a full discussion of the concept of 'development' because this task is beyond of the objectives of this chapter. The intention is, rather, to situate the use of the term within the context and political arena in question.

that the massive confluence of western tourists to ‘underdeveloped’ countries would bring foreign currency helping them, in this way, to address development-related issues. The reproduction of this discourse was accompanied with a series of actions that drew the attention of governments generating great expectations, especially from developing countries. These actions included the declaration of the Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress, the creation of the Agency for International Development, and the declaration of the Decade of Development reflecting the great political activism from the US at the time. For the specific case of tourism, the actions were concentrated in the organisation of the First Conference on International Travel and Tourism in Rome (1963), the proclamation of the International Year of Tourism (1967) and, more importantly, the release of a specialised study about the “Political and Economic relevance of Tourism for ‘underdeveloped’ countries” published by UNESCO (1963).

This study became one of the most influential sources of information about the functioning of the international tourism industry for policy-makers at the time (Interview, former INFRATUR official, December 2008). It provided the necessary arguments to justify public investment in this industry especially in developing countries, such as the case of Mexico. Special attention was paid to stressing the need of governments to consider an expansion of their roles promoting the growth of tourism activities for the benefit of national and regional economies. The main arguments of this document were thus of an economic nature: it was claimed that tourism could contribute positively to solving deficits on national trade accounts producing, at the same time, a multiplier effect on the economy. In this sense, the adoption of a more interventionist posture was suggested encouraging governments to implement the necessary measures (organisational, legal, financial and so on) to complete the ‘development’ project.

This document stated: “in developing countries...the State has a very important, even decisive, role to play. The State has to *create* an institutional framework favourable to economic growth, but in many cases it must also *assume* the role of entrepreneur [in tourism]” (UNESCO, 1963: 53; my emphasis in italics); and it asked “Can there be any justification for devoting funds and specialist staff to a luxury industry like tourism, at the expense of agriculture, industry, or the building of houses for homeless?” (Ibid: 54). That was perhaps the central question that this document

wished to address facilitating the necessary discursive elements for policy-makers to build credible justifications to incorporate tourism into the political agenda. However, it was clear that the task of policy-makers had to go beyond the simple reproduction of this global discourse; they had to construct a positive image of tourism in order to prevent any form of opposition or suspicion surrounding the intentions of the state to stimulate the growth of this sector. Despite the bad reputation of tourism development in international examples such as the Caribbean and Cuba and domestic examples such as Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez and Acapulco (cf. Collins, 1979), the only promise of contributing to solve issues related to ‘underdevelopment’ seemed a solid argument to portray tourism as a viable option to ‘rescue’ poor countries from their poverty.

Derived from this intense ideological campaign, the objectives of tourism and development agendas were deliberately interlocked in Mexico giving birth to a national discourse that INFRATUR’s policy-makers would systematically reproduce. In this sense, the use of the word ‘development’ within this discourse should be understood as the result of a meditated decision from policy-makers to generate the necessary acceptance to legitimate the incoming policy process. It is important to note that the use of terms such as this can play a crucial role in policy-making because it “enables the transformation of individual intentions and actions into collective resources and purposes” (Stone, 2002: 159) and that allows policy-makers to “assemble broad bases of support, facilitates negotiation, and permits policy-makers to retreat to smaller, less visible arenas to get the things done for particular policies” (Ibid; 161). The elements of this discourse were constantly found in statements such as the following made by influential actors of the government such as President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970) in 1968:

*“we have to place a **special interest** in the promotion and **development of tourism**, for two principal reasons: firstly, through tourism we will help a great number of our Mexican fellows to reach a **better economic position** by getting a job where they can earn enough money to sustain their families and; secondly, since tourism is an industry that can return in a rapid way the intelligent and reasonable investments that Mexico can make to develop it, the former **can be translated in development**...it will contribute in a very **efficient way** to maintain the equilibrium of the national trade balance and in currency and prices’ stability in order to **prevent a negative effect on the economy** of Mexican households” (Jiménez, 1992: 70: my translation and emphasis in bold).*

This quote is a good example of the discursive constructions utilised to reflect the economic rationale behind the interest of the state in tourism. The way in which this interest was portrayed to the public, however, clearly neither invites nor accepts refutation. Tourism development was portrayed as a short-term solution for the long-lasting economic problems in Mexico such as unemployment. There is no doubt that the depoliticisation of tourism through developmental arguments helped policy-makers to consolidate this agenda taking it to the next level of the process i.e. policy formulation. Thus, all the discursive efforts from policy-makers were oriented to implant and spread the idea that tourism was nothing but a genuine development strategy.

#### *5.4.2 The symbolic representation of the economy: a story of decline*

A symbol, according to Stone (2002: 137), is “anything that stands for something else. Its meaning depends on how people interpret it, use it, or respond to it...the meaning of a symbol is not intrinsic to it, but is invested in it by the people who use it...symbols are [thus] collectively created”. Considering the former, ‘symbols’ are used by policy-makers to shape the perceptions of individuals conditioning the acceptance or rejection of a particular representation in a constructed problem. Stone (2002) said that it is this influence on our perceptions of certain situations which turns symbols into political devices. She pointed out three aspects of symbolic representation in the definition of policy problems: narrative stories, synecdoches and metaphors. The next paragraphs will describe the main narrative developed by tourism policy-makers explaining how it was utilised in order to create space for the emergence of the CIPs policy. This information aims to shed some light on the way by which policy-makers defined the social ‘problem’ to be solved and how different symbolic resources were utilised to influence the policy process as part of a well-defined political strategy.

If one pays attention to the last sentence of the statement made by President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz provided in the previous page referring to the prevention of a negative effect on the economy, it seems easy to understand the logic behind the decision of the state to intervene in the tourism sector. This decision was carefully portrayed as an ‘imperious necessity’ to prevent the occurrence of a potential ‘disaster’ in the national economy. The main narrative utilised by the technocrats was thus one of



economic decline. This discursive construction surrounding this narrative found in the Banco de Mexico's document "*Bases para el Desarrollo Integral*" in 1968 stressed that the economic model followed until then -Import Substitution Industrialisation, ISI- started to present signs of exhaustion, therefore jeopardising its continuity. The process of rapid industrialisation experienced in the 1940s and 1950s had caused negative effects on the trade balance -more imports than exports- and the economic stability of the country. Likewise, it was argued the protectionist policy of the domestic market had to be reassessed because it was threatening the sustainability of the governmental apparatus due to the progressive engrossment of the public debt derived from the proliferation of state-run enterprises in the 1950s. Moreover, it was said that this situation had produced other negative effects such as the creation of black markets, the low productivity and bad quality of the products in both, state-run and private enterprises, and ultimately it was blocking the flourishing of a competitive environment in the national market (for a detailed discussion see Anglade and Fortin, 1985; Cárdenas, 1996, 2000; Grindle, 2000; Middlebrook and Zepeda, 2003; Middlebrook, 2004; Navarrete, 1959). A scenario of government's inaction was not included within this narrative as it was claimed that the economic cost and, above all, the social cost of not taking any action would be unmanageable under the prevailing conditions. The following quote can help to understand the former:

*"Despite all the programs and efforts from the federal government, states and municipalities through diverse public institutions in sectors such as agriculture, heavy industry, building and services, **the problem of unemployment is far from being solved**, therefore it is imperative to search for new activities that can provide **steady sources of employment** adequately remunerated such as **tourism**...it is important to note that the work force demanded by the tourism industry actually requires a very **low volume of people with a high-skilled profile** and, on the other hand, it requires a **great percentage of people with low levels of education**, this situation means a **low social cost** in the preparation of employed personnel, a circumstance that presents a clear **favourable panorama** for the regional **development**"* (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 2/190: Descripción del Proyecto Cancun, INFRATUR, 1969: 7; my emphasis in bold).

This quote serves to exemplify the general features of the 'story of economic decline' that policy-makers were employing to justify the tourism intervention. This type of narrative fits in what Stone (2002) classified as the 'story of helplessness and

control'. In this type of narrative an unfavourable panorama is presented to the public stressing the need from governments to act in order to solve related issues. The circumstances are normally portrayed as out of the control of policy-makers but this type of narrative emphasises that policy-makers can actually 'control' things if they are allowed to. A narrative of decline thus serves as a prelude to give way to a narrative of control as Stone (2002: 145) points out: "the story of decline is meant to warn us of suffering and motivate us to seize control".

In this sense tourism was publicised in quotes such as this as a *labour-intensive* and *low-cost* activity with a rapid rate of investment return. Unlike heavy industry where important investments in technology and training for personnel were supposedly carried out, tourism appeared as a short-term solution to the unemployment problem. This argument helped policy-makers to construct a particular profile of policy recipients as well as the potential social benefits. The targeted population was framed under a social profile of low education and an economic profile of severe limitations to engage in the national economic system. The reproduction of this narrative thus raised public awareness about the possibility of an imminent economic crisis stressing the potential -and perhaps 'miraculous'- effects that tourism development could produce reversing its negative effects.

A key informant of this work was asked to comment on how the tourism agenda was negotiated in the decision-making circles at the time. He stated:

*"In one of several cabinet meetings to discuss national economic issues, the director of the Banco de Mexico and the Minister of the Treasury presented the panorama to President Ordaz...they were discussing the historical statistics of the trade balance...looking at the figures, the president asked why the economic contribution of tourism seemed to be declining taking into account the growth and success in destinations such as Acapulco...the response from these officials was that the Mexican government did not control tourism development at the time, and because of that, its contribution remained rather marginal" (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, December 2008; my translation).*

Whether the specific details of this meeting were actually true or not, the interesting point derived from this passage is that it suggests a manipulative approach in the political negotiation. There is no doubt that the flow and the contents of the information in these meetings were controlled by the technocrats through influential actors of the economic institutions of the regime. In this sense, the selection of

particular information supporting their arguments was crucial to dominate the debate. Strategies such as the former were implemented presumably to predispose the acceptance from other actors in the tourism arena to ultimately take these ideas into the realm of policy-making. However, not only was the reputation from these influential actors sufficient to generate a base of political support for the tourism proposal but also the provision of ‘hard’ evidence to support their arguments and give an appropriate dimension to the constructed ‘problem’. The former included a number of measurements to produce the necessary support to their arguments and achieve the objectives considered in their agenda.

#### *5.4.3 Dimensioning the problem: the use of numbers*

One of the most common political devices is the measurement of the constructed ‘problem’ in question. The fundamental questions in the use of this device are: 1) what is being measured?; 2) what are the purposes of measuring it?, and; 3) how it is going to be measured and by whom? The action of counting according to Stone (2002: 164) involves “deliberative decisions about *counting as*” (emphasis in original). The former implies a categorisation of the things that can be included and excluded and subsequently selected in the final counting. Figures, graphs, tables and statistics are normally used by policy-makers mainly because they help to solidify the construction of arguments in a particular narrative. It is important to note at this point, the crucial role that ‘measures’ play in our modern societies to define political problems. ‘Measures’ are used by policy-makers to construct a particular story because numbers have become symbols of precision, accuracy, and objectivity in our societies (Ibid: 176). Due to the former, an ‘aura’ of impartiality has surrounded the measures making the identification of the real motivations and interests behind their use a very complex task. In that sense, a sense of ‘ambiguity’ in their use becomes necessary to allow policy-makers to have control over the interpretations of the measured. Stone (2002: 182) mentions in this regard: “measurers have power over the fate of the measured, since measuring is done to help decide on policy actions”. The question is then, what measures were portrayed by tourism policy-makers to dominate the tourism arena?

There is no doubt that in order to reinforce the narrative of an economic decline and making a case for state-led tourism development, a substantial number of ‘evidences’

should have been provided. An example of one of the ‘proofs’ to sustain the argument of an imminent economic crisis can be found in the figures presented in **Table 5.1**. The numbers in this table showed a historical trend line of the trade balance portraying an unfavourable economic panorama for the country. Attention is centred on portraying a negative balance of transactions and a rapid decline in public earnings especially during the 1960s.

Year	Earnings	Expenditures	Trade balance
1950	826.7	786.5	40.2
1955	1,208.1	1,185.7	22.4
1960	1,371.8	1,682.9	<b>-311.1</b>
1965	1,989.1	2,364.8	<b>-375.7</b>
1967	2,198.5	2,312.9	<b>-514.4</b>

**Table 5.1** Historical trend of the Mexico’s trade balance (figures in million of dollars).

Source: *Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. Banco de México 4/4, Bases para el Desarrollo Integral, Tabla 8, 1968.*

A more detailed account of the import-export transactions affecting the evolution of the Mexican trade balance was also elaborated by policy-makers as it can be seen in the **Table 5.2**. In this table, the transactions of both goods and services are included, providing more detail to the figures corresponding to the 1960s. This table shows a dramatic negative trend in the trade balance from 1960 onwards. Although some signs of recovery can be identified in this table -for example, in 1961, 1962, 1965, 1966, and 1969- the figures portray, in general terms, a negative pattern during this historical period. An unprecedented negative increase is shown in the last row establishing a new parameter and a reminder of the complex economic situation of the country.

Year	Exports, goods and services	Imports, goods and services	Trade Balance
1950	826.7	768	58.7
1955	1,208.1	1,173.2	34.9
1960	1,371.8	1,672.3	<b>-300.5</b>
1961	1,463.4	1,658.7	-195.3
1962	1,586.8	1,707	-120.2
1963	1,709.3	1,879.3	-170
1964	1,847.9	2,199.8	-351.9
1965	1,989.1	2,303.5	-314.4
1966	2,181.2	2,477.3	-296.1
1967	2,206.6	2,712.9	<b>-506.3</b>
1968	2,506.3	3,138.5	<b>-632.2</b>
1969	2,942.3	3,414.6	-472.3
1970*	3,105.8	3,970.9	<b>-865.1</b>

**Table 5.2** Historical evolution of Mexican trade balance including goods and services, figures in millions of dollars (my emphasis in bold, \* preliminary figures).

Source: *Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. Banco de México 3/3: Departamento de Estudios Económicos, 1972; my emphasis in bold.*

With regards to tourism, a number of statistics were also presented in order to sustain the argument of the need from the state to act. **Table 5.3** portrays the results of the historical records and investigations made by INFRATUR's officials so as to provide a picture of the situation of tourist arrivals. Attention was focused on portraying an optimistic pattern in the arrivals of international visitors to Mexico. The former might have obeyed to the intention of the policy-makers to centre the discussion over the continuous growth of these figures, dimensioning the potential value of these visitors for the economy in both, foreign currency earnings and trade balance alleviation. This table shows a consistent growth over time with the exception of two years: 1947 and 1953.

Year	International Tourists	Annual variation
1946	265,234	-
1947	249,591	<b>- 5.9 %</b>
1948	264,904	6.1 %
1949	322,776	21.8 %
1950	408,123	<b>26.4 %</b>
1951	445,413	9.1 %
1952	462,354	3.8 %
1953	440,991	<b>-4.6 %</b>
1954	446,839	1.3 %
1955	572,499	28.1 %
1956	636,215	11.1 %
1957	711,809	11.9 %
1958	735,357	3.3 %
1959	757,176	3.0 %
1960	771,488	1.9 %
1961	815,870	5.8 %
1962	957,724	<b>17.4 %</b>
1963	1,108,766	12.8 %
1964	1,238,845	14.6 %
1965	1,395,485	12.6 %
1966	1,546,057	10.8 %
1967	1,674,061	8.3 %
1968	1,936,588	15.7 %
1969	2,121,392	9.5 %
1970*	2,317,074	9.2 %

**Table 5.3** Historical evolution of tourists' arrivals to Mexico (\*preliminary figures).

Source: *Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 5/210: Turismo como Instrumento de Desarrollo Regional*, INFRATUR, Departamento de Estudios Económicos, 1972; my emphasis in bold.

Finally, **Table 5.4** showed a comparison of the economic contribution of exports, tourism, and border transactions. It is important to note that previous to the 1950s, tourism activities were classified under the label of 'border transactions' (Interview with a Banco de Mexico former official, January 2009). The elaboration of this table

might have been observed for the objective of making a clear distinction between these categories giving the appropriate dimension to the contribution of tourism on its own for the first time. Whereas the revenues by border transactions seemed to have reached a ‘stagnation’ period, tourism revenues presented a steady but modest growth over the years. This table clearly portrayed a promising panorama for the future of the trade balance if the contribution of these activities might be augmented with the stimulus of the state.

Year	Exports, goods and services	%	Tourism Revenues	%	Border transactions' revenues	%	Tourism and border transactions' revenues	%
1950	826.7	100	110.9	13.4	121.9	14.7	232.8	28.1
1955	1,208.1	100	118.1	9.8	261.7	21.7	379.8	31.5
1960	1,371.8	100	155.3	11.3	366	26.7	521.3	38
1961	1,463.4	100	164	11.2	392.7	26.8	556.7	38
1962	1,586.8	100	178.6	11.3	406.7	25.6	585.3	36.9
1963	1,709.3	100	210.6	12.3	445.9	26.1	656.5	38.4
1964	1,847.9	100	240.7	13	463.3	25.1	704	38.1
1965	1,989.1	100	274.9	13.8	499.5	25.1	774.4	38.9
1966	2,181.2	100	328.4	15.1	546.6	25.1	875	40.2
1967	2,206.6	100	363.1	16,5	599.6	27.2	962.7	43.7
1968	2,506.3	100	431.9	17,2	713.5	<b>28.4</b>	1,445.4	45.6
1969	2,942.3	100	527.8	17.9	761.2	25.9	1,289	43.8
1970*	3,105.8	100	575	<b>18.5</b>	878.9	28.3	1,453.9	<b>46.8</b>

**Table 5.4** Comparison between tourism revenues and border transactions' revenues for the national current account (figures in million of dollars, \* preliminary figures).

Source: *Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 5/210: Turismo como Instrumento de Desarrollo Regional*, INFRATUR, Departamento de Estudios Económicos, 1972; my emphasis in bold.

Although these numbers seem to be fairly conclusive, it is very difficult to know whether these measures were manipulated or not. Nevertheless, the following quote can help to gain a better understanding about the production of these numbers:

*“We had the big assignment to present a statistical picture of tourism in order to calculate its economic benefits; yet, you have to consider that this was an exercise that has never been done before. There were no detailed*

*statistics and records of tourism activities so we had to make our estimations according to the available data...I think we did a great job although I can not say that the figures presented then were totally accurate...nevertheless, there is no doubt that these numbers helped us to confirm that tourism was the right choice” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, November 2008; my translation).*

#### 5.4.4 The causes of the marginal participation of tourism

The previous sections of this chapter have discussed the assemblage of a narrative of economic decline elaborated by tourism policy-makers. However, the causes provided by them surrounding the limitations of the Mexican tourism sector have been little discussed so far. As mentioned in the previous chapter (chapter four), tourism activities in Mexico were concentrated in few destinations such as *Acapulco*, Mexico City, *Ciudad Juárez*, and *Tijuana* during the 1960s. According to Brenner and Aguilar (2002), Collins (1979), and Clancy (1999), the consolidation of these destinations had not been derived from a comprehensive planning approach. A number of structural and organisational problems appeared -such as excessive immigration, deficient public services, proliferation of illegal activities, price inflation, pollution, proliferation of shanty-towns, unemployment and so on- in these centres making evident the historical lack of control over their growth and development. Despite this, these destinations became the main point of reference for policy-makers in order to analyse how tourism functioned at the time. A key informant of this research commented in this regard:

*“We certainly were not specialists in tourism...nobody in the country had enough information to produce a report of the Mexican tourism industry...we had to produce all the data from the observations made especially in destinations such as Acapulco, which was the biggest destination at the time. In addition to the former, me and other colleagues were sent to some international destinations such as Hawaii, some Caribbean Islands, the US, Spain, and France with the main objective of observing how a tourism destination had to be developed. We were able to collect essential information for the final proposal that was reflected in the CIPs policy...” (Interview, former INFRATUR official, November 2008; my translation).*

Considering the former quote, it can be said that policy-makers widely recognised their lack of experience and knowledge about the functioning of the tourism sector entirely relying on their observations on the ground. The data collected in two years of investigations (1966-1968) gave policy-makers a knowledge platform about tourism gaining a better understanding of some of its main features such as the flow

of visitors, the identification of a potential market, and the evaluation of the economic cost-benefit. A key informant of this research gave an example of how socioeconomic estimations were being carried out by policy-makers:

*“the population growth in a destination was estimated, for example, according to the number of available rooms in the resort...then for a five star hotel with 100 rooms, it was believed that it would generate employment for approximately 160 employees, for each employee an average number of family members of five was considered; the estimation then was that this hotel was in fact attracting 800 people to the destination...this formula was very useful for us to estimate the social and economic impacts of tourism” (Interview, former INFRATUR official, January 2009; my translation).*

Thus, these and other similar assessments were made in order to give dimension to the tourism sector. These observations, above all, helped policy-makers to construct a particular idea of tourism development conceiving it as an economic activity that responded to the international trends of mass tourism for recreational purposes. The form of tourism development based on ‘sun, sand, and sea’ attributes was recognised as the most attractive to generate explosive growth and increase the participation from Mexico considering the successful examples of France and Spain (see Walton, 2009). Considering the geographical advantages of this country in respect to the largest generator of tourists in the world at the time (US), it was believed this form of tourism development would be translated into short-term economic benefits (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, December 2008).

The complex social and economic panorama in destinations such as Acapulco reinforced the argument that a spontaneous tourism growth was highly undesirable and its negative effects difficult to reverse. It was commented by one of the key informants that INFRATUR was asked to explore the feasibility of giving a new financial impulse to Acapulco in order to more effectively control the negative effects and give a new direction to its development. This proposal did not receive any support according to this informant because it was claimed that an investment of that nature would not be recovered in the short term and the economic and social benefits would be very limited (Interview, former official Banco de Mexico, January, 2009). Thus, the idea of the creation of new tourism destinations under a more comprehensive planning approach was taking shape. The main justification of this initiative was that the appearance of more unplanned tourism centres in Mexico had to be prevented. In order to avoid the ‘errors of the past’ in places such as Acapulco,



the state needed to play a more active role in this task. Policy-makers thus stressed in the debates the social and economic problems derived from the unplanned destinations not only in Mexico but in other international destinations as well. A key informant commented:

*“we largely discussed the problems caused by unplanned tourism especially those regarding economic inequalities, lack of opportunities, and exclusion that were creating social resentment among the local population in the tourism destinations...I remember to have discussed in one of the meetings the case of Saint Thomas [the Caribbean] in the mid-1960s where two tourists were shot by some locals on a golf course...the men responsible were caught and declared they did it because they were unable to witness how rich tourists were coming to enjoy the beauty of their city meanwhile the local population struggled to survive...we certainly did not want to reproduce an episode like that in Mexico, and we thought that the best way to prevent the formation of social resentment against tourism development was through the implementation of an integral planning approach” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, December 2008; my translation).*

In this sense, the responsibility of social and economic problems derived from tourism was assigned to the lack of attention of the state to regulate and plan its growth and development. The former helped to construct an interventionist discourse i.e. it would be only through state control that profound positive transformations in tourism could materialise. This was the main discursive route followed by INFRATUR’s policy-makers to legitimate this decision portraying themselves as the ‘fixers’ of the problems derived from unplanned tourism destinations. Above all, the reproduction of this discourse gave them a new sense of authority and political power in the tourism arena.

#### *5.4.5 The representation of a ‘common’ interest*

‘Interests’ in the language of politics according to Stone (2002: 210) are “the active side of effect (consequences of actions irrespectively of if we are aware of them or not), the result of people experiencing or imaging effects and attempting to influence them”. In this sense the construction of ‘common interests’ becomes crucial to mobilise support and constitute alliances aiming to accomplish certain goals in a political agenda. It is important to note that tourism, unlike other economic sectors where the intervention of the state can be more easily justified -e.g. agriculture, education, security, public services, infrastructure, and so on- does not seem to reunite the sufficient elements to defend the investment of public money upon its

development. The former can be understood as a consequence of a collective construction of tourism as a private-regarded activity with questionable social and economic benefits. In this sense, if tourism was going to be favoured by public funds in Mexico, a convincing argument had to be carefully elaborated in such a way it reflected the intention of the state to be representing a broad range of interests in the society.

Special attention was paid to stress that tourism development would be implemented in economically depressed areas of the country. Considering the conditions of 'poverty' and 'underdevelopment' in these regions, tourism was constructed as an agent of change in order to transform those conditions. Thanks to the link constructed between tourism and development discourses prior to the appearance of the policy process, tourism development could be effectively depoliticised under the argument of working for the benefit of the 'poor'. Who could be against this argument? who could criticise an initiative aimed at delivering economic benefits to an unattended population? and, more importantly, who would propose a 'better' option different to this?. The construction of a 'common interest' was thus crucial for the advancement of an agenda of tourism development. On the one hand, this 'communal' representation assisted policy-makers to support the claim of working on behalf of the disadvantaged whereas, on the other hand, it helped suppress any form of opposition to this plan due to the indisputable nature of this social construction. In this sense, as Richter (1989: 19) noted, it would be a mistake to conceive tourism apolitical because "there is often a political agenda -wise or foolish, benign or selfish, compatible or incompatible- underlying an explicit tourism program". Therefore, although the decisions and actions of policy-makers should have appeared as immune to the political struggles occurring in Mexico in other political arenas, the representation of a 'common interest' in tourism development became indispensable to ensure the achievement of the goals considered by policy-makers.

## **5.5 Policy formulation**

### *5.5.1 The emergence of the CIPs policy*

Once the narrative of an economic decline gained sufficient attention at the national level, the presentation of possible solutions was the next logical step. These

‘solutions’ should appear as the result of a process whereby all the possible alternatives were explored by policy-makers leading to the adoption of a ‘rational’ decision. Rational decision-making according to Stone (2002: 256) should be packed in sequential operations including the definition of goals and objectives, the imaging of several alternatives, the evaluation of these alternatives and, finally, the adoption of the ‘best’ alternative according to the proposed goals and objectives. In the particular case of tourism policy-makers, the ‘best’ alternative proposed by them was the formulation of a new tourism policy to provide a more comprehensive framework for the growth of this sector in the country. The creation of a new policy in tourism was portrayed by policy-makers as one of the more viable alternatives to address the objectives set in the economic and developmental agendas.

The new tourism policy was named *Centros Integramente Planeados* (State-Planned Tourism Destinations, CIPs, acronym in Spanish) and was presented by the Banco de Mexico through INFRATUR<sup>13</sup>. As already mentioned, this institution started to operate formally in 1969 through a ‘technical’ committee of experts. The committee was composed of representatives from economic institutions such as the SHCP, NAFINSA and Banco de Mexico and its powers -economic and political- were fully controlled by the interests and political agenda of the technocrats group. The initial functions of INFRATUR were: the encouragement of private investment as a complement to the government investments in infrastructure; the acquisition, urbanisation, selling, and leasing of properties for tourism purposes, and; the collaboration with other organisations of the federal government, states and municipalities for the promotion of the tourism industry (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. Banco de Mexico 4/4: Bases para el Desarrollo Integral, INFRATUR, 1968: 2; my translation*)

The first formal meeting of this trust was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> August of 1969 (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1/183: Proyecto Cancun 1960-1976, INFRATUR, 1969: 2; my translation*). During this meeting the results of the previous investigations into tourism and the formal presentation of the CIPs policy initiative were discussed (Interview, former official Banco de Mexico, November 2008). A related document stated that the formulation of CIPs policy

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<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that the CIPs policy approach was an entirely Mexican creation.

obeyed to the need of “consolidating and increasing, in the short and medium term, the amount and volume of tourism expenditure in the country, through concentration of public investment in infrastructure projects within certain geographical areas of the country previously selected” (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1/183: Proyecto Cancun 1960-1976, INFRATUR, 1969: 2; my translation*). The objectives of this program were defined as follows: 1) CIPs policy will assist in the creation of employment sources in zones with tourism potential and with scarce alternatives for the development of other productive activities; 2) CIPs policy will help in the realisation of regional development through a growing demand for complementary activities such as agriculture, industry, and the production of handicrafts; 3) CIPs policy will contribute in the improvement and diversification of the tourism destinations, and; 4) CIPs policy will help to increase, in the short and medium terms, the earnings of foreign currency for the trade balance (Ibid). The main economic justification given in this document was that tourism represented a labour-intensive activity with a favourable local panorama in economic terms. According to the estimations of the policy-makers, between 40% and 60% of the direct expenditure by tourists was directed to salaries and that the expected multiplier effect would help the regional development of the selected zones (Ibid).

INFRATUR’s policy-makers paid special attention to portraying a favourable panorama highlighting the multiple benefits that tourism would bring through the implementation of CIPs policy. The type of tourism that policy-makers wanted to pursue was delimited in this initiative clearly favouring coastal development throughout the Mexican territory. The targeted market was the US due to the supposed favourable geographical position of Mexico in respect to the largest sender of tourists in the world during the 1960s (Ibid: 24). The importance for Mexico to create new destinations in addition to the existent ones -e.g. *Acapulco, Tijuana, and Mexico City*- was stressed under the argument of the need to expand the participation of this country in the world tourism market. The construction of new destinations in coastal zones had the primary objective of increasing the arrivals of international tourists and their expenditure in related activities. INFRATUR’s policy-makers stated that this policy was a watershed decision in terms of tourism planning in Mexico that would help to consolidate an integral approach to coordinate public and private investments so as “to ensure the harmonious development of the sector in the

short term” (Ibid: 23; my translation) as well as “integrate into this program those zones that present profound developmental problems” (Ibid: 29; my translation).

It is important to note that the CIPs policy not only signified the materialisation of the discourses reproduced throughout the 1960s but also a real political resource to negotiate future decisions. A key informant briefly described the nature of the negotiations once the CIPs went public:

*“Once the proposal was ready [CIPs policy], the Minister of the Treasury and the Director of Banco de Mexico presented the work carried out by INFRATUR in previous years to President Ordaz in a cabinet meeting...he and his close advisers examined the proposal and listened to the arguments; they asked specific questions about its economic feasibility...all the questions were answered in several meetings and the approval was obtained after a relatively short period of negotiations...the proposal was so well elaborated that there was very little room for opposition” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, February 2009; my translation).*

This quote reflects a panorama where the CIPs agenda was forwarded in a very unproblematic way. However, the consent from the president in these meetings was not the end of these negotiations as other information collected by this research suggests. In addition to presidential approval, the authorisation of the budget had to be negotiated through mixed institutional channels in order to reach the phase of policy implementation. Although the funds for INFRATUR’s operation and subsequent works was derived from the SHCP -a political ally-, the release of financial resources by the Mexican government were conditioned by the president and his group to the successful application of international loans from developmental institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The former, according to an informant of this research, was a political tactic from the ‘politicos’ to test the feasibility of the proposal as well as to reduce the control acquired by the technocrats in the tourism arena. He commented:

*“In order to verify the information and quality of the proposal [CIPs policy], President Ordaz and his advisers conditioned the government’s financial support to the successful application of international loans from developmental institutions...this was done to implement an additional control ‘chain’ that ensured constant supervision of the plans and investments of the projects derived from this policy” (Interview, former FONATUR official, April 2009; my translation).*

Since the main decisions of the country were fully controlled by the President and his close circle during the 1960s (Lehoucq *et al*, 2005), the CIPs proposal was not

subjected to a further debate in other political spaces such as the Mexican Congress. Thus, the CIPs proposal was only subjected to the scrutiny of the mentioned international institutions through the presentation of the projects in order to obtain the necessary loans to initiate the construction works. The CIPs policy proposed the construction of five destinations on the coasts of Mexico: Cancun (in the Caribbean), *Ixtapa* and *Huatulco* (both located in the Pacific), and *Loreto* and *Los Cabos* (both located on the Cortés Sea). The first tourism resort selected to be constructed by policy-makers was Cancun, a rural economically depressed village that was located on the Yucatan Peninsula in the southeastern region of Mexico. An important number of interpretations have been elaborated over time attempting to explain the rationale behind this decision. For example, Espinosa (2004) considers that the decision obeyed to a security rationale given the prevailing conditions of tension against communism. He argues that the proximity of Cancun to Cuba was perceived as a threat to national security due to the possibility of the proliferation of dissident groups against the Mexican regime in an unpopulated territory with a minor presence of the State at the time. In contrast, Brenner (2005), Clancy (1999, 2001a, 2001b), and Jiménez (1992) said that this decision was rather based on an evaluation of the international tourism trends considering the potential to incorporate this destination into the Caribbean tourism market. Moreover, they argued that the economic conditions as well as exceptional natural beauty of Cancun, weather and location were the main elements that supported the decision of developing this area in the first place. Lastly, a former member of the INFRATUR office (Interview, December 2008) commented, that the decision was mainly based on the fact that Cancun presented an unproblematic land-ownership panorama; this circumstance would facilitate the implementation tasks and the processes related to its commercialisation.

After some visits to Cancun's area by representatives from the WB and the BID, the BID acceded to support this project granting a loan to the Mexican government of approximately 21 million dollars in 1971 (BID loan 217/oc-ME, 1971). One of the conditions for this loan was that the Mexican government had to contribute with a direct investment of approximately 16 million dollars and the private sector was expected to contribute 20 million dollars (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 5/210: Turismo como Instrumento de Desarrollo Regional, INFRATUR, Departamento de Estudios Económicos, 1972*). It was expected that the

sum of all these investments should cover the construction of an international airport, the construction of a water network, the installation of energy sources, the provision of an urban infrastructure, the construction of a golf course, the rehabilitation of archaeological sites, and the installation of a communications network in Cancun. It is important to note that despite the intense campaign of promotion of tourism development during the 1950s and 1960s by supranational actors such as the WB, BID, UN, and so on, Cancun was one of the first projects financially supported for the construction of tourism infrastructure in the world for developmental purposes comparable to the case of Benidorm in Spain (see Claver-Cortés *et al.*, 2007 for a detailed discussion).

According to a key informant, the access to the loans did not represent a major impediment for INFRATUR's policy-makers as some influential members of the Mexican economic institutions had been able to develop a good relationship with some members of these institutions. He commented:

*“The Minister of the Treasury and the Subdirector of the Banco de Mexico had a very good relationship with influential members of these institutions, especially with the WB due to the negotiation of several loans for general infrastructure projects in Mexico during the 1950s and 1960s...they had gained a good international reputation due to the good results experienced in the stability of the currency and the national economy in general terms...I am sure they had the social network to apply for a loan in a more easy way...moreover, you have to consider that the Director of INFRATUR had previously worked at the BID in the early 1960s, so I imagine this situation somehow helped to consider the proposal [the CIPs] more seriously” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, January 2009; my translation).*

Without any form of consultation at the local level at this stage of the policy process, the formal announcement to the public of the implementation of CIPs policy was made at the end of the decade of the 1960s by President Díaz Ordaz, informing the construction of five new tourism resorts in the years to come in order to solve the problems associated with ‘underdevelopment’ in the country (FONATUR, 1988: 12). The policy process thus continued its way towards the stage of policy implementation where discourses, objectives and plans had to be confronted with the social realities of the selected places.

## 5.6 Conclusions

The information contained in this chapter has attempted to provide a discussion of the role that actors' knowledge played in policy-making activities exploring the phases of agenda setting and policy formulation. It was argued that, through the discursive construction of problems, policy-makers are able to draw the attention of the public and sustain the claim of the need to intervene to solve these problems. Utilising different discursive resources (such as narratives, symbols, causes, interest and so on), policy-makers can generate a debate that is normally dominated by those who possess more information about the issue in question. In this sense, actors' knowledge acquires a special relevance in the policy process to determine how different ideas are kept on and off the debate as well as to define the way in which public policies are designed. Above all, it is important to recognise as Schneider and Ingram (1993: 334) noted that these social constructions "influence policy agenda and the selection of policy tools, as well as the rationales that legitimate policy choices".

This chapter explored the initial phases of the policy process through the analysis of the interplay of different ideologies, values and interests as well as the identification of the institutional and power arrangements in the political arena of Mexican tourism during the 1960s. It can be said that the main features of the prevailing political system largely contributed to delineate the contours by which the CIPs policy emerged. These structural features, ultimately, helped to determine the participation patterns and the main strategies utilised by different actors to control the evolution of the policy process. These strategies included the enlargement of the institutional presence of the state in tourism, the creation of common agendas, the domination of communication channels and, above all, the construction of an epistemic community.

It is important to mention that despite the existence of a conjunctural opportunity given the concurrence of several internal and external factors for the support of tourism development during this historical moment (e.g. jet travel, the consolidation of mass tourism, proliferation of coastal destinations, more leisure time, and so on), this research identified in construction of a narrative of economic decline a stronger justification for the emergence of the CIPs policy process. Although it is recognised the importance of these circumstances for the decision of supporting the tourism sector, it is believed that the discursive construction of policy-makers played a more



decisive role. The construction of a narrative of economic decline thus proved very useful to embed a tourism agenda of national scale in Mexico.

It is important to note that the creation and reproduction of discourses became the main resource that policy-makers used to control the flow of ideas as well as the construction of problems and solutions. The creation of particular discourses supporting tourism development at different levels (i.e. global and national) was recognised here as crucial to consolidate political agendas that would otherwise be ignored. Nevertheless, an important factor that was taken into account in the analysis of these discourses was the access to the spaces where the debate was taking place. The information in this chapter suggests that the participation in the tourism arena was highly restricted and decisions largely influenced by the epistemic community surrounding the CIPs policy process. Considering the former, it was identified that if access is restricted to a particular group of actors, then certain discourses are irremediably excluded independently of their content and purpose. Furthermore, the information contained in this chapter was also very useful to illustrate how power struggles ensued leading to the use of different resources at hand by related actors to influence this process. The decision to take CIPs policy proposal to the next level in the process -policy implementation- did nothing but confirm that the objectives of the agenda set during this period were successfully implanted. However, the task of translating policy intentions into the realm of actions seemed more challenging given the inexperience of Mexican policy-makers in tourism development.

Last but not least, it is believed that the information contained in this chapter might serve to stimulate a further discussion of the role that knowledge plays in policy-making activities as well as to gain a better understanding of the political dimension of tourism. The next chapter will explore the implementation phase of the CIPs policy in the case of Cancun. Attention will be focused on describing a clash of different cultural and ideological visions of tourism development between locals and policy-makers in this process. Thus, chapter six will analyse the different ways in which these visions were bridged, transformed, and/or negotiated through the experiences of related actors on the ground.

## **Chapter 6. The encounter of two worlds: the implementation of CIPs policy in the case of Cancun.**

### **6.1 Chapter outline**

The objective of the present chapter is to describe the implementation phase of the CIPs policy in the case of Cancun. This particular case was chosen in light of its potential to illustrate the issues that arose from the confrontation of different world views during this phase of the policy process. For this purpose, the social interface element referred to by Long (2001) as a “clash of cultural paradigms” is developed in this chapter. According to Long (2001: 70), this element of the social interface “helps us to focus on the production and transformation of differences in worldviews or cultural paradigms...it becomes necessary...to identify the conditions under which particular definitions of reality and visions of the future are upheld, to analyse the interplay of cultural and ideological oppositions, and to map out the ways in which bridging or distancing actors and ideologies make it possible for certain types of interface to reproduce or transform themselves”. Considering the former, this chapter focuses attention on the analysis of the interplay of worldviews from different actors for the case of the CIPs implementation in Cancun. Special attention is paid to discussing the different strategies employed by related actors (policy-makers, implementers, locals, immigrants and so on) to negotiate their visions of the world within the tourism policy project. Assisted by the theoretical proposal developed by Stevenson (2007) and Stevenson *et al* (2008), this chapter builds some explanations about actors’ decisions and actions supporting and/or resisting policy intervention. Throughout this chapter, different narratives by the actors that participated in this process are provided with the objective of widening the understanding of how different factors (human, structural, and contextual) influence decision-making as policy implementation unfolds.

The structure of this chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section presents a brief literature review of the different approaches to studying policy implementation. A discussion of the main advantages and limitations of these approaches is included identifying the elements that have been considered within an

analysis of this particular phase. The second section of this chapter describes the implementation experience of the CIPs policy in the context of Cancun. This section examines the different narratives of the actors that participated in this process identifying the existence of a clash of cultural paradigms derived from profound differences in their perception of the world. It focuses on gaining a better understanding of the nature of these differences as well as on describing the resources and power arrangements employed by some actors to impose a particular vision of the world. Finally, the third section includes a discussion of the effects generated by the implementation of the CIPs policy in Cancun at the national, regional and local levels. The information describes how the implementation of this policy generated the appearance of other agendas in this arena transforming the traditional structures of control and decisions in tourism policy-making activities.

## **6.2 Approaches to study policy implementation**

Research on policy “implementation” seeks to understand how the machinery of the state and political actors intersect to produce public actions (John, 1999: 1). Before the 1970s, researchers in political science tended to focus their analyses on the phase of “policy formulation” leaving “implementation” to the attention of administration scholars. However, a new wave of studies emerged aiming to gain a better understanding of the policy process as a whole considering “implementation” as a crucial part of the analysis (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984). These types of studies focused on providing insightful explanations for the failure or success of policies derived from “implementation” practices. An example of this can be found in works such as the one developed by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) describing the failures in the implementation of some public policies in the American context. Pülzl and Treib (2007) point out that the majority of these studies stressed the outcomes of policies in a negative fashion as many researchers realised that expectations were not normally met.

Despite the recognition of the “implementation” phase as a crucial component of the policy process, this first generation of studies conceived policy “implementation” as a natural result of the decision-making process. Brewer and DeLeon (1983: 253) noted “[implementation was seen as] an automatic extension or spill over of the decision-making process and therefore warranted little separate attention”. The main

assumption was that top state organisations controlled policy-making practices and, due to the former, implementation of policies proceeded with little or no controversy. This approach -known as “top-down”- focused on studying the structures and enforcement methods from the state to secure the goals set at the top. Birkland (2005: 184-185) denounced a number of problems with this approach considering it incapable of providing explanations for the different problems and challenges faced by implementers on the ground. For example, he argued that “top-down” approaches take for granted the existence of a single national government that structures policy implementation and policy delivery. It is important to point out that the former may not be applicable to all political systems or all political arenas. This approach clearly underestimates the role played by different actors, structures -formal and informal-, and contextual factors in the formulation and execution of policy proposals. Another flaw identified by Birkland was the belief that policy objectives and goals are always clear, considering actors’ interpretation as the main problem in the execution phase. Again, there is a lack of recognition of the possibility that policy goals and objectives can actually be ambiguous -intentionally or not- and that they may constitute a source of conflict within the same political arena. Hill (2009: 205) pointed out in this regard that “[policy] goals are contestable and change over time” and due to their changing nature, implementation success or failure cannot be assessed solely based on good or bad interpretations. Lastly, Birkland mentions that “top-down” approaches assume that public policies are reflected in a single statute or another government statement. However, policies do not always take the form of a formal document; they can arise in multiple forms such as official declarations, press releases, congress discussions and so on. In this sense, discursive constructions may acquire a greater relevance to give origin to a policy process rather than the existence of a formal policy document as happened in the case of the CIPs policy process.

The second generation of “implementation” studies -known as “bottom-up”- flourished in response attempting to explain why policy goals were not normally achieved and recognising the complexity in analysing the policy process. According to Sutton (1999: 23) “bottom-up” approaches conceive implementation as “an ongoing, non-linear process...[that] requires consensus building, participation of key stakeholders, conflict resolution, compromise, contingency planning, resource mobilisation and adaptation”. The advocates of “bottom-up” approaches identified

the impossibility of separating the phases of policy formulation from policy implementation within an analysis under the assumption that decision-making is continuous (Sabatier, 2007). John (1998: 30) commented in this regard that “while the concept of implementation remains useful as a conceptual tool to understand the success of policy, the project of creating implementation analysis as a *separate* [...] has largely failed” (my emphasis in italics).

Although “top-down” approaches largely disregarded the input of implementers in policy-making activities, “bottom-up” approaches widely recognised these subjects as active political actors in this process. In this sense, Pülzl and Treib (2007: 96) noted “[implementers are] political actors in their own right and the outcome of this endeavour entails complicated negotiation processes between them and central authorities”. Therefore, “bottom-up” studies are associated with the analysis of the negotiations, decisions, and challenges faced by these actors and other related actors during the implementation process. Two examples of these types of studies can be found in the works of Lipsky (1980) and Long (1992, 2001). Lipsky, for instance, discussed the degree of discretionary decision-making power that implementers acquire in the phase of policy implementation. He argued that, through this power, implementers -or “street-level bureaucracies”, as he calls them- are able to consolidate a new order in policy decision-making. Long’s work, on the other hand, discusses the idea that implementers develop certain capabilities during the implementation process and, due to the former, they are able to define new decision-making structures. Long associated the former with the exercise of the agency of these actors to create room for manoeuvre in spite of any possible structural constraint.

Despite the recognition of actors’ agency in “bottom-up” approaches, they also received a number of criticisms. One of these criticisms was linked to the overestimation of the supposed actors’ agency supporting or resisting the plans formulated at the top. In this sense, in order to assess actors’ agency in implementation tasks, structural features should also be taken into account so as to identify the extent of actors’ input. Another criticism points out that “bottom-up” approaches assume the existence of an active participation of different interest groups outside state structures within the implementation process. The former

assumption must be handled with care as in some policy areas plans are actually formulated and implemented with little or none public input.

A third generation of approaches to study “implementation” emerged due to the need to move away from unproductive discussions between “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches. Pülzl and Treib (2007: 96) noted that this third generation aims to bridge the gap between these approaches by “incorporating the insights of both camps into new theoretical models”. Hill (2009: 205) commented in a similar vein: “to move beyond the top-down/bottom-up debate is about recognising that there will be various ways in which actors will attempt to exercise control over the implementation process”. In this sense, “implementation” is not viewed as a linear process neither as an exercise doomed by the will of its implementers but as complex social interactive process that involves adaptation, reformulation and, above all, negotiation. Considering the former, “implementation” is analysed in this chapter as “an interactive and negotiative process...between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends” (Barrett and Fudge, 1981: 25, quoted by Krutwyscho and Bramwell, 2010: 671). This research thus recognises the crucial role that actors’ visions play in these negotiations setting the power arrangements through which policies are legitimated and implemented.

### *6.2.1 An actor-oriented perspective to analyse the implementation of CIPs policy*

This research analyses the implementation of the CIPs policy in the case of Cancun conceiving it as a process composed of multiple negotiations of different natures. Despite the lack of attention to these issues in tourism research (cf. Britton, 1982; DeKadt, 1979; Elliot, 1983; Francisco, 1983; Richter, 1983, 1989), an important number of studies have emerged compensating this situation to some extent (cf. Chant, 1992; Clancy, 1999; Elliot, 1997; Hall, 1994; Hall and Jenkins, 1995; Hollinshead, 1999; Morgan and Pritchard, 1999; Zhang and John, 1999). The appearance of more studies analysing issues surrounding policy-making processes in tourism has increased in recent years. However, it has to be noted that the literature concerning policy implementation in tourism remains modest because it is “still diverse and fragmented and there have been few structured attempts to extract lessons from implementation” (Krutwyscho and Bramwell, 2010: 675).

Despite this, some studies have paid attention to exploring implementation experiences from the perspective of the actors involved. Some examples of these types of studies can be found in the works of Airey and Chong (2010), Krutwayshe and Bramwell (2010), Stevenson (2007) and Stevenson *et al* (2008). These studies investigate the narratives of the actors participating in this process in order to gain a better understanding of how different visions are bridged, contested, transformed and/or negotiated. Stevenson *et al* (2008: 746, 747) noted that “by placing people at the center (*sic*) of the investigation it emphasises the communications and social interactions that are fundamental to the process [of policy-making]...[in this sense] research needs to be directed at developing a more detailed and coherent understanding of the communications between different actors focusing on some of the problems they encounter and the power inequalities that occur in a contested policy arena [tourism]”.

This chapter describes the implementation of the CIPs policy in the case of Cancun from the perspective of some of the actors that directly participated in this process. The narratives from policy-makers, implementers, and locals are included in order to deepen the understanding of how different visions interacted in intervention projects such as this. Recognising that policy documents related to the CIPs policy say little of the realities encountered during the implementation phase, the voices of these actors become indispensable to giving an appropriate dimension to the decisions and actions that occurred within this policy process. The following sections describe the implementation phase developing three main themes: 1) the setting, including information related to the physical and socioeconomic conditions of Cancun during this period; 2) the clash of world views, including information related to the different actors' interpretation of policy objectives reflected in the construction of political structures, governance practices and power arrangements at the national and local levels, and; 3) implications of policy implementation, describing its main effects on the reorganisation of the Mexican tourism industry at the national, regional and local levels.

## 6.3 Implementation of the CIPs policy in the case of Cancun

### 6.3.1 *The setting*

The case study chosen to explore the implementation phase of the CIPs policy is Cancun. With over thirty years operating as a tourist resort, Cancun has become a reference point within the international tourism market with it now being the most important Latin-American destination (Brenner, 2005). Today, this destination has over 28,000 rooms, it receives more than four million tourists per year, it maintains an average hotel occupation of 80% throughout the year, and it generates about 25% of the total tourism income in Mexico (FONATUR, 2006: 3). Due to its explosive growth and economic relevance, the development of this destination has attracted the attention of scholars, practitioners, and the public in general to understand how a former little fishing village was transformed into a renowned international tourism spot. The former begs some questions: What was the role -or roles- played by the state in the growth of tourism activities experienced in Cancun? What decisions were made during the implementation of Cancun and what interests motivated the participation of different actors? Which visions prevailed and which were transformed during the process? Did the original policy objectives change due to the conditions encountered at the local level?

According to the Mexican government, the main objective of the CIPs policy was “to encourage, promote, and develop new tourism destinations as part of a fundamental government strategy aimed to improve the socioeconomic conditions of those regions that have been historically marginalised from national development due to infrastructure and communication problems...[therefore] tourism development represent a great opportunity for these zones to be economically integrated within the rest of the country” (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR, 1/183, Proyecto Cancun 1960-1976*). Four particular economic objectives were considered in the CIPs proposal: 1) to create a consistent source of employment; 2) to give impulse to regional development through the stimulus of agrarian, industrial and, artisanal activities; 3) to diversify tourism destinations in Mexico, and; 4) to increase foreign revenue for tourism activities (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. Banco de Mexico, 4/4, Bases para el Desarrollo Intergral, 1968: 3*). The cost of Cancun’s project was estimated at 40

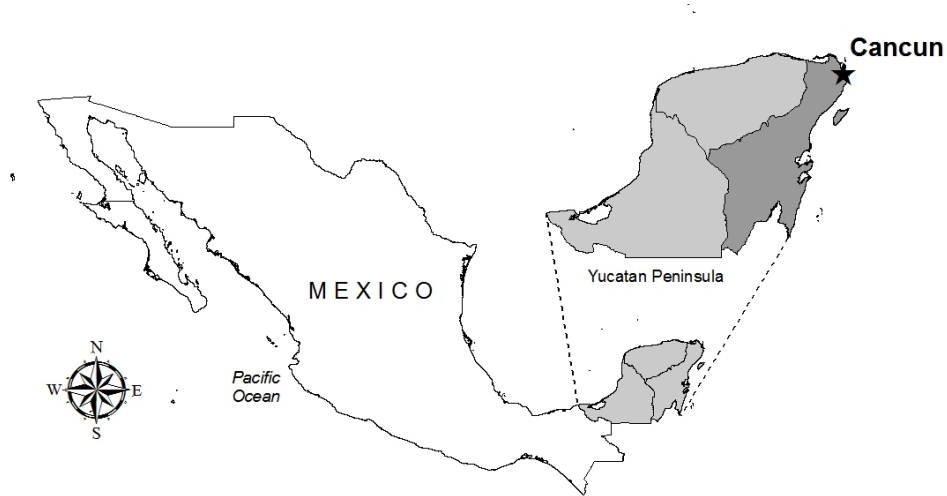


million dollars: 48% of the investment had to be supplied by public funds and the remaining 52% had to come from an international loan negotiated by the Ministry of the Treasury (SHCP) with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (Contract Num. 217/oc-ME). This negotiation was carried out through institutional channels inviting the IDB's representatives to become acquainted with the project in greater detail. These representatives were accompanied by policy-makers in several visits to Cancun in order to clarify the details of the proposal (Interview, former INFRATUR official, February 2009). With a minor input from the IDB's advisors, the loan was secured to start the construction works in January 1970. Cancun thus became the first state-led tourism development project in Mexico leading policy-makers to translate policy intentions into the realm of actions. What were the conditions that implementers encountered in this experience and what sort of problems did they face in Cancun?

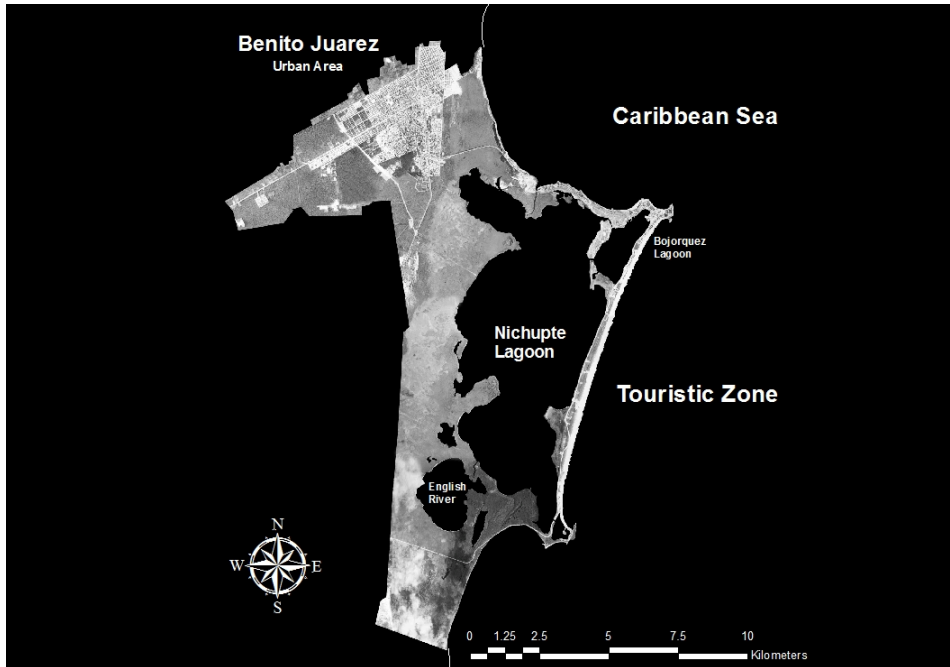
#### *6.3.1.1 Physical Conditions*

Cancun is geographically located 21°10'N and 86°50'W in the Southeast of Mexico on the Yucatan peninsula (see **Map 6.1**). This resort was developed on a 25 km island with dunes of white sand surrounded by an extensive mangrove system. The natural formation of the island protects a water system composed of three lagoons: *Nichipté*, *Bojórquez*, and *Río Inglés* (see **Map 6.2**). The original project of Cancun included a total area of 12,700 ha that was divided into three main zones: 1) the touristic zone (island), representing 17.7% of the territory; 2) the urban zone (continental land), representing 29.1%, and; 3) the ecological conservation zone, corresponding to the remaining 53.2% (continental land) (FONATUR, 1982, 1988, 2005; INFRATUR, 1969). Although some preliminary infrastructure works were carried out at the beginning of 1970, the construction of Cancun did not start formally until September 1971. A Master Plan was designed by Mexican policy-makers in accordance with the construction trends of the time implemented in other countries such as Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, Spain, Sri Lanka among many others (Torres and Momsen, 2005b). The former, according to a key informant of this study, was done to increase the possibility of securing a loan from international financial institutions such as the World Bank (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, December 2008). The contents of this plan were thus influenced by a clear technocratic vision of tourism development embraced in institutions such as the

above mentioned and the particular agenda of the tourism advocates in the Mexican government.



**Map 6.1** Cancun's geographical location.  
Source: Own elaboration.



**Map 6.2** Cancun's territorial distribution.  
Source: Own elaboration.

The Cancun Master Plan considered the implementation of five main subprojects of infrastructure:

1. Subproject of transport: this included the construction of an international airport, the construction of a 80m bridge to link the island with the continent, the extension and improvement of the Puerto Juárez's pier -the closest population nucleus-, island sand-filling works to widen the construction surface, and the acquisition of a hydrofoil for the transportation of tourists;
2. Subproject of sanitary engineering: this included the installation of a water system able to meet the needs of the urban and the touristic zones, the construction of a sewage system including two treatment plants, the extermination of noxious flora and wildlife, and the collection and disposal of solid waste;
3. Subproject of electricity: this included the construction of a transference line of 150km allowing the installation of house connections and public lighting;
4. Subproject of telephone: this considered the construction of a telephone centre with a capacity of 1,000 lines with the possibility of executing long-distance connections, and;
5. Subproject of urbanisation: this proposed the construction of the main streets and avenues, the construction and paving of interior streets, the consolidation of streets, commercial shopping centres, and public parks in the touristic zone, the construction of a convention centre and, the construction of a 18-hole golf course (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 2/190, Descripción del Proyecto Cancun, 1969; my translation*).

The former information can help to understand the scale of Cancun's project considering the construction of a tourism destination practically from zero. The geographical area of Cancun was chosen after a period of selection carried out by policy-makers without a formal process of consultation with the local population. This included the exploration of alternative options in the surrounding area of the Yucatan Peninsula. The physical and social conditions of several similar places in the Yucatan peninsula were examined in order to assess the feasibility of constructing a new tourism destination. Yet, none of them seemed to satisfy the minimum

conditions required to complete a project of such scale according to the policy-makers. A key informant mentioned:

*“Cancun was certainly not the only place we were considering for the construction of the new resort, we travelled to Celestún [Yucatan] to see the local conditions. However, our engineers identified that the dominant winds in this area would represent a serious constraint...we also travelled to Puerto Progreso [Yucatan] but it was immediately ruled out because we encountered several problems associated with the tenancy of the land...Isla Mujeres was not seriously considered due to the reduced dimensions of the island making progressive growth of the resort impossible...Cozumel presented two serious constraints: number one, the provision of enough running water, and the high cost of transport to perform the construction work from the continental land to this island...and Akumal, a little fishing village that was flooded with particular interests due to land tenancy issues...” (Interview, former INFRATUR official, November 2008, my translation)*

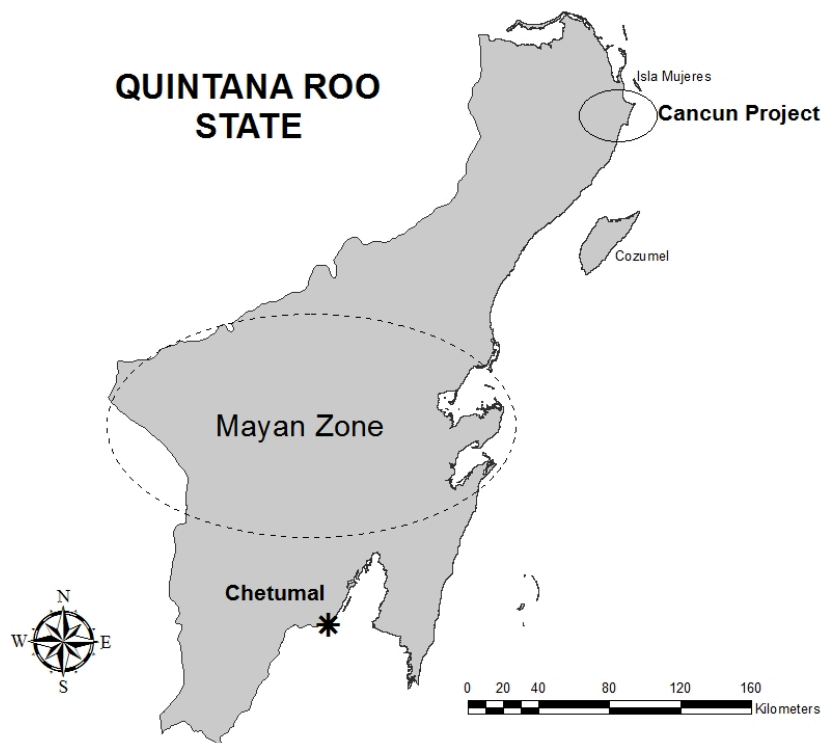
Although the information in this quote suggests that the selection of Cancun proceeded in a technical fashion, the information collected in several interviews suggests that this process involved several negotiations of political nature as well. In this sense, it can be said that Cancun was chosen not only for its exceptional physical features and location but also for its supposed unproblematic political environment to carry out the implementation tasks.

### *6.3.1.2 Social and Economic conditions*

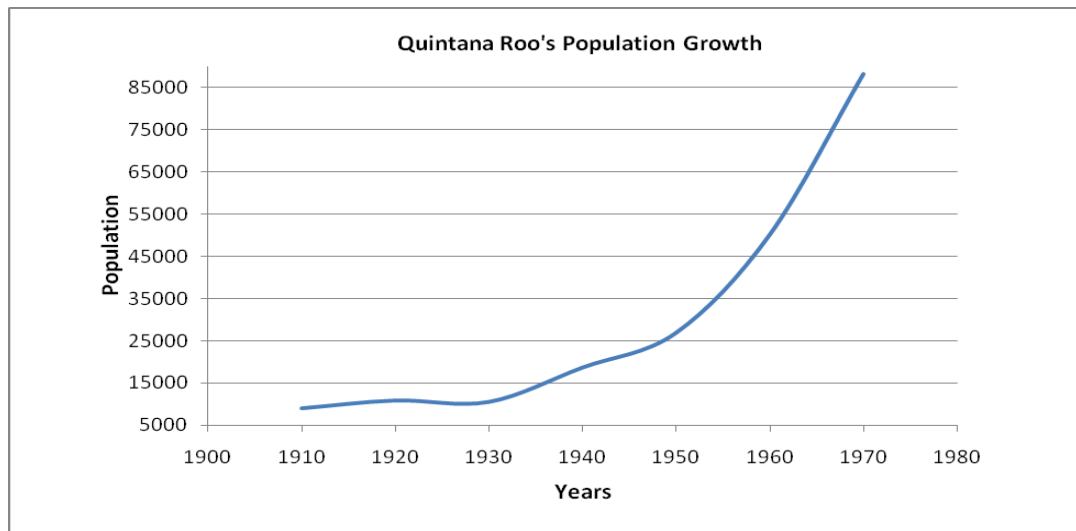
Before the introduction of the tourism development project, Cancun literally did not exist on maps and was no more than a forgotten little fishing village called *Puerto Juárez*. In 1970, the territory of Quintana Roo was mainly rural, relying economically on self-subsistence activities related to the primary sector. Population numbers remained considerably low until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (see **Graph 6.1**) and this region was regarded as isolated and unproductive at the time. The dominant economic activity in the region before the introduction of tourism development was the commercialisation of *chicle* (the raw material utilised to produce the well-known chewing gum). This resin was extracted from a tree called *chicozapote* and it could be extensively found in the forests of this territory and Central America. Despite the great expansion of this activity especially during WWII, this industry went into a severe crisis due to the replacement of the natural resin by synthetics derived from hydrocarbons in the production of commercial chewing gum

(see Redclift, 2003 for a more detailed discussion). The attempt to regulate this activity by the government did nothing but worsen the situation for the people whose livelihoods depended on this activity.

The most important population nucleus of Quintana Roo at the time was its capital, Chetumal, a city located in the extreme south of Quintana Roo (see **map 6.3**). This urban centre was considered of big economic relevance at the regional level as it concentrated almost all productive activities. The economic configuration of this territory was strengthened in the mid-1950s due to the occurrence of Hurricane Janet (1955) directing the public budget to the reconstruction of the city and the reanimation of its economic activity. Thus, the rest of Quintana Roo's territory (centre and north) was left almost abandoned with the exception of two islands where a small-scale tourism industry was flourishing in the late 1950s: *Cozumel* and *Isla Mujeres*.



**Map 6.3** Territorial distribution of Quintana Roo.  
Source: Own elaboration.



**Graph 6.1.** Historical Population Growth in Quintana Roo (1910-1970).  
Source: Own elaboration with INEGI (1996) data.

One of the first attempts from central government to incorporate the territory of Quintana Roo into national economic activities was through the proposal elaborated by the Transport and Communications Ministry (SCOP) to create the “Gulf and Caribbean Commercial Circuit” in the late 1950s (*Archivo ACADEMIA S.C. exp. s/n IV Congreso Interamericano Regional de Turismo, 1955*). This proposal identified the potential of this geographical area in terms of commerce and tourism opportunities. The construction of an aerodrome in the community of *Puerto Juárez* was considered as well as the construction of a road network connecting this region with the main road network of the country. This project reflected the interest from the central government to explore the economic potential of this territory. The following quote reflects this vision:

*“Puerto Juárez has the potential to become a trading hub of national relevance, bringing tourism and commerce to Mexico. This project will help to transform the social and economic reality of the region turning it into one of the most important trading hubs of the continent” (Ibid: 3).*

Despite the alleged economically promising future of the project, it was never implemented. This may be due to a lack of sufficient political support to tourism as well as the lack of interest in this particular region at the time. The construction of a road connecting *Puerto Juárez* with the city of *Merida* in 1964, however, changed the isolated conditions of this region and represented a new opportunity for it to be integrated into the the economic and political agendas.

The social configuration of this territory presented a multicultural landscape. It was characterised as the home of several indigenous groups associated with the ancient Mayan culture. After a number of political conflicts between these groups and the central government for the control over the territory, the majority of the Mayan groups were forced to settle throughout different communities surrounding the central region of *Quintana Roo* within the municipality of *Felipe Carrillo Puerto* (see Brown, 1996 for a detailed discussion). Thus, the most important social nucleus of *Quintana Roo* was still the capital city (*Chetumal*) in the late 1960s concentrating a mixture of indigenous and *mestizo*<sup>14</sup> populations, most of them immigrants from the rest of the country. In the northern part, *Isla Mujeres* concentrated the largest social nucleus with approximately 2,000 inhabitants.

### 6.3.2 Experiences on the ground: clash of cultural paradigms

The first impression of policy-makers of the region where the tourism destination was going to be constructed was one of isolation and inhospitable conditions. A key informant commented:

*“Me and another colleague had the job to understand more about the social panorama of the zone where the project was going to be implemented, so we decided to conduct a basic census...we walked for several days finding a small number of houses mainly in la Colonia [Puerto Juárez] and we found 117 people living in the area...most of these people were living in very poor conditions subsisting on primary activities such as fishing...access to education was almost nonexistent there as we could only find one primary school teacher in the area giving lessons without a proper classroom...once we explored the island [Cancun] we realised that only three people were living there...they were working as surveillance guards on the properties of particular owners of the island, most of them from Isla Mujeres...apart from that, there was nothing else in Cancun” (Interview, former INFRATUR-FONATUR official, December 2008, my translation).*

The information in this quote illustrates the impression that policy-makers had of the physical conditions of the area as well as the socioeconomic profile of the policy recipients considered by them. On the one hand, Cancun was seen as a very isolated place where the minimal conditions to live seemed to be nonexistent. On the other

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<sup>14</sup> *Mestizo* is a term widely utilised in Latin America to make reference to people with a mixed genealogical background, normally different from the local or indigenous group.

hand, the local population were visualised as people living in severe impoverished conditions with very limited livelihood alternatives. This interpretation of the local landscape by policy-makers reinforced their idea of the need to intervene in order to change these conditions and offer those people new economic alternatives through tourism development.

At the beginning of the project, policy implementers were confronted with the challenge of understanding the implications of working within a rural environment as the majority of them came from large urban settlements such as Mexico City. The following quotes help to understand to a certain extent their ideological struggle:

*Engineer (1975) “I remember I experienced several difficulties working in this region especially because manpower was very limited and the area was extremely isolated... just to give you an idea of the extreme isolation conditions of this place when I arrived...I slept for three entire weeks in my car, because there was not a single house at the time; If I needed money I had to go to the bank 320 km away, it was 90 km to make a phone call, and 640 km to buy anything from a grocery shop!” (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR, 1975 3/9 – 35, my translation).*

*Director of the Hotel Training Centre (1975) “The living conditions at the beginning were very extreme: there was no electricity, drinking water, or sewage...there was literally nothing” (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR, 1975 3/9 – 9, my translation).*

*Fonatur Official “The living conditions were extremely difficult...the food supply was very reduced, no electricity, no phone...we had to take a shower in the lagoon and sometimes we had to sleep buried in the sand because of the intense attack of mosquitoes...it was hell” (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR, 1975 3/9 – 39, my translation).*

The information in these quotes reflects how these actors perceived a local reality that, according to their expressions, was very different from the one they were used to. The absence of basic elements of the ‘modern life’ in this region (such as banks, sewage, phone service and so on) represented a great conflict that needed to be solved through a profound transformation of the local landscape. This process of transformation implied, above all, the incorporation of new elements to the local scenario different from the traditional ones known by the local people until then.

This process was initiated through the start of the construction works of the tourism resort in 1971. This generated the arrival of hundreds of people to Cancun from all

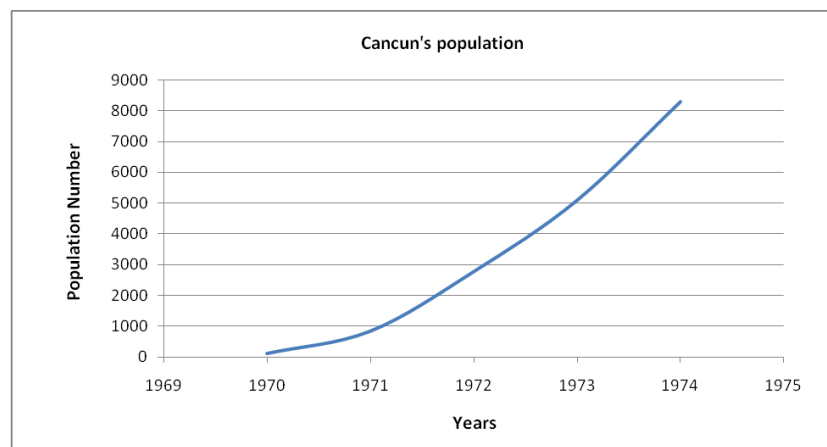


corners of the region and many parts of Mexico, modifying the physical and social landscape in a very short period of time. The announcement of the start of this tourism project to the public attracted the attention of specific segments of the Mexican society (in search for better economic alternatives) provoking an immigration phenomenon to the region not experienced in previous decades (see **Graph 6.2**). All of a sudden, Cancun had become a synonym for economic opportunity and a prosperous future in the minds of locals and incomers. The following quotes reflect the former:

*Construction worker: “As a chiclero...I used to earn about 3.50 pesos for each kg of chicle...once I started to work in the construction industry of Cancun, I earned 40 pesos per day, that meant 280 pesos per week!...this was incredible for me as it was a sum of money that I had never earned in my whole life!” (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1975 3/9 – 36, my translation).*

*Waiter 1: “There are plenty of opportunities for all the people who decided to move to Cancun to get a better life...we are all adapting to the problems with the water, electricity, transport, and food...nevertheless I feel fine here and I am sure there is a promising future for me and my family” (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1975 3/9 – 8, my translation).*

*Waiter 2: “I decided to come to Cancun because I was told about the good salaries they pay here...I am now working as a waiter in a hotel and my wife is working as a cleaner...I aspire to save some money and raise a family here...I am happy and I am sure Cancun will grow very fast and it will be much better” (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1975 3/9 – 28, my translation).*



**Graph 6.2** Historical Population growth in Cancun (1970-1974).  
Source: Own elaboration with data from the expedient FONATUR 2/193.

The great availability of jobs of different sorts during the construction phase of the resort helped to generate positive expectations in the people that were reflected in these expressions of enthusiasm and optimism. It can be said that policy intervention was enjoying a good reputation since this project was apparently promoting the participation of locals and incomers irrespective of their social and economic background. The positive construction of the implementation process helped to create an important base of local support to tourism development, considerably reducing the possibilities for opposition. This quote helps to understand the former:

*“The project always considered the absorption of people from the countryside surrounding Cancun, especially people working for the “henequen” industry from Yucatán and people from the “chicle” industry from Quintana Roo...the crisis experienced by these two economic activities in the region left hundreds of people without an income to survive...we thought we would need to go to the peripheral communities to convince the people to come to Cancun and work here...fortunately for the project we did not have to do it, people came in their hundreds receiving a great social support” (Former FONATUR official, Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1975 3/9 – 39, my translation).*

Yet, it has to be noted that not all the people that lived or arrived in Cancun had the opportunity of getting a job or were considered by the tourism project in any sense during those years. A study conducted by Jiménez and Sosa (2005) describes the challenges that some people encountered of being included within the activities related to the project. The people that were considered by employers as ‘unskilled’ normally struggled to find a regular source of income to cover their basic needs. Despite the lack of employment opportunities for them, the majority decided to stay and settle in the peripheral area of the project. The illegal invasion of lands in this zone rapidly grew leading to the proliferation of slums as a direct consequence of the high immigration rates surpassing the predictions made by policy-makers. A key informant commented in this regard:

*“It is true that the work in Cancun was abundant, especially in the construction phase, however you have to take into account not all the people could get a job. That is because the people, in one way or another had to prove that they possessed the minimum skills required to perform the required job. A lot of people who arrived to Cancun were very disappointed*

*because they were not able to find anything to do there” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico-INFRATUR-FONATUR official, November 2008, my translation).*

In this sense, it can be said that the allocation of jobs was highly influenced by the social profile constructed by policy implementers subjecting the candidates to meet minimum skills requirements. Policy-makers were aware that the construction of a tourism destination such as the one projected in Cancun would produce a massive migration of people in search of employment. However they were neither able to successfully visualise the profile of the incomers nor to estimate the scale of the immigration. A former FONATUR official commented in this regard:

*“It was impossible for us to predict a population growth of such scale...we were aware of the problem related to the irregular settlements but, to be honest, we could not do much...we first tried to measure the size of the problem because we did not know how many people were actually living in these unregulated territories...we attempted to reallocate them to the regulated area by FONATUR offering them the possibility of purchasing portions of land at very cheap prices but most of them were reluctant to move...likewise we considered to integrate the unregulated zone into the infrastructure plans but the cost of doing that exceeded the capacity of the budget...in the end, it was decided to provide basic infrastructure in some land areas where the population was more concentrated. We were conscious about the fact that this was clearly an insufficient measure...” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico-INFRATUR official, January 2009, my translation).*

Thus, two main distinct social conglomerates in the local population emerged due to the formation of a society full of social and economic contrasts. The first group was composed of people that were actively participating and obtaining diverse benefits from the activities related to the implementation. Although construction works largely monopolised the employment offered during the first years of the project, the proliferation of businesses in the incipient urban area assisted in the incorporation of a large number of people into the local dynamics (FONATUR, 1982). The second group, on the other hand, was characterised by people living in impoverished conditions with limited opportunities to be included within the local economic dynamics. Despite the adverse conditions faced by these people, they were able to remain in the area subsisting through economic activities related to the informal sector. This strategy allowed them to resist the panorama of exclusion generated by

the implementation practices that clearly stigmatised their social and economic condition.

An increase in the participation of this vulnerable social group in the project, however, was sought through the implementation of a number of education programs. The main barrier to these people being considered within the policy plans was, according to the policy-makers, their lack of basic knowledge and skills to effectively interact in the different social scenarios that tourism would bring. The best example of the former was the creation of a local “Hotel Training Centre” having the main objective of helping those people who had never received any formal education to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to obtain a tourism-related job. Through a four-month course, it was expected that the attendees could learn basic notions of the English language, geography, national history, human relations and hygiene (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1975 3/9 – 9, my translation*). For the director of this training centre this course was designed to “transform these people with the aim of improving their living conditions” (Ibid). Despite this centre carrying out two courses, this initiative encountered several constraints. For example, that the contents of this course were mainly imparted in the Spanish language in spite of a great percentage of the attendees not being familiar with it due to their indigenous background (mostly Mayan). Thus, the classes had to include translations from Spanish to Mayan making communication and ideological exchanges a very challenging task. Not surprisingly, the drop-out levels were very high as many of the attendees showed little interest returning to their home communities during the weekends and coming back to Cancun until mid-week. The continuous flow of people from Cancun to the peripheral rural communities reflected, among many other things, the lack of attachment from these people to the new community as well as an absence of meaning for them in acquiring this type of education. The removal of the support to this type of project was the consequence of the difficulty for policy-makers to understand why people ‘refused’ to be integrated in that way. A key informant mentioned:

*“We learned with time that these people [referring to local Mayans mainly] were not used to living under a social regime full of norms...they were used to living under a communitarian regime where the figure of private property*

*does not exist at all and economic benefits are distributed among community members...we were conscious of the possible social impacts such as the phenomenon of acculturation and the problems associated with the adaptation to a more modern way of living, nevertheless we considered it very important to create all conditions to include them, according to our possibilities, within the social and economic progress of the country” (Interview, former FONATUR official, November 2008, my translation).*

The recognition of policy-makers of the existence of deep cultural and ideological contrasts between different sectors in the local society, however, did not help to integrate these visions in the objectives of the project. It was clear that there was no intention from policy-makers to bridge or negotiate these divergent visions of the world but rather to impose the ideology embraced by those actors more familiarised with the vision of reality encapsulated within the CIPs policy. This process progressively advanced through several episodes during the implementation phase dealing with the most practical issues on the ground. These quotes help to understand the former:

*“After a couple of days of looking for people to work on jungle-clearance tasks, I was able to hire a group of 80 starving “chicleros”... I clearly remember that 77 of them only spoke Mayan and the rest knew very basic Spanish...you can imagine how difficult it was for me to explain to them the details of the work as they didn’t even know the metrical system!...we had to adapt communication channels based on simple wood sticks and knots” (Former INFRATUR engineer, Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1975 3/9 – 35, my translation).*

*“I remember the case of a young Mayan who was hired to dig some ditches...I saw that when the employer gave him the spade the boy started to remove the soil with his own hands...he obviously did not know what the spade was for” (FONATUR official, Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1975 3/9 – 22, my translation).*

*“After several months of waiting for it, the phone line was finally installed in the headquarters and we hired a local man as a watchman during the nights...after two or three months we asked him if he received any call during the nights, he responded “the apparatus rings all night” so we asked him again “who calls?” he replied “I don’t know...nobody told me how to use the phone”” (Former FONATUR official 2, Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1975 3/9 – 26, my translation).*

The information in these quotes reflects a panorama of unequal conditions between different actors, rewarding those who shared a similar system of norms and values

supported by the policy design and sanctioning those who had a different cultural and ideological repertoire. The former helped to define the roles and participation patterns of different actors inside and outside the community as well as to shape the contours of the practices for the allocation of benefits and burdens.

Thus, a new society full of ideological and cultural contrasts emerged in Cancun during the policy implementation phase deeply transforming the social and economic conditions of a geographical zone that had been historically ignored until then. As the community grew, the number of economic interests flourished reducing, in this way, the room for manoeuvre and local control that implementers had enjoyed during the first years of the implementation<sup>15</sup>. The main concern of implementers then was focused on the prevention of any source of conflict -social, political, economic- in the community that could affect the central objective of making Cancun a tourism reality. An interviewee commented in this regard:

*“We were really concerned by three fundamental aspects of the community: the economic, linked with a constant creation of employment; the social, linked to a peaceful organisation of the community, and; the political, with the representation of the community as a single voice...we managed to control the first two at the beginning of the project but as it advanced, local and external interests were incorporated making it difficult to have control over the third...as the project grew, we were losing control over local decisions” (Interview, former FONATUR official, December 2008, my translation).*

### 6.3.3 Actors’ organisation surrounding the CIPs policy

#### 6.3.3.1 The institutional structure

The implementation process of the CIPs policy in the case of Cancun provoked an unprecedented institutional convergence in Mexico surrounding the tourism sector. This research identified two types of institutions involved in this process. A first group of institutions was deeply involved in the definition of the objectives of the CIPs policy as well as its implementation and controlled the main decisions regarding its development. Among these institutions were, principally, the Banco de Mexico, the Ministry of the Treasury (SHCP), and the National Development Bank (NAFINSA). The second group of institutions was related to those playing a mere

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<sup>15</sup> This was mainly reflected in the growth of local businesses related to the tourism activities (see Martí, 1985 and Torres and Momsen, 2005a for a detailed discussion).

instrumental role helping to carry out a number of practical tasks but with a very limited input into the policy process. Within this second group of institutions were the Ministry of Water Resources (SRH), the Federal Commission of Electricity (CFE), the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), the Ministry of Urban Development and Ecology (SEDUE), the Ministry of the Marine (SM), just to mention a few examples. The participation of these institutions in the case of Cancun mainly consisted in the provision of expert advice on technical and practical issues concerned with the execution of the Master Plan. No evidence was found in this research of a decisive contribution from these institutions in decision-making tasks during the implementation phase.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Banco de Mexico was responsible for the creation of INFRATUR (Infrastructure and Tourism Development Fund) in 1969 delegating the operation powers of national tourism development to this new entity. The INFRATUR office was provided thus with a legal framework to focus its efforts mainly over the implementation of the CIPs policy (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección, AES exp. INFRATUR, 5/195*). Despite being just a small office (12 officials) dependent of the Banco de Mexico, INFRATUR became a dominant tourism institution in a relatively short period of time. The historical disarticulation between the existing tourism-related institutions (i.e. Department of Tourism, the National Tourism Council, and the Tourism Guarantee and Promotion Fund) opened an opportunity window for INFRATUR to seize the leadership role in this sector. CIPs policy-makers did not consider the incorporation of these institutions within the policy process as there was no interest from INFRATUR to negotiate its decision-making powers. Responding to a direct question about the extent of the participation of tourism-related institutions within the CIPs process a key informant commented:

*“No, we never considered to do that [taking into account tourism institutions] we thought there was no point in doing that because their functions were rather cosmetic...with the exception of FOGATUR, the other two departments were swarming with political and private interests. For us it was clear they did not have any interest in tourism development but only in the distribution of the economic benefits from tourism activities towards specific influential groups of people...we preferred to work the policy proposal within a more autonomous environment, at least at the beginning of the project...” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, February 2009, my translation).*

The information in this quote confirms the existence of an ongoing political battle between the different factions of the Mexican ruling elite (*politicos versus technocrats*) and reveals the form of operation of CIPs advocates that was characterised by the secrecy and centralisation of decision-making powers. Obtaining similar responses such as the former quote in several interviews, it was inferred that the Banco de Mexico through INFRATUR maintained full control over the policy process in the early 1970s. This situation, however, would change in 1974, when an institutional fusion took place between INFRATUR and FOGATUR leading to the formation of a new institution: FONATUR (National Tourism Fund) operating under the aegis of NAFINSA. This new tourism institution incorporated all the legal and operational attributions of its predecessors adopting the state's agenda to intervene in tourism development tasks. FONATUR was constituted under the legal figure of a public trust and as such, its functions included the possibility of operating, promoting, financing, commercialising, and investing in tourism-related ventures. According to an official statement, the creation of FONATUR signified "a definitive effort to unify the authority regarding tourism planning by coordinating the institutional actions with the objective of providing the benefits derived from the tourism industry to all Mexicans" (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. FONATUR 1974, 3/32, my translation*).

Alongside the creation of FONATUR, the Department of Tourism was upgraded to the cabinet-level in the same year (1974) forming what is known today as the Tourism Ministry (SECTUR). The creation of SECTUR seemed to be a response to the need of building a more comprehensive framework to group all the public efforts in tourism under the leadership of a single government body. However, it was not until 1977 that it acquired the appropriate legal framework to exercise its functions in full as the head of the tourism sector (SECTUR webpage, 2011). A conflict of interests emerged between FONATUR and SECTUR derived from the dispute to control the budget and operational powers of the projects related to the CIPs policy (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, November 2008). The creation of these two competing institutions was interpreted in this research as the continuation of the struggle to dominate the tourism arena by the ruling elite considering the promising economic benefits that the CIPs policy would bring in the years to come.



Despite the implementation of collaboration strategies such as the creation of a “technical committee” with several representatives from different tourism-related institutions, it was clear that the CIPs policy and, hence FONATUR, monopolised the tourism agenda given the large public investments carried out in projects such as Cancun and *Ixtapa*. It is important to note that FONATUR, unlike SECTUR, seemed to have a stronger presence due to the financial and political support from influential economic-oriented institutions in the government structure (Banco de Mexico and Ministry of the Treasury mainly). In this sense, although SECTUR seemed to possess all *de jure* powers to assume the leadership of the tourism sector, FONATUR had *de facto* powers to act as such. A key informant commented in this regard:

*“The decisions surrounding the project of Cancun were taken in a very independent way because the chain of decisions in the office [referring to INFRATUR-FONATUR] depended directly on the Banco de Mexico but once SECTUR appeared, the negotiations for budget and works within the CIPs became problematic...everybody wanted to influence, in one way or another, the projects...there was a constant struggle for the allocation of resources, burdens, and benefits...” (Interview, former FONATUR official, November 2008, my translation).*

At the regional level, the institutional representation of *Quintana Roo* was very limited. The organisation of this geographical area was based on the legal figure of a “Federal Territory” prior to the introduction of the CIPs policy. The former meant that *Quintana Roo* was not a formal state because it did not reunite the necessary conditions to establish an independent regional government. The former included a minimum number of inhabitants, a relevant economic contribution for the country, the elaboration of a legal framework, the institution of a local congress, just to mention a few examples. Thus, this territory entirely relied upon the political and economic decisions originating in the central government through a representative chosen at the discretion of Mexico’s president<sup>16</sup>. It was not until 1974 that *Quintana Roo* acquired the category of a federal state once Cancun started to operate formally as a tourism destination. The regional government, however, was established in the capital, *Chetumal*, and *Quintana Roo* was divided into seven municipalities, including the creation of the municipality of *Benito Juárez* where Cancun was located.

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<sup>16</sup> Although these conditions might have represented a relevant factor for the selection of Cancun, this research was not able to find conclusive evidence to support this argument.

The new organisational structure of the regional and local governments unveiled a political struggle between several actors to control the decisions in Cancun. Policy-makers recognised the need of building a local government fully controlled by FONATUR in order to ensure the continuity of Cancun’s project away from any political dispute. A key informant commented on this process:

*“Given the rapid growth of the project, it was seen as indispensable to provide legal and operational autonomy to Cancun...the only way to do that was to create an independent local government to maintain the continuity of the project...once the municipality of Benito Juárez was created, we proposed Alfonso Alarcón [FONATUR’s Director of Community Development] to be the new municipal president...despite the political pressures from the new government in Chetumal, Alfonso was successfully appointed by the President as the first local governor of Cancun...we thought it was the best option to secure control over future investments” (Interview, former FONATUR official, December 2008, my translation).*

This political move allowed policy-makers to successfully protect FONATUR’s interests in the short-term. However, as the community grew, the interests and participation of different groups also proliferated acquiring more prominence in the local decisions. By 1976, a total of 11 different groups were identified by FONATUR’s office of Community Development (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, colección AES exp. FONATUR, 1975, 2/193*) providing a picture of civil organisation at the time. Among these organisations were the Transporters Union, the Female Association of Cancun, the National Union of Tourism Services Workers, the Union of Taxi Drivers, to mention some examples. The political presence of these groups reduced the room for manoeuvre of implementers who recognised the need of reproducing the national corporatist practices at the local level to secure their compliance. Thus, several members of these groups were able to acquire an important number of positions within the local government in exchange for political support.

Levels	Political organisation	Electoral cycle
Local	Municipality (Benito Juárez)	Every 3 years
Regional	Region (Quintana Roo)	Every 6 years

National	Central administration (México)	Every 6 years
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**Table 6.1** Political organisation of Mexico.  
Source: Own elaboration.

### 6.3.3.2 Governance surrounding CIPs

The phase of implementation of the CIPs policy in Cancun coincided with the presidential succession period in Mexico. Luis Echeverría was elected president in 1970 replacing Gustavo Díaz who governed in the period from 1964 to 1970. The new president -who had previously worked as Minister of the Interior- faced a very turbulent social and political environment left by his predecessor. There was a general feeling of discontent and distrust within society to the government as a result of a series of events linked to the brutal repression against students' demonstrations in 1968 and 1971. Echeverría was identified by the media and public opinion as the key actor in the formulation and execution of this authoritarian strategy (see Poniatowska, 1971 for a more detailed discussion). The dispute for the presidential seat made the political rupture within Mexican bureaucracy between the *políticos* and *technocrats* more evident. Once Echeverría won the presidential election, the technocrats' coalition was progressively dismantled through the removal of influential members of the technocrats' group from public service. A key informant commented on this historical process:

*“Echeverría considered Antonio [Ortiz Mena, Minister of the Treasury] a big threat because he had built a great reputation as a public servant, not only nationally but also internationally...once Antonio made a public statement about his intentions to be president it was a political bomb...during those years it was only the president who had the unofficial attribution to select his successor and Antonio was certainly not the “tapado” [chosen]...this dispute represented a public affront to the political regime and to the rules of the party [PRI] that cost him and many others political exile...” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, December, 2008, my translation).*

The expansion of the state in the economy during Echeverría's administration was oriented to find a mechanism of legitimacy given the prevailing difficult circumstances. Many scholars would flag Echeverría's administration as 'populist'

due to a considerable increase in public expenditure during this period <sup>17</sup> (cf. Cárdenas, 1996, 2000; Castillo, 2005; Collins, 1979; Espinosa, 2004; Truett and Truett, 1982). However, the continuity of the CIPs policy was under threat at the beginning of Echeverría's administration because Cancun was regarded within the interior of the ruling elite as the personal business of the Minister of the Treasury due to the full control of the policy process (several interviews; Martí, 1985). Thus, some close collaborators of the presidency started a fierce campaign to discredit the CIPs policy, portraying it as a very expensive project with very limited benefits to the country (Interview, former FONATUR official, January 2009, my translation). Despite the former, Echeverría decided to continue the construction works in Cancun as the program of public investments in tourism was secured by NAFINSA and the BID.

The implementation of the CIPs policy in Cancun helped to transform the role of the state leading it to adopt a multifaceted condition. In a relatively short period of time, the state participated actively as operator, regulator, investment stimulator, and coordinator of the tourism sector. As operator, the state owned and provided the infrastructure necessary for the development of tourism and related businesses. In the particular case of Cancun, the first two hotels in this destination (*Cancun Caribe* and *Presidente*) were built and operated by *Nacional Hotelera*, a state-owned company. Although a more active role from the private sector was expected especially in the hotel sector during the implementation phase, investors were reluctant to participate due to the lack of guarantees for the success of Cancun's project (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, February, 2009). Therefore, this strategy aimed to build the confidence of potential investors ensuring an environment of full support from the state.

As regulator, a legal framework was devised by SECTUR to regulate tourism-related businesses. During the 1970s, all the activities associated with the tourism sector in Mexico were regulated by the Federal Tourism Law and, in the particular case of Cancun, by the Agrarian Reform of 1971 (Moreno, 1974: 10). The objective of this reform was to regulate land speculation within the tourism resorts such as Cancun as

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<sup>17</sup> State-owned enterprises, for instance, grew from 175 in 1971 to 456 in 1976 (Erfani, 1995: 129, quoted by Espinosa, 2004: 277).

well as provide the legal basis in which to develop community tourism ventures on communal lands. This reform generated a great controversy at the time as communal property was protected in the national constitution (Art. 27), tourism becoming a new mechanism for private investors to gain access to these lands. As promoter, investments in the tourism sector were encouraged through the implementation of financial schemes such as incentives. FONATUR offered attractive investment plans in Cancun, especially in the hotel sector, granting credits for hotel construction and tax exemptions for hotels in operation. Thus, potential investors in the private sector (national bankers mainly) were invited personally by policy-makers to take advantage of this opportunity given the favourable conditions (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, February 2009). Finally, as coordinator, the state carried out the organisation of the different activities related to tourism through the creation of institutions such as FONATUR and SECTUR. Thus, being decisive in the consolidation of the multifunctional role of the state in tourism, the CIPs policy helped to increase the state's powers, participating in approximately 31 tourism-related ventures by 1977 (Espinosa, 2004: 278).

The chain of decision-making within the CIPs policy followed a simple hierarchical structure during the implementation of Cancun. According to the information collected through several interviews with key informants, the majority of respondents agreed that important decisions emanated from the "top", in the office of the Director of the Banco de Mexico. However, the political operation of the INFRATUR-FONATUR director was recognised by all the respondents as the most important for the successful implementation of the CIPs policy, especially in Cancun. Identified in this research as the key actor in the political operation of CIPs plans, decision-making powers were concentrated around this influential actor. In a very short period of time, this actor became the main channel of communication between the decisions adopted by the central government and the decisions taken by implementers in the local context. A key informant commented:

*"I can say without any doubt that Antonio [Enriquez Savignac] was the most important actor in the history of the CIPs policy...having very outstanding negotiation skills he talked equally to locals, investors, governors, INFRATUR's officials, etc and convinced them to support his plans...I think the key was the great enthusiasm he projected and the meticulous preparation*

*of the plans” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico-INFRAATUR-FONATUR official, March, 2009, my translation).*

The group of implementers formed by this actor in Cancun was able to construct a political organisation locally protecting FONATUR’s interests during the implementation phase. The control over the first municipal government and the autonomy of operation away from external interests can provide evidence of the former. The implementation experience in Cancun demonstrated to CIPs policy-makers and implementers that two elements were indispensable in this process: the construction of an effective base of support surrounding the project (social, political, and economic), and the control of the negotiation channels to mediate local and external interests. These conditions, however, could not be sustained in the long term as control over decisions was progressively eroded due to the incorporation of more interests in the local arena in the years to come.

#### *6.3.3.3 Power arrangements*

The implementation of the CIPs policy in Cancun unveiled existing power structures at the local level. Before the introduction of the tourism project, the control over this territory remained in a few hands. A first *de jure* structure existed where the interests of the central government were represented through the governor of the territory<sup>18</sup>. Although this position was seen rather as instrumental and a clear sign of political exile, the governor always expressed his full support to the CIPs policy and the project in Cancun, especially because he was highly sympathetic to the *technocrats’* coalition<sup>19</sup>. Despite the former, this actor was not able to witness the implementation process because he died in 1970, leaving this assignment to a new governor with a different political orientation. The new governor showed a special interest in building an effective local representation to negotiate the benefits and burdens of the CIPs policy in Cancun with FONATUR. Although the new governor attempted to form a strong institutional structure independent from the central government’s decisions, he was not able to incorporate all local interests into a single coalition (Interview,

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<sup>18</sup> In the case of Quintana Roo, the governor during the initial phase of the policy implementation was Javier Rojo Gómez, an old politician with a very long history in public service. He was responsible, for instance, for the creation of the National Peasant Confederation (CNC), a very influential social and political group within the national political system for several decades (Martí, 1985).

<sup>19</sup> He had maintained a close relationship with the Minister of the Treasury and his close circle.

former INFRATUR official, December 2008). A second *de facto* structure existed composed of a small network of influential actors (*caciques*, landowners of huge portions of land) controlling the decisions made over large portions of the territory. Among these actors were José de Jesús Lima, a local tourism entrepreneur in *Isla Mujeres*, Nassim Joaquín, a renowned tourism and commerce tycoon in *Cozumel*, Anibal de Iturbide, an influential landowner living in *Chakalal*, a small community near Playa del Carmen, and Pablo Bush, another influential landowner and small-scale tourism business man settled in the community of *Akumal*, a fishing village approximately 100km away from Cancun, to mention some examples. Due to the economic power possessed by these actors, they had been able to influence local decisions maintaining an effective territorial control. A key informant commented on the nature of this informal structure:

*“Previous to the construction phase of Cancun, we knew about the existence of this network of influential men in the zone...Anibal de Iturbide was a close friend of the Director of the Banco de Mexico and he explained to him about the local conditions of the territory well before the decision of Cancun was taken. Anibal and Pablo [Bush] possessed 33km of land near to what is now Playa del Carmen and together were putting on a lot pressure to bring the project of the new resort to their territory...it was the same case in Cozumel and Isla Mujeres, José and Joaquin were pulling to get access to this new project and obtain the benefit of tourism development on a large scale...it was decided, ultimately, to maintain the project away from these interests as much as possible. The former doesn't mean we did not have to negotiate to some extent their support of the final decision...” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, December 2008, my translation).*

The CIPs policy through the construction of Cancun opened a new arena of power relations in Quintana Roo where local and alien interests had to be negotiated. CIPs implementers were warned by policy-makers about the need to negotiate the support and independence of action in the construction of Cancun. One of the challenges in this task was to generate the conditions to obtain total control over the land for the project. Almost half of the project's territory was in the possession of the central government whereas the rest were communal lands (approximately 45%) and particular plots (5%) (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. INFRATUR 1969, 2/11*). The appropriation of communal lands was carried out through an expropriation decree incorporating these territories into the assets of the project. Although the number of the people dispossessed by this measure was

apparently small, the creation of a new communal land *-Ejido Bonfil-* in the periphery to Cancun was seen necessary by implementers to prevent any expression of opposition from locals. The creation of this *ejido* had the primary purpose of becoming a farming community to be the main source of food for the future demand of the tourism resort (Interview, former FONATUR official, January 2009).

The acquisition of the land owned privatal, however, required a very different approach. The main interest of CIPs implementers was focused on incorporating the island territory to develop the hotel zone considered in the project. The strategy employed by the implementers was to purchase these lands simulating a transaction between individuals. According to the statements of many informants of this research, the secrecy of the tourism project was indispensable in the acquisition of these lands to avoid price speculation as well as to prevent the appearance of management conflicts in the future tourism resort. The following quote from an interview reflects the former:

*“The lawyer of the Cancun’s project...was responsible for carrying out the acquisition of the land located on the island...he talked with the owners one by one telling them he was a business man from Mexico city and that he was interested in purchasing this land to build a retirement house...some of them believed the story and took advantage of the price offered that was higher than its nominal value, however others were reluctant because they had prior knowledge of the CIPs plan and negotiated a much higher price in the end...I think this was the correct strategy because it allowed us to start the construction work without any further constraints...” (Interview, former INFRATUR-FONATUR official, December 2008, my translation).*

As the implementation process advanced in Cancun, the number of actors and interests increased within the power arena creating multiple scenarios of negotiation. An example of the former was found in the negotiations from the people living in unregulated zones with implementers to solve the issues that were affecting them. The creation of a special fund (*FIDEICOMISO Puerto Juárez*) to address infrastructure and housing problems and the adoption of the name “*Benito Juárez*” for the new municipality were the two principal outcomes derived from these negotiations. Another example was found in the propagation of local civil associations representing the interests of working and social groups in the community within the decisions made by FONATUR and the municipal government. These associations progressively gained political capital allowing them to generate



favourable conditions to obtain specific benefits -social, political, and economic- for their members in exchange for political support reflecting the national corporatist scheme of political operation at the local level.

Finally, the power structure in the new state of Quintana Roo was oriented to consolidate a strong institutional presence in order to control all the decisions in the regions contained in this territory. Due to the explosive growth of Cancun and the constant influx of financial resources to the tourism project during the implementation phase, it gained greater attention in comparison to the capital of Quintana Roo, *Chetumal*. This fact provoked a political conflict not only concerning the control over the decisions within this territory, but also the control over the economic benefits derived from tourism development. The main strategy adopted by the regional politicians to acquire this control was to reduce FONATUR's powers in Cancun through the incorporation of the government's representatives into the municipality structure. This strategy proved successful until the second period of the municipal government (1978-1981) where a local politician was elected as municipal governor in Cancun<sup>20</sup>. From that moment onwards, the central government, through FONATUR, would progressively lose control, independence of action, and decision-making powers at the local level. The different agendas of new actors in the political arena led to the reconfiguration of the power structures that prevailed during the CIPs implementation phase. The former helped to establish a new order of decision-making where the powers of policy-makers and implementers were clearly diminished.

#### **6.4 The effects of the CIPs at national and local levels**

As has been discussed thoroughly in this chapter, the implementation of the CIPs policy in Cancun had a profound effect on the transformation of the relationships between the state and the tourism industry. The formulation of this policy served to define the objectives of the "National Plan for Tourism Development" in the early 1970s. These objectives included "the expansion and improvement of the infrastructure in the traditional tourism centres [operating at the time, and] the propagation of infrastructure work for the creation of new tourism centres with the main purpose of obtaining a greater income derived from foreign revenues generated

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<sup>20</sup> Felipe Amaro Santana.

by tourism activities to compensate, in the short and medium term, the negative balance on the national current account” (FONATUR, 1982: 18, my translation).

These objectives and those contained within the CIPs policy fitted with the INFRATUR-FONATUR’s agenda to give tourism a new political and economic dimension. However, it is also fair to say that the implementation of the CIPs policy also generated -indirectly perhaps- a response from other actors to provide a different policy framework for tourism development. This was the case, for example, for the policy proposal promoted by the president, Echeverría in 1973 known as “Communitarian Tourism” (CT). In line with the agrarian reform, this proposal had the objective of encouraging the proliferation of tourism businesses in communal lands as a way of providing an alternative livelihood for the population living in rural communities (see Reyes-Osorio 1974, for more detail). Unlike the CIPs policy, the CT policy sought to provide state incentives to rural communities to run small-scale tourism businesses in order to satisfy the domestic tourism demand. For many scholars, this and many other similar policy projects formed part of a populist vision followed by the state during the 1970s and early 1980s in Mexico (see for example Castillo, 2005; Collins, 1979; Espinosa, 2004; Middlebrook, 2004; Middlebrook and Zepeda, 2003; Torres and Momsen, 2005a, 2005b). The CT initiative could never be successfully implemented due to the number of problems encountered, such as its incompatibility with the national legal framework, the lack of experience of rural communities in tourism-related businesses, a constant struggle in the negotiations with the National Department of Agrarian Affairs (DAAC, acronym in Spanish), among many others.

The failure to implement the CT policy led its advocates to turn the attention towards the CIPs process in Cancun that was gaining a great deal of support from society. Thus, actors such as Echeverría jumped on the CIPs policy “bandwagon” expressing his support publicly and devoting a promotional campaign to Cancun through several official visits. The unexpected support from the president towards Cancun had an immediate effect on public opinion, associating this tourism project with a personal interest to build a personal fortune<sup>21</sup> (Interview Banco de Mexico Official, November 2008, my translation). Despite the former, the plans considered by the CIPs policy

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<sup>21</sup> During the implementation phase, President Echeverría was able to buy a preferential portion of land in the hotel zone for the construction of a private residence (see Martí, 1985 for more details).

continued, consolidating tourism development as a priority in the national political agenda. Although the vision of the CT policy was conceived to compete with the CIPs policy, it never received the necessary attention and support (political, economic, social and discursive) to become a reality.

The effects of the CIPs policy were also present in the formulation of a novel planning approach for the construction of tourism centres as well as for the organisation of the tourism industry at the local level. Unlike the spontaneous growth in traditional Mexican destinations such as *Acapulco*, *Mazatlán*, *Puerto Vallarta*, *Tijuana* and many others, the vision of the CIPs policy focused on preventing the appearance of social, economic, cultural, environmental and political problems experienced in the past. Above all, this vision implied a completely new exercise examining the conditions of the national and the international tourism markets. A key informant commented:

*“...As you may know, the CIPs policy was formulated with the main objective of developing new tourism centres. [Firstly] we were conscious that Mexico’s participation in the international tourism market was rather modest, presenting a negative trend especially during the 1960s, therefore we thought that a drastic measure had to be adopted in order to reverse this...[Secondly] we realised that in fact tourism required less investment in comparison to other industries, such as mining, farming, manufacturing and so on, having this sector [tourism] with a big possibility of being expanded in the short-term...[Thirdly] we identified that Mexico enjoyed a great geographical position in respect to the largest sender of tourists in the world at the time [the US] representing an opportunity difficult to ignore because tourism revenues have historically helped to compensate the deficits in the national current account...[Finally] we thought, in the end, that tourism could be used to achieve the development and economic objectives...” (Interview, former INFRATUR-FONATUR-SECTUR official, January 2009, my translation).*

The information contained in this quote suggests that the formulation of the CIPs policy and its implementation in Cancun largely transformed the policy-makers’ perception of tourism. It helped to draw the attention of the ruling elite to an economic sector that had been mainly driven by actors at the margins of the state’s structures. For the first time in Mexico, a tourism policy acquired the necessary political relevance to position the state’s interests at the fore-front controlling the negotiations within this arena.

At the local level, the implementation process of the CIPs policy in the case of Cancun also generated a very diverse range of effects. The construction of this destination helped to transform the demographic, economic, social, cultural and political conditions of this territory. In demographic terms, it helped to reconfigure the traditional population nuclei from the south and the centre of the territory towards the north. In a very short period of time, Cancun became an urban centre due to the massive migration phenomenon. In economic terms, it assisted in the economic conversion of the territory from primary and secondary activities towards the services' sector. The former implied a profound modification in the traditional livelihoods of the local population facing the great challenge to participate in a different economic activity. This transition -voluntary or not- altered the economic dynamics at the local level producing an overdependence on tourism activities in the years to come. Likewise, the natural landscape of this area also suffered profound transformations turning a little fishing community of 117 inhabitants in 1970 into a city of more than 8,000 people and a tourism resort with over 2,000 hotel rooms by 1975. The social and cultural effects of the CIPs policy implementation were also present in Cancun, in the form of changes within the local social structures, the migration patterns, the transformation of local customs, the social stratification, the new division of work, to mention some examples (see Jiménez and Sosa, 2005 for a greater discussion). Finally, the main political effects of this policy in Cancun during the implementation phase were reflected in the redistribution of decision-making powers and political representation as well as the creation of new power structures aimed at controlling the benefits and burdens derived from the policy in the years to come.

Cancun formally initiated its operations as a tourism destination in 1974 with 15 hotels, 1,322 rooms, 1,013 flights, and 99,500 tourists (FONATUR, 2007). In only two years, Cancun was recognised internationally at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Governors of the Inter-American Development Bank celebrated in May 1976, hosting the delegations of 34 countries. This event marked the end of the CIPs implementation process in Cancun -at least formally- giving way to the growth of tourism activities in this destination. A key informant gave his final remarks about what signified the whole implementation process of the CIPs policy for Cancun:

*“...The panorama for Quintana Roo and especially for Cancun without tourism was screwed (sic)...there is no doubt that the introduction of this policy in this area was a great achievement of a long-term development vision of the state. Cancun, above all, must be understood as a triumph of the perseverance and planning in this sector...we [policy-makers] have been largely criticised for the problems that Cancun has nowadays but if you think for a second, you will realise that despite the possible flaws it may have, these can not be compared to the enormous economic and social benefits that this policy has brought to the lives of thousands of families...if anyone can do something similar now it would be no less than a dream...lots of countries have tried to implement similar tourism policies but, I can assure you, none of these projects have had the success of Cancun...” (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, February 2009, my translation).*



**Map 6.4** Territorial and political organisation of Mexico prior to the introduction of CIPs policy, 1930-1970.

Source: [http://www.enotes.com/topic/Territorial\\_evolution\\_of\\_Mexico](http://www.enotes.com/topic/Territorial_evolution_of_Mexico)



**Map 6.5** Territorial and political organisation of Mexico after 1974.  
 Source: [http://www.enotes.com/topic/Territorial\\_evolution\\_of\\_Mexico](http://www.enotes.com/topic/Territorial_evolution_of_Mexico)



**Map 6.6** Current territorial and political organisation of Mexico, 2012.  
 Source: <http://www.buscate.com.mx/educativo/mapas-escolares.htm>

## 6.5 Conclusions

This chapter has discussed the implementation of the CIPs policy in the case of Cancun. Using the social interface element referred to by Long (2001) as a “clash of cultural paradigms”, this chapter described the encounter of different world views in

this process analysing the ways in which related actors attempted to bridge, contest, negotiate, and/or transform these visions to achieve the goals considered in the policy.

Despite the recognition of the great contribution from top-down and bottom-up approaches to analyse policy implementation experiences, this research agrees with the argument about the need to move beyond the unproductive discussion of the primacy of the explanations produced by each one of these approaches. It is argued that the efforts should be focused rather on the construction of different analytical strategies that allow researchers to bridge the advantages of these theoretical platforms as well as to increase the possibility to add new elements into the discussion. It is believed that the approach adopted in this chapter has done the former to a certain extent. Through the combination of the actors' perspectives with an analysis of the prevailing structural and contextual features within this approach, an important number of insightful explanations were developed, illustrating some of the main issues related to the implementation of the CIPs policy. The development of further approaches in this vein becomes an indispensable task to gain a better understanding of how policies are implemented and what sort of factors (human, structural, and contextual) influence their development.

This chapter described the implementation experience of the CIPs policy in the particular case of Cancun giving primacy to the voice of the actors that experienced this process (i.e. policy-makers, implementers, and locals). The main objective of the former was to illustrate how these actors made sense of this intervention project and what type of strategies they employed to negotiate their vision of local development. This chapter discussed that the ideology shared by policy-makers largely dominated the implementation process disregarding any other visions. The cultural disassociation between the different actors that participated in this process helped to generate an ideological clash in Cancun that was mediated through different forms of domination. Among these forms were the imposition of a new system of norms and values based on the idea of modernisation values and the introduction of a new livelihood system based on tourism development, just to mention the most significant examples. Thus, a local scenario of power inequalities was configured through the implementation process determining the pattern of participation of different actors and assigning them particular roles to play in the project. In spite of being portrayed by policy-makers as a development panacea, the phase of policy implementation

revealed the unequal nature of the tourism project conceived within the CIPs policy, allocating the benefits and burdens according to the cultural and socioeconomic profile of the participants in this process.

Six main findings were identified in the examination of the implementation of the CIPs policy. Firstly, it was found that the CIPs policy had a direct effect on the expansion of the developmental capabilities of the state. Projects such as Cancun helped to consolidate a more interventionist role of the state adopting a multifaceted condition. Through the CIPs policy, tourism advocates were able to give the necessary political prominence to this sector to be incorporated into the objectives of the national agenda. In this sense, the case of Cancun exemplified how states effectively enlarge their powers in tourism through the implementation of policies such as the CIPs. Secondly, the CIPs policy largely contributed to the transformation of the institutional structure of the tourism sector in Mexico. Previous to the introduction of the CIPs policy, state actions were oriented to carry out promotional tasks leaving the organisation of this sector to private initiative. The lack of coordination and communication between state and private organisations allowed new institutions such as INFRATUR-FONATUR to assume a leadership role, dominating policy-making activities related to this sector. The former prepared the conditions for the specialisation of the state in tourism affairs consolidating a more active role through state-owned tourism enterprises such as *Nacional Hotelera* and *Consortio Caribe*, to mention some examples.

Thirdly, the CIPs policy helped to establish a well-defined and long-lasting planning approach for tourism development in Mexico. The implementation experience in Cancun allowed policy-makers to identify the necessary elements to create a tourism destination from zero: 1) total control over land tenure; 2) infrastructure capacity; 3) a propitious market for investors and visitors; 4) financial resources, and; 5) political operation. The identification of these elements served in subsequent projects considered within the CIPs policy such as *Ixtapa* (1976), *Los Cabos* (1978), *Loreto* (1979), and *Huatulco* (1984) with Cancun becoming an important learning platform for policy-makers and implementers to deal with the potential issues during this phase. Fourthly, the CIPs policy acted as a vehicle of social change in the regions where it was implemented. The most notorious effect in Cancun was the reorganisation of the territory following a social and economic system different from



the traditional one. The configuration of a new society with profound cultural contrasts posed great challenges for actors to participate in a tourism project that was not designed to accommodate neither all social interests nor all social profiles. The implementation experience in Cancun evidenced the vulnerable condition of impoverished social segments *vis-a-vis* the introduction of a development policy that was supposedly conceived to assist them.

Fifthly, the CIPs policy helped to consolidate a national tourism product based on “sun, sand, and sea” features. The selection of Cancun and the rest of the CIPs projects purposely followed a vision of tourism development that prevailed in the 1960s and 1970s in destinations such as Spain, France, The Caribbean, and so on. Special attention was paid by policy-makers to stressing that the CIPs policy aimed to avoid the problems of the past in destinations such as Acapulco and reproduce the good examples of international destinations such as Benidorm in Spain. Despite the appearance of alternative models of tourism development in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s (such as ecotourism, rural tourism, pro-poor tourism, community tourism, adventure tourism, and so on) this model of tourism development conceived through the CIPs policy, has maintained a leadership role, at least in the Mexican context. Finally, the CIPs policy reconfigured the power relations and helped to create new scenarios of negotiation at the local level. The implementation process profoundly transformed the traditional structures of control and decision-making provoking the concurrence of new actors and new interests. Implementers successfully contained the appearance of coalitions against CIPs objectives during the implementation phase, however as the policy process continued, control would be progressively lost in the new political arenas created by the urban and tourism development.

The next chapter will explore the evolutionary pattern followed by Cancun after the conclusion of the implementation phase. Attention will be focused on describing how the vision of tourism development in Cancun determined the configuration of power structures enabling/constraining the access of actors to resources in the tourism arena at the national and local levels. This chapter will focus on analysing the different strategies employed by actors (discursive, political, social, power) to create sufficient room for manoeuvre to exert their control in the arena of Mexican tourism.

## **Chapter 7. The rise and fall of Cancun**

### **7.1 Chapter outline**

This chapter has the objective of providing a discussion of the historical evolution of Cancun as a tourism destination during the period 1975-2011. For this purpose, the element referred to by Long (2001) as “power as the outcome of struggles over meanings and strategic relationships” in the concept of social interface is developed here. Long (2001: 71) mentioned that power is not simply possessed, accumulated, and/or exercised but that it “is the outcome of complex struggles and negotiations over authority, status, reputation and resources, and necessitates the enrolment of networks of actors...such struggles are founded upon the extent to which specific actors perceive themselves capable of manoeuvring within particular situations and developing effective strategies for doing so. Creating a room for manoeuvre implies a degree of consent, a degree of negotiation and thus a degree of power, as manifested in the possibility of exerting some control, prerogative, authority and capacity for action...power inevitably generates resistance, accommodation and strategic compliance as regular components of the politics of every day life”. Considering the former, this chapter explores how power has been generated and exercised in the political arena of Mexican tourism focusing the attention on the evolution of Cancun. The main interest is to provide a map of the different networks of actors that participated in this process explaining the different resources they employed to maintain potential issues away from the negotiations to control the actions and decisions related to the local CIPs policy process.

The structure of this chapter is divided into six main sections. The first section of this chapter provides a brief overview of the model selected by this research to assist in the construction of explanations of how Cancun developed over time: the Tourism Area Life Cycle model (TALC; Butler, 1980). Focusing the analysis on the supply-demand dynamics of tourism activities, this model helps to determine the different development stages that a destination can experience over time. It is explained that the main interest for the use of this model in this chapter is to examine these characteristics as well as the different factors (social, structural, and/or contextual) that contributed to shaping the policy outcomes and the local policy process over

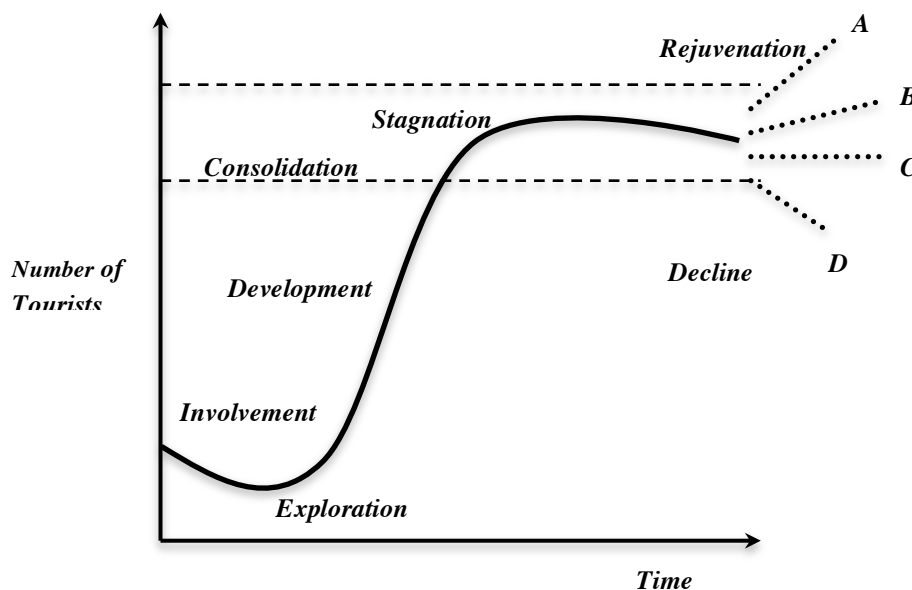
time. The remaining five sections of this chapter construct a narrative based on the analysis of the tourism arena (at national, regional and local levels) with the TALC lense developing the hypothetical development scenarios experienced by Cancun.

The second section describes Cancun's "development" stage covering a six-year period (1975-1981). The information in this section is concerned with portraying a period of expansion and consistent growth of tourism activities in this destination. Special attention is paid to discussing the power struggles and the emergence of different agendas that shaped the local policy process. The third section describes a "consolidation" stage (1982-1987) derived from a stabilisation process in the tourism supply-demand factors. It is argued that other internal and external factors, such as the economic liberalisation and the privatisation of the state-owned companies in Cancun, set the conditions for the appearance of this phase. The power discussion in this section is focused on illustrating the relevance of networks to mobilising different resources in order to achieve the objectives of their agendas. The fourth section describes a "reformulation-development" stage driven by an unexpected scenario of crisis during the period 1988-1999. The main "agent of change" identified by this research was the occurrence of a hurricane that led this destination towards a process of reinvention. The construction of new discourses and the implementation of new operational, commercial, and development schemes contributed to give origin to a new life cycle. It is argued that the local policy process was profoundly transformed due to the abandonment of the original objectives considered by policy-makers. The fifth section describes a "stagnation" stage during the period 2000-2005 as a result of the appearance of some signs of exhaustion in this destination. It is explained that some issues related to land scarcity, pollution, a contraction in the construction of tourism facilities, social problems in the local community, such as overpopulation, resentment to tourism activities and so on, contributed to the consolidation of this scenario. The changes in the political structures as well as the adoption of new discourses at different levels also played a crucial role in the development of new agendas and the generation of more power struggles to control the tourism arena. Finally, the sixth section discusses the possible existence of a scenario of decline in Cancun for the period 2006-2011. It is argued that considering the difficult social, political and economic conditions of the country, the panorama for the tourism sector is not promising. Despite a renovated campaign

from the central government to re-take its place as an influential actor in this arena, this period has been characterised by the adoption of controversial measures that may jeopardise the future of this sector in years to come.

## 7.2 The Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC): understanding the evolution of a tourism destination.

The Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) has become one of the most cited and frequently used models to develop economic and territorial interpretations of how tourism destinations evolve (Butler, 2009). Borrowing the concept of the “product life cycle” from business literature, the TALC examines the different stages whereby a tourism destination -the product- goes through its historical evolution. These “phases” or “stages” are: “exploration”, “involvement”, “development”, “consolidation”, and “stagnation”, followed by two possible options depending on the degree of intervention within the destination: “decline” or “rejuvenation”, a stage that could lead to the beginning of a new life cycle (see **Figure 7.1**). There are three main factors that are analysed in this model: 1) the demand, i.e. the number of tourists arriving to the destination; 2) the supply, i.e the number of tourism facilities and infrastructure, and; 3) global tourism trends, i.e. the prevailing discourses and practices of tourism development.



**Figure 7.1** The Tourism Area Life Cycle, Butler (1980)

A crucial component of TALC in determining whether a tourism destination has reached a “consolidation” and/or a “stagnation” stage is an examination of the destination’s “carrying capacity”. The “carrying capacity” of a destination is evaluated through the observation of three parameters: environmental (land scarcity, water and air quality); physical (transportation, accommodation, and supplementary services), and; social (overpopulation, resentment towards tourism activities) (Butler, 1980). If any or a combination of these parameters exceed their expansion capacity, a “stagnation” stage can be declared in a tourism destination. It is precisely at this point of development that tourism destinations can present a myriad of possible scenarios. Butler argued that if intervention does not take place at this stage, a “decline” scenario will irremediably emerge leading to the eventual disappearance of the destination. Tourist arrivals would fall considerably under this scenario and the tourism destination would no longer be able to compete with other similar destinations. In contrast, Butler also argues that if some corrective measures are applied during the “stagnation” stage then the scenario would change leading the tourism destination towards a “rejuvenation” stage. A “rejuvenation” stage supposes a profound transformation of the tourism product, adapting the destination to the demand as well as the current forms and discourses of tourism development. Thus, the tourism destination can regain a place within the tourism market and a new life cycle will begin.

Although the TALC has been widely used to explain how tourism destinations develop globally, the observations in many case studies have raised a number of issues in terms of the applicability of this model. Derived from a review of the applications of TALC carried out by Lagiewski (2006), several researchers identified the need to modify the original model in order to provide better explanations of the possible evolution patterns. For example, Haywood (1986) concluded that TALC was not sufficient on its own to provide an accurate prediction of destination development due to the lack of flexibility in the criteria to measure the proposed stages. Debbage (1990) -through the examination of the case of Paradise Island in the Bahamas- pointed out that TALC does not take into account the organisational behaviour of the tourism destination as the life cycle evolves and that it prevents a further discussion on these issues. Getz (1992) examined the case of Niagara Falls and concluded that this destination presented a long-lasting “maturity” stage with a

little intervention scenario, contradicting the evolutionary path suggested by the TALC. Finally, Bianchi (1994) argued that TALC was not able to provide insightful explanations of the development process due to an absence of a concept of “tourism development” closer to a sociological approach.

It is important to note that these studies have served to test the applicability of the TALC considering different stages and new shapes of the curve development derived from the findings in these studies. Sheela Agarwal (1995), for example, has largely contributed to the redevelopment of the TALC model examining the case of the South Coast of England. Focusing the attention on the ‘stagnation’ phase, she argued that a “reorientation” stage can emerge (instead of rejuvenation) preventing a scenario of decline. She concluded that more research is needed into the “stagnation” stage through the examination of different case studies in order to understand how tourism destinations are restructured so as to maintain their place in the tourism market. In the same vein, Garay and Cánoves (2011) also contributed to the redevelopment of TALC examining the case of Catalonia, in Spain. They argued that this model “can be especially practical for constructing a global model that groups tourism development by phases with its paradigmatic changes” (Garay and Cánoves, 2011: 651). The evidence provided by their study suggests a multiple concurrence of cycles -instead of one long cycle- over time moulded by the prevailing political, economic, social and cultural features associated with tourism development. Considering all the former, it can be said that despite the apparent simplicity of this model, the TALC has gained recognition as an important theoretical tool to develop a better understanding of how tourism destinations evolve.

This research decided to use the TALC in this chapter to describe the evolutionary process experienced in the case of Cancun. Recognising that policy implementation is not the final stage of the policy process, the interest in the evolution of this destination was to examine the outcomes of the CIPs policy over time. A narrative is developed describing the TALC phases through which Cancun evolved taking into consideration the supply-demand factors<sup>22</sup> as well as additional information related to the economic, political, and social environment. Special attention is paid to illustrating the different agents of change that contributed to give origin to the

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<sup>22</sup> This includes a historical analysis (1975-2005) of statistics produced by FONATUR (2007) for the case of Cancun.

transition processes from one stage to another (e.g. tourism trends, crisis events, political struggles and so on) and to the power relations generated in the arena of Mexican tourism at the local, regional and national levels. As in the previous chapter, the voices of different actors are also included to promote the reflection of the different strategies utilised (discursive, political, social, and so on) by them to create room for manoeuvre to control the CIPs policy process.

### **7.3 The development stage (1975-1981)**

Cancun started to formally operate as a tourism destination in 1974, once the first construction phase concluded and the first three hotels (*Hotel Bojórquez*, *Playa Blanca*, and *Villas Tacul*) opened their doors to tourists in 1974. Butler (1980) mentioned that some destinations, such as Cancun, did not experience “exploration” and “involvement” phases within their life cycle because places such as this were purposively conceived for tourism development. He commented at the time:

*“...areas for development, such as Cancun in Mexico, are selected by computer from a range of possibilities allowed by certain preselected parameters has meant that the exploration and involvement phases are probably of minimal significance, if they are present at all. Under these circumstances the development phase becomes the real commencement of the cycle” (Butler, 2006: 9)<sup>23</sup>.*

Although the information in this quote suggested that the selection of Cancun proceeded in a very technical way, the information provided in previous chapters of this thesis has shown that this process was in fact more complex involving a great number of power and political struggles. Similarly, Butler’s argument of an absence of the stages of “exploration” and “involvement” in the specific area where Cancun was built may not reflect the local tourism conditions at the time. It is argued here that these stages were actually present in peripheral areas -such as *Merida*, *Cozumel*, *Isla Mujeres*, and *Akumal*- where small-scale tourism development flourished in previous decades (see chapter six for more detail). In this sense, it is assumed that these cases were crucial for the generation of a tourism flow towards this region that subsequently allowed Cancun to begin its life cycle in the so-called “development” stage.

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<sup>23</sup> The original article of 1980 was re-published in a book edited by Butler in 2006 called *The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications of Management of Resources*, Vol.1.

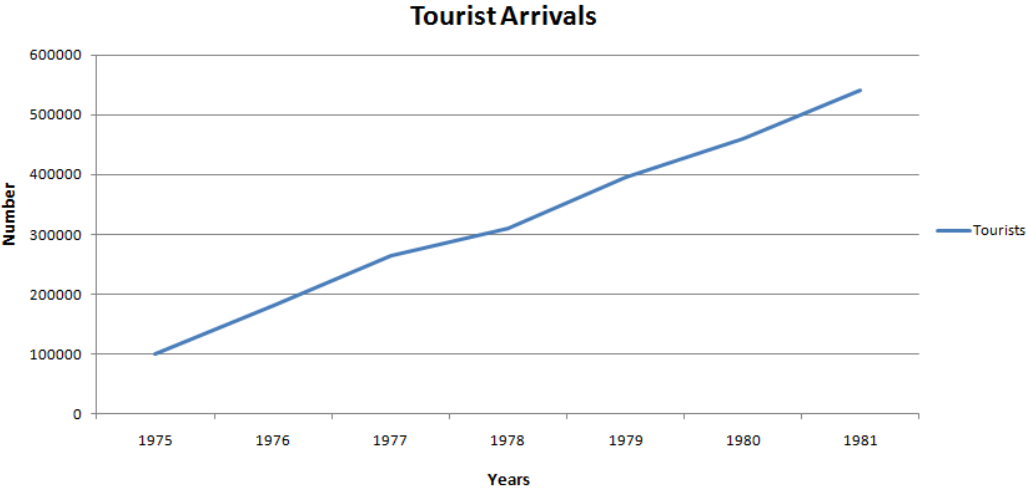
### *7.3.1 A statistical picture of Cancun's "development" stage*

This section presents an analysis of the supply-demand factors including a review of annual statistics for the period 1975-1981 in terms of tourist arrivals, hotel growth, flight arrivals, hotel occupation, tourists' length of stay, and foreign revenue. These statistics show that Cancun presented a panorama of sustained growth during its first years of operation (see **Graphs 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4**). Cancun passed from receiving one hundred thousand tourists in 1975 towards more than five hundred thousand in 1981. Likewise the growth of hotel facilities and flight arrivals increased considerably from 15 hotels in 1975 to 54 in 1981 and, from one thousand arrivals in 1975 to more than six thousand in 1981. Finally, foreign currency earnings passed from 11 million in 1975 to 100 million dollars in 1981. These results helped this research to confirm that Cancun was experiencing the stage of "development" described in the TALC model. However, once the "hotel occupation" and "length of stay" are examined for the same period, the results show that these categories followed a different development pattern (see **Graphs 7.5, 7.6**). Graph 7.5 shows that the annual "hotel occupation" had a consistent growth trend (from 61% up to 77%) until 1979 but it fell in the following years to 64%. In the case of the "length of stay" the results show that since 1976, the number of nights spent in the destination never grew and actually decreased (0.6%) in the period analysed.

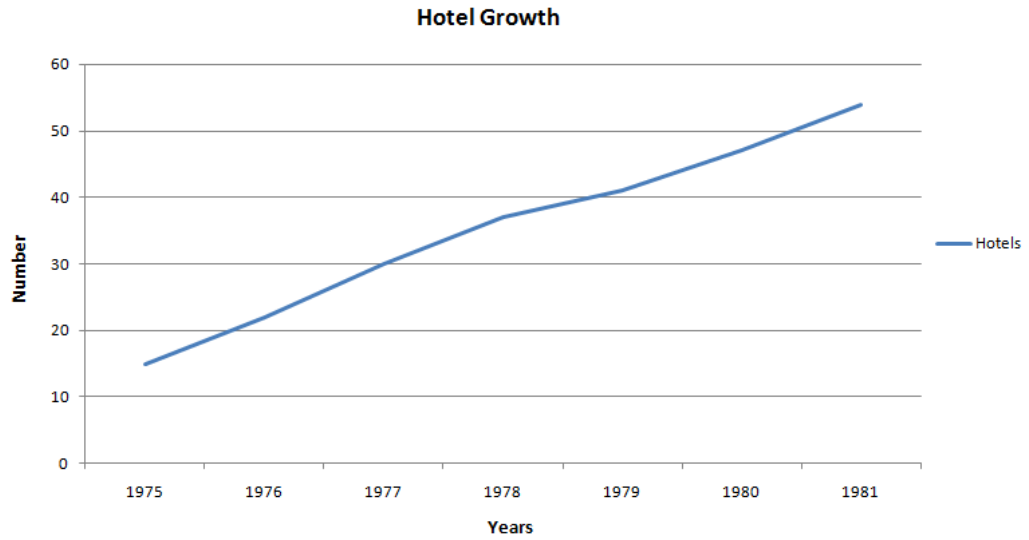
The main question that arises is: why did these categories not match the results obtained for tourist arrivals, tourism facilities and foreign currency revenue? A first hypothesis for the results obtained in the graph of "hotel occupation" is that the explosive expansion of the hotels on offer had a direct effect on this pattern i.e. more available hotel rooms, not enough tourist arrivals to fill them. However, if the data is examined more closely, it can be noted that the rate of growth of tourist arrivals clearly surpassed the rate of growth of hotels in this period (450% versus 260% respectively). Considering the number of tourists who arrived to Cancun each year, the hotel offer would be insufficient theoretically to maintain the occupation levels at the limit. The former opens the door either to formulate alternative hypotheses to explain these results or to question the accuracy of the data provided by FONATUR. In the case of the results of "length of stay", the formulation of a hypothesis explaining this pattern was not possible. The graph shows that in 1976 tourists stayed



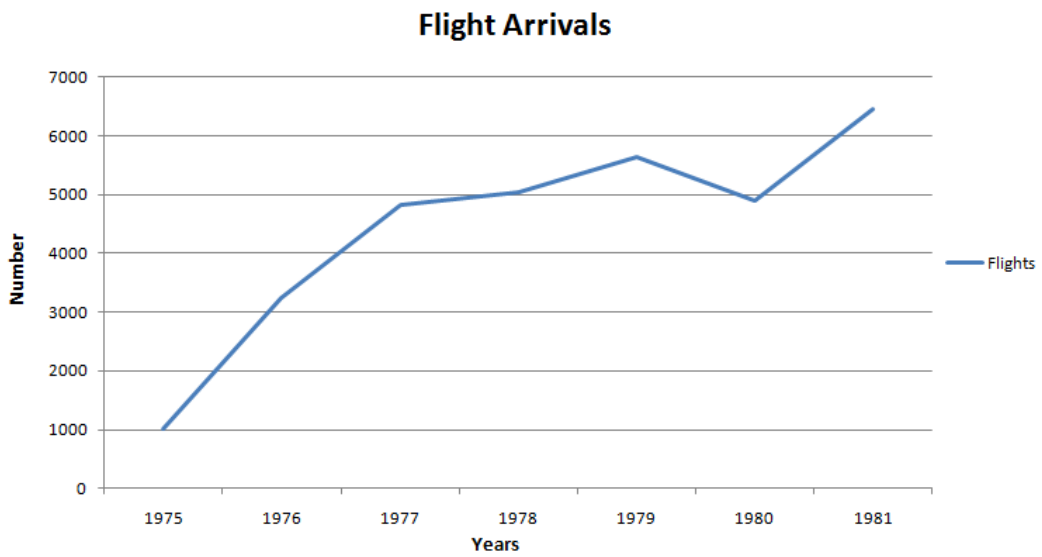
an average of 4.5 nights in Cancun whereas in 1981 the number decreased to 3.9 nights. This research was not able to find any relevant information that could explain why tourists stayed in Cancun less time. Perhaps the development of alternative tourism routes in the region -*Merida, Isla Mujeres, Cozumel*- or the itineraries established by travel agencies contributed to the consolidation of these figures, but in any case, not enough information was found to support these suppositions. What was remarkable for this historical period, however, was that Cancun grew in a very short period of time (less than 6 years) leading this destination to reach the “consolidation” stage well before the expectations of policy-makers in the most optimistic scenario. This situation would have several implications for the evolution of the CIPs policy process in Cancun as a response to these circumstances.



**Graph 7.1** Tourist arrivals to Cancun period 1975-1981.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

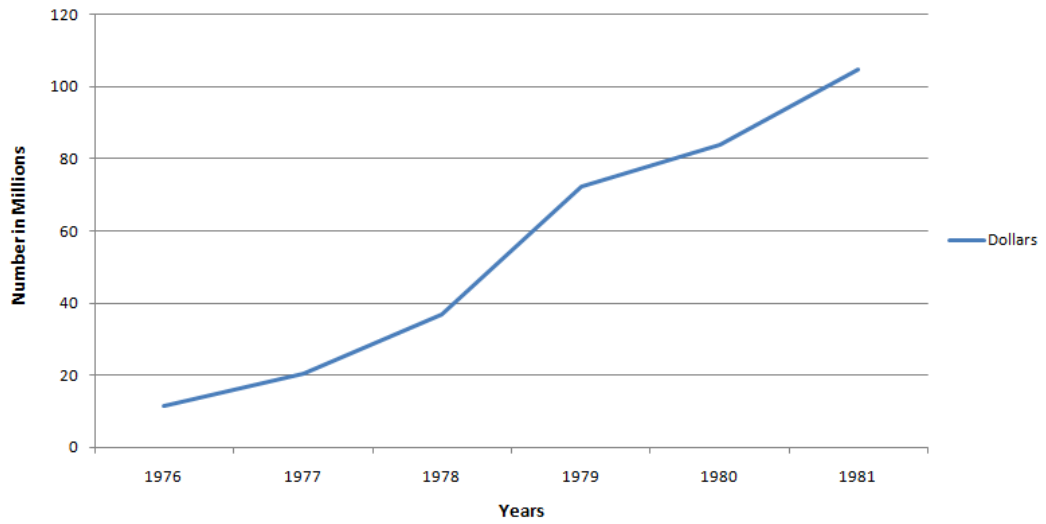


**Graph 7.2** Hotel growth in Cancun, period 1975-1981.  
 Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



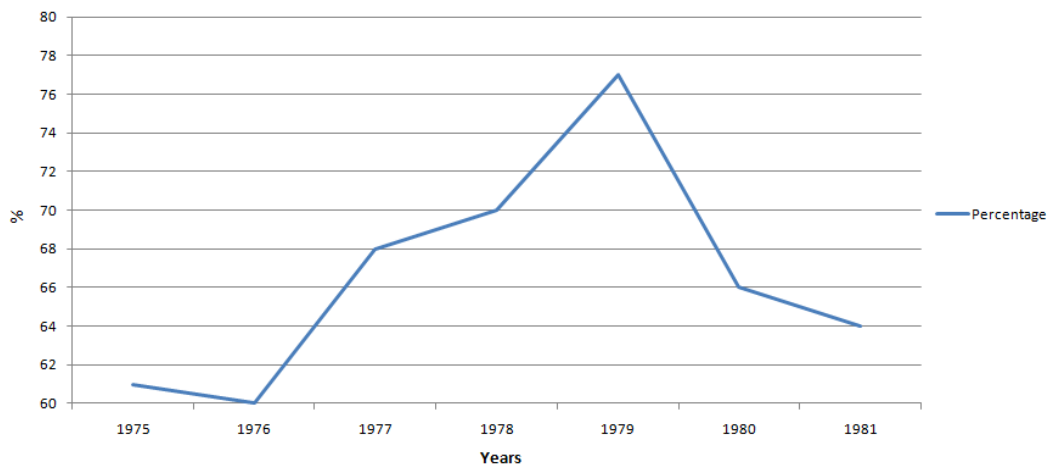
**Graph 7.3** Flight arrivals to Cancun, period 1975-1981.  
 Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

### Foreign Currency Revenues

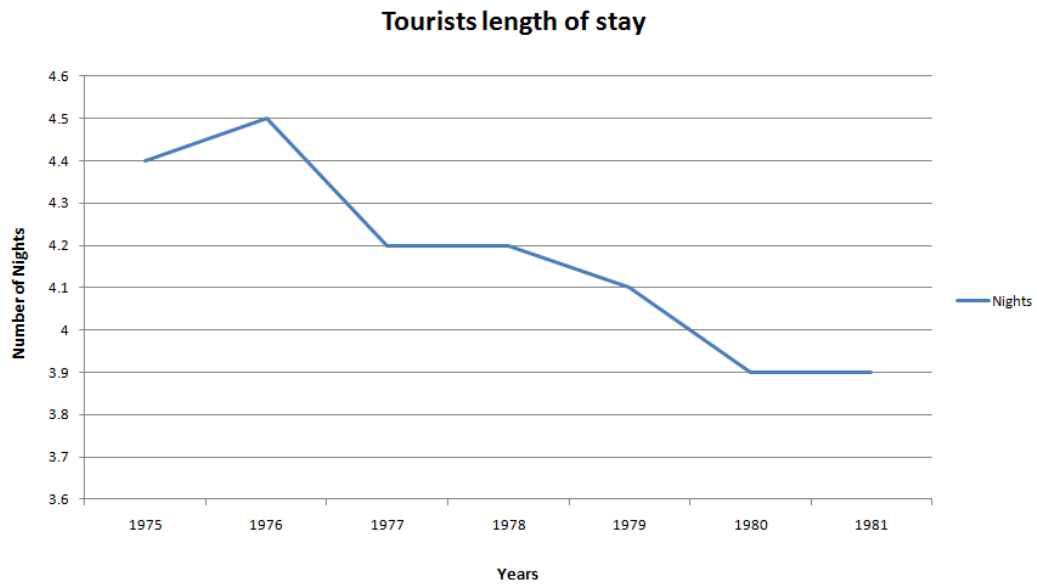


**Graph 7.4** Foreign currency revenues for Cancun, period 1976-1981.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

### Hotel Occupation



**Graph 7.5** Annual average hotel occupation in Cancun, period 1975-1981.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.6** Annual average length of stay of tourists in Cancun, 1975-1981.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

### *7.3.2 Discourse versus reality*

During this phase, Mexico experienced a series of transformations in its economic, political, and social landscape. The global oil crisis experienced in 1974 led the Mexican government to increase its public debt through the acquisition of more external loans in order to overcome the negative economic effects (Espinosa, 2004). The administration of President José López Portillo (1976-1982) encountered a scenario of budget constraints and a general lack of trust by the private sector due to the populist approach followed in the previous administration that expanded the presence of the state in the national economy. The first objective of President López was to reverse this interventionist image adopting a national policy aimed at encouraging greater participation from the private sector. A series of reforms were proposed in the National Plan (1976-1982) reflected the intentions of the government to provide a different economic, administrative, and political framework aiming to improve state-private relations. However, the discovery of new oilfields at the end of the 1970s changed these plans leading to a new period of state expansion and the subsequent appearance of more state-owned enterprises in several sectors, including tourism (Middlebrook and Zepeda, 2003). The revenues generated by oil sales became the principal base of the economy subjecting the objectives of the political agenda to this source of income. The economic contribution of tourism through the production of foreign revenue was also recognised as crucial for the achievement of

these objectives leading to the creation of the National Tourism Plan by the Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR) in 1978. Despite the inclusion of some environmental and social objectives within this plan, it was clear that the main motivation of the state in tourism continued to be economic. The following quotes help to understand this argument:

*“...the official interest in the development of the tourism sector is clearly linked with the generation of foreign exchange revenues derived from the arrival of international tourists contributing to the economic development of the country...” (PNT, 1978: 52, my translation).*

*“We have determined that it is convenient...to direct the international tourism flow towards specific places in Mexico to the achievement of the goals considered in the national development agenda...the decision to promote tourism within the national agenda was oriented towards the generation of employment, to bring more foreign exchange, increase the productive activities, favour the masses and reduce the inequalities between the urban and rural contexts” (Speech pronounced by FONATUR’s Director, July 1976; Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES, exp. INFRATUR 1976, 4/5, my translation).*

The reproduction of a positive discourse surrounding tourism was maintained during this period stressing the strong link between tourism and developmental objectives. It was claimed, among many other things, that “tourism promoted a fairer distribution of income, generated regional development, provoked less dependence on the exterior, and that it was a sector exclusively developed by private domestic investment” (PNT, 1978: 62). The consolidation of this discourse seemed to be facilitating the implementation process in other tourism destinations considered in the CIPs policy such as the cases of *Ixtapa*, *Loreto* and *Los Cabos* at the end of the 1970s. However, the picture of tourism constructed through this discourse was not being reflected on the ground considering the first policy outcomes experienced in Cancun. García-Fuentes (1979) argued that the supposed socioeconomic benefits for the local population derived from tourism development were scarcely found in this destination. Making a comparison between the main objectives considered in the CIPs policy and the outcomes experienced in Cancun, she found that the conditions of underdevelopment persisted despite the growth of tourism activities in the region. She argued that tourism development did not constitute a development agent since its benefits were concentrated in few hands. The main conclusion of this study was that

this situation seemed unlikely to change in the short and medium term due to the unequal conditions generated by the introduction of tourism into the region. Despite the short existence of this destination, the first policy outcomes in Cancun were revealing the great contrast that existed between the government discourse of tourism and the realities occurring at the local level under a panorama of social and economic inequality.

### *7.3.3 Two local agendas: tourism and urban development*

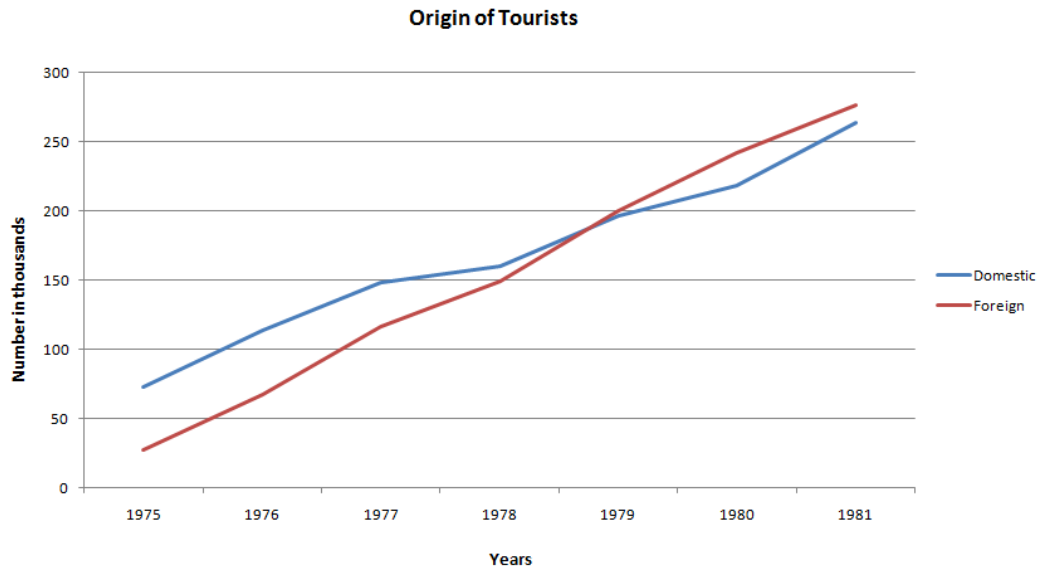
Many interviewees of this research agreed that the event that catapulted Cancun as an international tourism destination was the celebration of the 17th annual meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank (BID) in 1976. The organisation of this event was possible due to the sponsorship link that the BID had with this destination as well as the personal connection between the CIPs policy process and the Director of the BID at the time<sup>24</sup>. This event contributed to attracting the attention of the international market towards this new tourism spot. From that moment onwards, the arrival of tourists and tourism facilities increased considerably. In the first years of operation, tourism activities in Cancun depended on the arrival of domestic tourists. However, as this destination grew, the arrival of foreign tourists gained more representativeness becoming a demand factor for this destination in the following years (see **Graph 7.7**). Parallel to the expansion of tourism activities in Cancun, the urban zone in the municipality of *Benito Juárez*, also experienced a considerable rapid growth. Yet, it is important to note that state investment in the urban area did not match the one applied in the touristic zone (see **Graph 7.8**). Having severe budget constraints, the new municipality faced the challenge to administer a city that was growing at an average annual rate of 19% (INEGI, 2000). Under this scenario, the municipality assumed the management role according to its economic and legal capacities, attempting to satisfy the fast-growing demand for public services, infrastructure and urban development. These concerns were reflected in the first Municipal Plan (1978-1981) identifying the need to strengthen the figure of the municipal institution in order to handle the situation. It was stated:

*“Given the difficult economic conditions of the city, the municipality found that a number of measures should be adopted to increase the quality of*

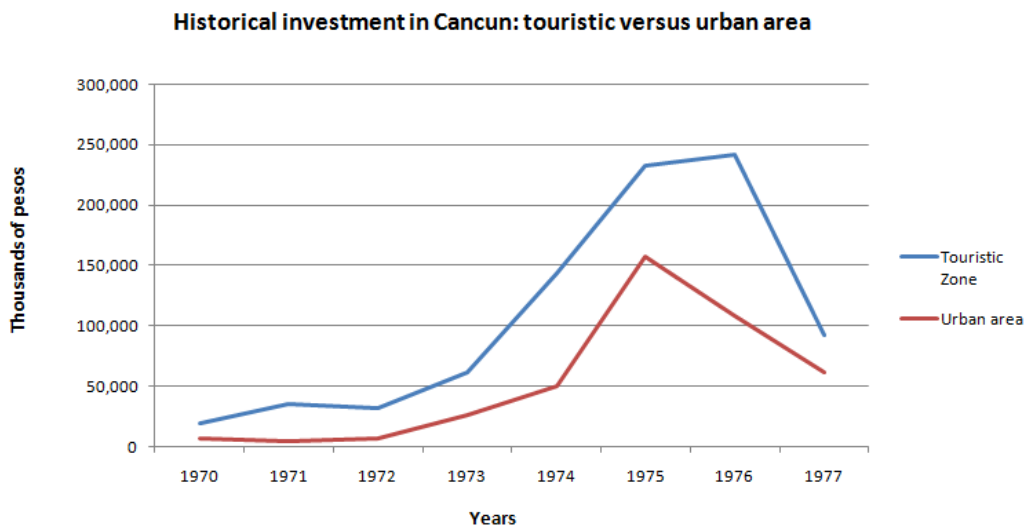
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<sup>24</sup> The Director of the BID was the Mexican economist Antonio Ortiz Mena who had worked for the Mexican government for many decades as Minister of the Treasury.

*education, public services, social development, and civil participation...an extension of the legal powers of the municipality is required to achieve these goals” (Labor de Gobierno, Municipio de Benito Juárez, 1978-1981: 2-3, my translation)*



**Graph 7.7** Distribution of tourists by origin in Cancun, period 1975-1981.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.8** Historical Investment in Cancun period 1970-1977.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR report on public investment in Cancun 1979. (Archivo de la Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES, exp. FONATUR 4/143).

Despite the touristic orientation of Cancun, the attention of the municipality was focused on finding solutions to address urban issues derived from the uncontrolled growth. A long-lasting disassociation emerged between the development of the

touristic and the urban zones, making it evident that tourism development had a privileged position in the policy agenda. This situation led to the emergence of a clash of interests between the local community (represented formally by the municipality) and the central administration (represented by FONATUR's offices at the national and local levels). Through several strategies (discussed later in this chapter), the municipality attempted to expand its presence in decision-making activities so as to enlarge its economic capacity and political participation. The main interest of the central administration, however, was to maintain full control over the touristic zone through constant supervision of its growth and development. A clear differentiation in attributions and decision-making between the municipality and the central administrations was considered necessary by FONATUR's policy-makers to ensure that policy objectives could be achieved as planned, free of any interference (Interview, FONATUR official, May 2009). The confrontation of these agendas generated an environment of political tension in Cancun that led to the mobilisation of resources from these actors to guarantee that their interests and agendas were properly represented.

#### *7.3.4 A battle for control*

The administration of President López Portillo brought profound changes within the institutional tourism structures. The dismantling of the technocrats network continued during this presidential administration leading to the loss of important allies within the political system during this historical period<sup>25</sup>. The new Minister of Tourism, Guillermo Rossell, organised a campaign of colonisation in the state tourism offices, paying special attention to FONATUR. It was mentioned by the majority of informants of this research who worked in the tourism public service at the time that the new tourism minister had a personal agenda consisting of building a personal fortune derived from the tourism projects considered by the CIPs policy, such as the case Cancun. A key informant commented:

*“The tourism minister was an unsavoury person with a very low moral quality, low capacity for political negotiation, and clearly interested in making obscure businesses surrounding tourism...he was well known for*

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<sup>25</sup> The Director of the Banco de México, Enrique Fernandez Hurtado, was one of the last influential active members of the “technocrats” network in the Mexican bureaucracy. He resigned from this position in 1976 once the administration of López Portillo came into effect.



*being a tyrant solving the official issues of the sector at his discretion...I saw it myself as I was forced to resign from my position in FONATUR because I was witnessing how public projects such as Cancun and Ixtapa were being appropriated by the network of friends of this person. It was a very difficult moment for many of us who originally directed these projects being abruptly displaced” (Interview, former FONATUR official, February 2009, my translation).*

The resignation of INFRATUR-FONATUR’s director, Antonio Enriquez Savignac in 1977, confirmed the political rupture between the new administration and the political network surrounding the CIPs policy that had played a key role in the implementation process of Cancun. Thus, people with close ties to the Tourism Minister were appointed to strategic positions within SECTUR and FONATUR progressively acquiring more control over the tourism projects related to the CIPs policy such as Cancun, *Ixtapa*, and *Los Cabos*. However, Rossell could not finish his administration because he was replaced in 1979 by Rosa Alegría<sup>26</sup>. Her appointment (1980-1982) was perceived as a strategy from the López administration to soften the environment of tension left by Rossell, attempting to restore order in the tourism offices (Interview, SECTUR’s official, February 2009).

Political organisation at the local level presented a similar environment of tension during this period. After the conclusion of the first municipal government period (1975-1978) headed by an ex-FONATUR official (Alfonso Alarcón), Felipe Amaro was elected as the new mayor of the municipality of *Benito Juárez*. Amaro was well-known belonging to the regional political network headed by the governor of Quintana Roo, Jesús Martínez Ross (1975-1981). The principal objective of this regional network at the time was to “recover” control over Cancun from the hands of the central administration. The chosen strategy to achieve this objective was the confrontation between the municipality and FONATUR. According to Martí (1985), Amaro and his group largely sponsored illegal invasions of tourism development lands in the possession of FONATUR throughout his administration in Cancun. He promoted the proliferation of businesses not considered in the Master Plan, authorised construction projects, organised public demonstrations to acquire control over public beaches, among many other measures (Interview, former FONATUR official February, 2009) This battle revealed not only the interest from the

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<sup>26</sup> It is important to mention that Rosa Alegría was the first woman ever to be appointed to the Mexican cabinet.

municipality to acquire greater territorial control but also the interest to participate directly in the large economic benefits that tourism development was generating. FONATUR was able to contain, to some extent, the onslaughts of the municipality during this period through some economic concessions, such as the collection of a number of taxes in the hotel zone.

Period/level	National (President)	Regional (Governor)	Local (Mayor)
1976-1982	José López Portillo (Políticos)	Jesús Martínez 1975- 1981 (Quintana Roo's political network)	Alfonso Alarcón 1975- 1978 (FONATUR)
			Felipe Amaro 1978- 1981 (Quintana Roo's political network)

**Table 7.1** Political organisation, period 1976-1981.  
Source: Own elaboration.

#### 7.4 The consolidation stage (1982-1987)

The organisation of the “North-South Summit for Cooperation and Development” in Cancun demonstrated that it was already one of the most important tourism destinations on the American continent by 1981. This event helped Mexico to project the image of a committed state in the development of the tourism sector that was harvesting the economic benefits of its growth. Seemingly, this destination would continue its development path without any major constraints as had happened in previous years. However, it is argued here that Cancun actually entered in a process of growth stabilisation due to the concurrence of two circumstances during this historical period: 1) a deceleration in the pace of the growth of tourist arrivals, and; 2) a considerable reduction in land available to maintain the expansion of tourism facilities. According to the categorisation proposed by TALC, Cancun was experiencing a development stage known as “consolidation” despite its short existence. The local economy was fully dependent on tourism-related activities and it was clear that this area was no longer a little fishing village but a vivid and growing tourism and urban centre hosting approximately 37,130 inhabitants by 1982 and presenting an annual growth rate of 17.3% (*Gobierno del Estado de Quintana Roo*, 2009).

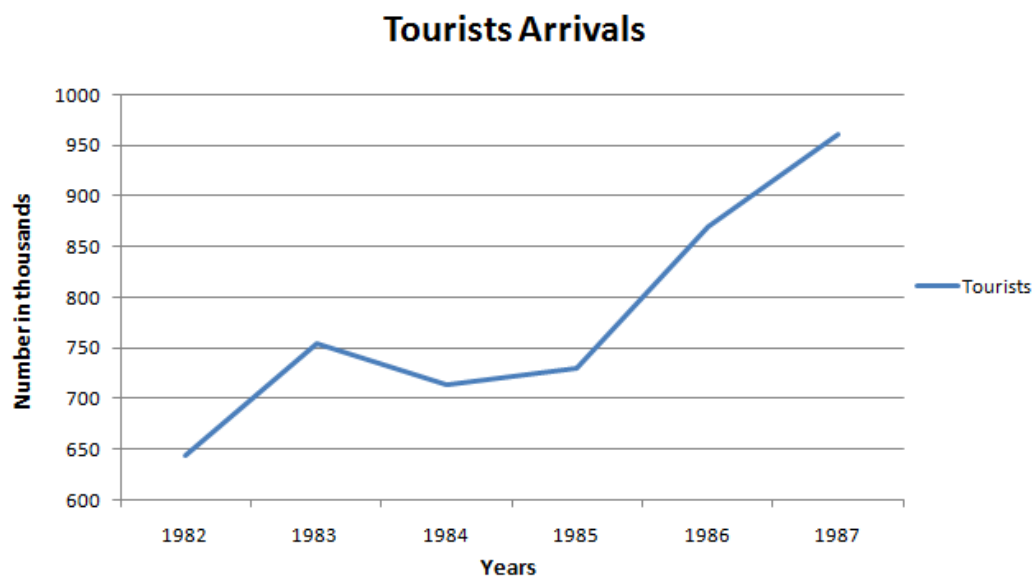
This particular period was characterised by a withdrawal of the Mexican state from developmental tasks, not only in tourism but also in the majority of economic sectors

due to the problems generated by a severe economic crisis in the early 1980s. The main strategy of the government to reverse the negative effects of this crisis was the reduction of the presence of the state in the national economy, entering into a privatisation process. What did the state's retreat signify for tourism and Cancun's development in this period? What sorts of strategies were employed to solve the problems associated with the economic transformation of the country at the national and local level? and, To what extent did these particular circumstances have an influential effect on the consolidation of this destination?

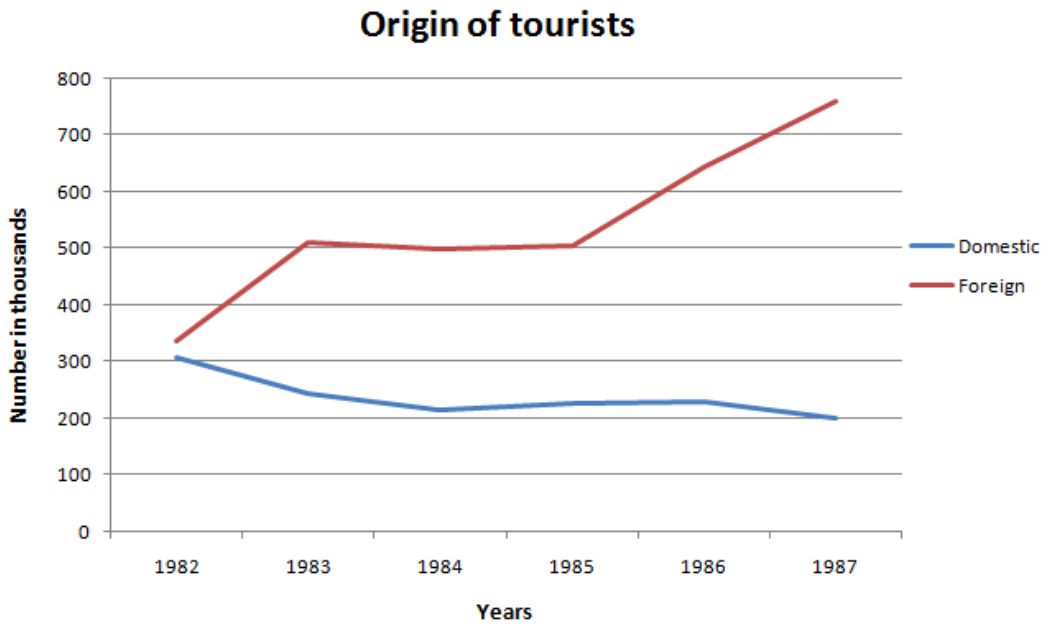
#### *7.4.1 A statistical picture of Cancun's consolidation stage*

The statistics for this historical period show that Cancun entered into a process of growth stabilisation. The former can be explained as the consequence of the effects that particular economic and political landscapes had at the national and the local level. It was previously mentioned that the growth in the "arrivals of tourists" fell for three consecutive years (1983-1985) presenting some signs of recuperation from 1986 onwards (see **Graph 7.9**). Given the difficult economic conditions experienced by Mexico during this period, it is not surprising that the arrivals of domestic tourists collapsed (see **Graph 7.10**). However, if the same graph is examined, it can be seen that the arrivals of foreign tourists maintained a stable trend during a three-year period. The statistics on "hotel occupation" and "flight arrivals" present a similar trend to the "arrivals of tourists" showing a growth stalemate during the same three years 1983, 1984, and 1985 (see **Graphs 7.11 & 7.12**). What is interesting to note from these numbers is that, contrary to the belief that the 1982's currency devaluation could have had a positive effect increasing tourism activities in Cancun, the former is not reflected in these results. It is evident, however, that a clear recuperation period occurred in the following years for these categories (1986-1987). Unlike the previous results, the statistics related to "length of stay", "hotel growth", and "foreign exchange revenue" presented a clear sustained growth (see **Graphs 7.13, 7.14, and 7.15** respectively). For example, the average "length of stay" increased from 3.9 nights in 1982 to 4.9 nights in 1987. Similarly, "hotel growth" increased from 53 hotels in 1982 to 86 in 1988. Finally, "foreign currency revenue" was expanded from 70 million dollars in 1981 to more than 400 million dollars in 1987 (see **Graph 7.15**)

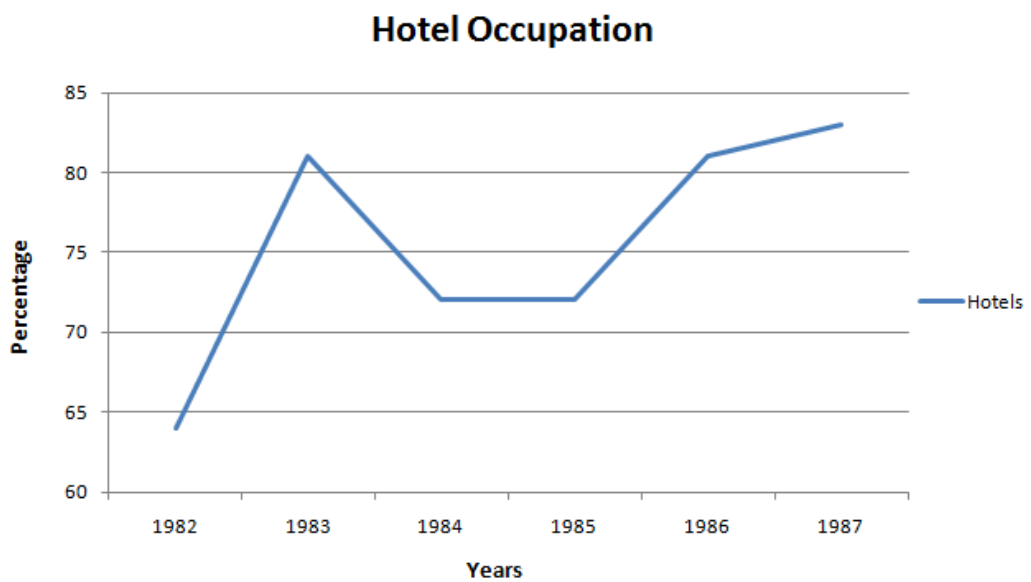
Why do these categories present a different development pattern to those of tourist and flight arrivals? One hypothesis is that the implementation of the privatisation policy might have played a decisive role in the consolidation of these figures, at least in the category of “hotel growth”. For the figures of “foreign exchange revenue”, the supposition is that the severe devaluation of the local currency might have contributed to obtaining large revenues despite the absence of growth in the arrivals of tourists for three consecutive years. The figures on the “length of stay”, in contrast, show a clear sign of consolidation during these years. Unlike the previous development stage in which the figures in this category actually decreased, the figures during this period demonstrated that Cancun was establishing a pattern of consolidation. This development stage was abruptly interrupted by the appearance of an unexpected factor at the local level that led to a phase of “reformulation”, steering the development of Cancun in a different direction.



**Graph 7.9** Tourist arrivals to Cancun, period 1982-1987.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

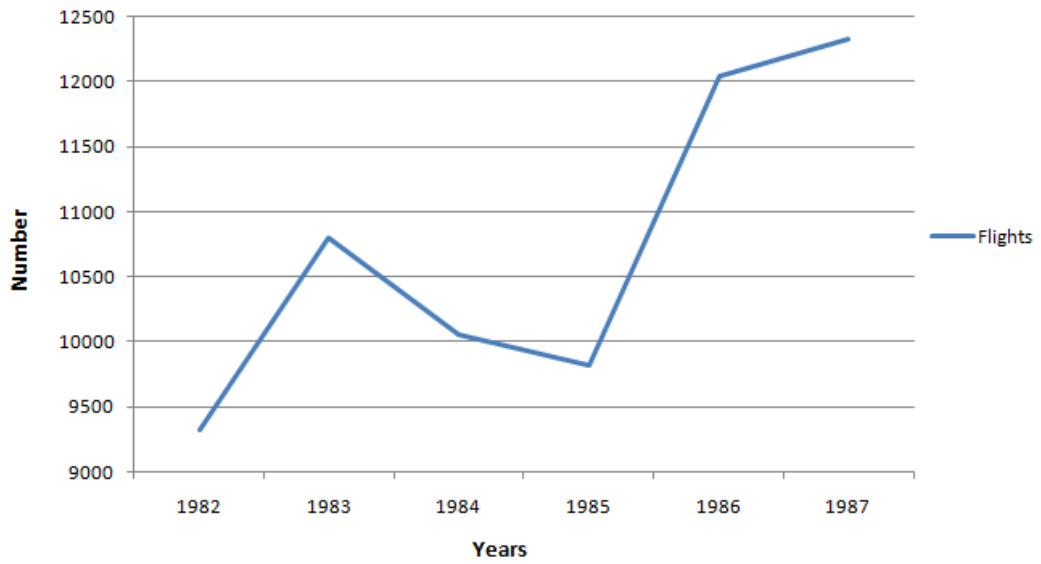


**Graph 7.10** Origin of tourists in Cancun, period 1982-1987.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



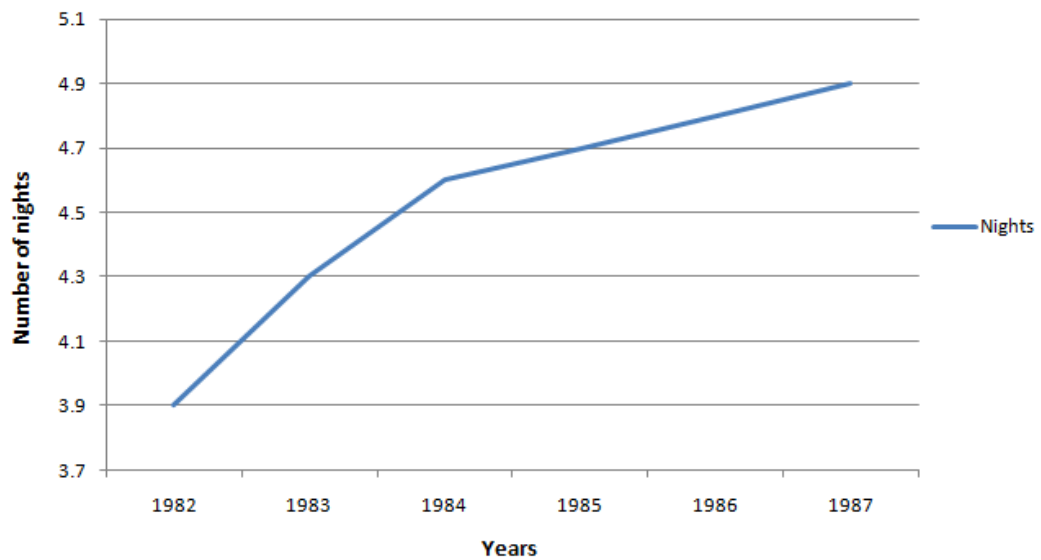
**Graph 7.11** Annual hotel occupation in Cancun, period 1982-1987.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

### Flight Arrivals

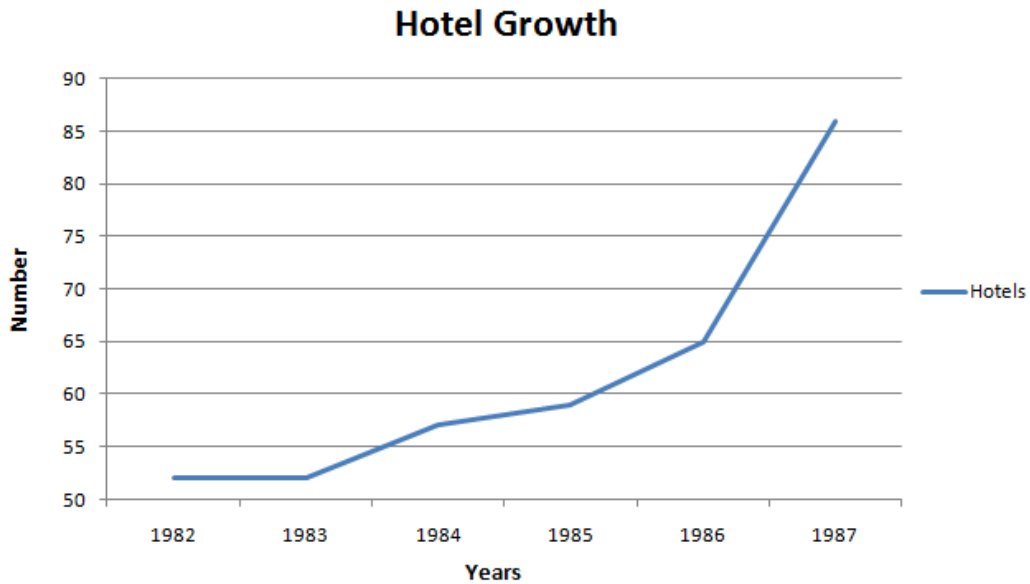


**Graph 7.12** Annual flight arrivals to Cancun, period 1982-1987.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

### Tourists length of stay

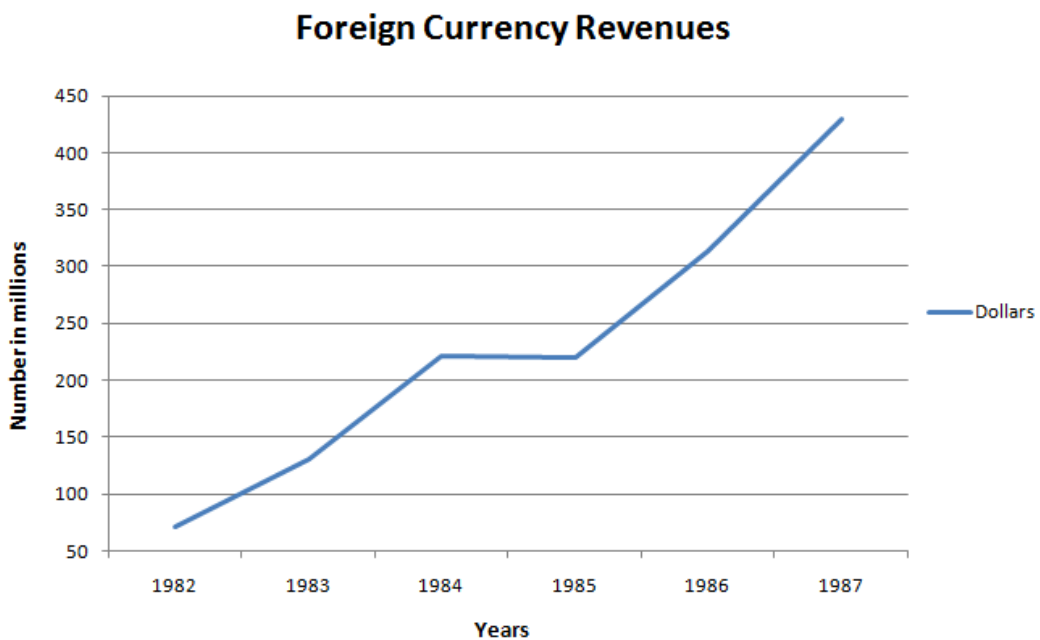


**Graph 7.13** Annual length of stay of tourists in Cancun, period 1982-1987.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.14** Annual hotel growth in Cancun, period 1982-1987.

Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.15** Foreign currency revenues in Cancun, period 1982-1987.

Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

#### *7.4.2 The new revolution of the state: 1980s economic liberalisation*

The economic crisis of 1982 produced a profound transformation in the economic, political and social landscape of Mexico. A scenario of bankruptcy led the state to implement several economic measures in order to ensure the governability of the country in the short term. According to Haber *et al* (2008: 59, 65), by 1982, public

debt was calculated at approximately 14% of the national GDP, the rate of unemployment doubled in one year, and total investment fell by 27.8%. The principal measures adopted by the state included the implementation of an austerity plan by the federal government aimed at reducing public expenditure to a minimum, the nationalisation of the banking system to prevent the flight of capital, the request of a multi billion dollar loan to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to maintain the operation of state institutions, and a progressive devaluation of the local currency in order to control inflation rates. Other complementary measures included the elimination of subsidies to some agricultural products, the elimination of the scheme of price controls, massive privatisation of state-owned companies, the termination of the majority of public trusts, and the reduction of legal barriers to imports (Cárdenas, 1996).

One of the economic stabilisation measures that had a major effect on the development of the national tourism industry during this period was the “SWAPS” policy. This scheme consisted of the acquisition of Mexico’s public debt by private entities in exchange for real estate and business benefits. The promise of the state was to duplicate the value of the investment in the form of land and fiscal incentives in a particular productive sector. According to Arnaíz and Dachari (1992), Castillo (2005), and Jiménez (1992), this conversion scheme was very successful for tourism, increasing the participation of the private sector throughout the 1980s. The confirmation of Mexico’s commitment to the process of economic liberalisation was its entrance to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1986. This political move ultimately opened the doors to foreign investment and was meant to increase export revenues. Despite the implementation of these measures, the occurrence of an 8.1 magnitude earthquake that hit Mexico in 1985 did nothing but augment the pressure on the Mexican government. The devastation of many regions of the country, especially Mexico City, jeopardised the economic stabilisation process that was under way during this period.

These adverse conditions actively contributed to reshaping the Mexican political landscape, not only in tourism-related institutions but also in the whole governmental apparatus. The introduction of the “General Law of Democratic Planning” (GLDP) in 1982 was identified as one of the main transformations reconfiguring the operational structure of the Mexican state. The GLDP proposed a new framework for



the organisation of the governmental apparatus aligning all the actions of the state (national, regional, and local) under the umbrella of a single National Development Plan (PND). The PND would reflect the main objectives pursued by the central government, establishing a particular agenda to be followed by other government branches (regional and local). In this sense, the PND (1983-1988) became the main instrument to align the political agendas of the different levels of government. The first important proposal derived from this document was to carry out a reform of the state that consisted of decentralising the responsibilities of the central government towards the regional states. It was stated:

*“This plan [PND] must be considered the main guide for the qualitative transformations that Mexico requires...the internal crisis [economic] should be seen as evidence of the vulnerability of the economic system so our main task should be to encourage a greater participation of states in the reconstruction of our country” (PND, 1983-1988: 123-124, my translation)*

In the case of the tourism sector, a National Program of Tourism 1984-1988 (PNT) emerged and was designed according to the objectives of decentralisation considered in the PND. For example, the PNT proposed the creation of six regional offices throughout the country in order to delegate SECTUR’s coordination responsibilities for tourism management. Unlike previous years where the central government assumed the main role in tourism development through FONATUR, the priority in this period was given to channel financial resources to the construction and refurbishment of hotel facilities as well as the creation of a legal framework to regulate the operation of tourism providers<sup>27</sup>. The former was interpreted as part of the liberalisation process that was under way leading the state to reduce its presence in developmental tasks. This reduction provoked the collapse of state control over decision-making in Cancun due to the incorporation of the interests and agendas of the private sector in the local arena. Despite these changes at the operational level, the governmental discourse surrounding tourism remained the same, considering it a crucial activity for the social and economic development of the country.

*“The relevance of the tourism sector in economic and social development is undeniable due to its capacity to generate foreign exchange, create employment, contribute to balance regional development, strengthen the*

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<sup>27</sup> A new Federal Law of Tourism was published in 1984, strengthening the presence of SECTUR in regulation tasks.

*national identity, and stimulate the rest of the national economic sectors” (PND, 1983-1988: 49, my translation).*

#### *7.4.3 The privatisation process in Cancun*

In the mid 1980s, Cancun enjoyed a positive reputation in the national media. These are some examples of the newspaper headlines referring to this destination on the 21st of April 1985:

*“Cancun, a centre generating employment and foreign exchange”, El Sol de México.*

*“With the success of Cancun, tourism development flourishes in the Pacific coast as well”, Opciones.*

*“The experience of Cancun encourages the construction of more CIPs destinations”, El Heraldo.*

*“Cancun in existence for 15 years, an example to follow in tourism development” El Nacional.*

*“Cancun is an example of tourism planning to the world”, La Prensa.*

*“15 years later, Cancun is a consolidated tourism destination” El Universal (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES, exp. SECTUR 2/70, my translation).*

Despite the general enthusiasm and positive perception of this destination, its growth seemed to be reaching a stabilisation point. The total number of tourists had declined for three consecutive years (1982-1985, see **Graph 7.9**) and the number of domestic tourists fell consistently during this period (see **Graph 7.10**). The first stage of Cancun’s touristic zone was already saturated leading to the second development stage. As a consequence, the expansion of tourism facilities slowed down causing a fall, in flight arrivals very similar to the fall seen in tourist numbers. In contrast, the expansion of the hotel sector continued in Cancun throughout this period. This difference might be explained by the effects of the national policy of incentives (SWAPS) in the particular case of Cancun. According to Espinosa (2004: 285), Cancun was one of the favourite places to convert Mexico’s public debt into tourism investment. A massive flood of new entrepreneurs arrived at Cancun increasing the construction of hotels and businesses related to the provision of tourism services. Big hotel chains with foreign and domestic capital such as Hilton, Melia, Oasis, Best Western, Palace Resorts, Grupo Posadas and so on, entered the local scene,

displacing some of the small local firms that had traditionally dominated the area until then (see Clancy 1999, 2001a, 2001b and Jiménez 1992, for a detailed discussion). The incorporation of more interests into the touristic zone generated a new dispute concerning the control over the local tourism development. A key informant commented about this process:

*“...The privatisation of state-tourism companies and the implementation of SWAPS in the 1980s caused a situation of anarchy in Cancun. New providers arrived increasing the costs of services without any consultation process; it was common to see land speculation and the propagation of non-considered businesses in the Master Plan... this situation created chaos here, they were literally killing the goose that laid the golden eggs” (Interview, former hotelier, April 2009, my translation).*

As part of the growth pattern expected by policy-makers in the Master Plan, the implementation of complementary projects such as the construction of a marina that included a luxury residential project (*Puerto Cancun*), and the expansion of the facilities at the local airport in order to increase its capacity to receive more flights were considered (see **Map 7.1**). None of these projects, however, could be implemented during this period. The former can be understood as the consequence of the reduction of the presence of FONATUR and the inability of the local government to carry out the CIPs policy agenda.



**Map 7.1** Complementary projects in Cancun.  
Source: FONATUR (2006: 10).

Parallel to the development in the touristic zone, the urban zone maintained its pattern of uncontrolled growth, leading to the sharpening of the existing structural problems in the city. The poor provision of public services and the evident disparities in the landscape between FONATUR's urban zone and the unregulated zone generated an agenda in the local society to provide solutions to these problems. Some

civil organisations, such as the architects association, engineers union, taxi-drivers union, construction workers union carried out a public consultation for the design of the first Plan of Urban Development in 1985. The outcome of this exercise was a document with a series of recommendations aimed at regulating the future development of the city as well as the inclusion of environmental conservation goals (*Archivo ACADEMIA, exp. Plan Director de Desarrollo Urbano, 1985, s/n*). Despite the great organisation shown by these local stakeholders, this plan was barely considered by the local government (Interview, local entrepreneur, April 2009). The objectives of the municipal administrations were focused, rather, on the expansion of the powers of the municipality in tourism development tasks to obtain larger economic benefits. It was declared:

*“Tourism activity is the axis that generates our progress, the recent currency devaluation [1982] made Cancun more competitive in the international tourism market...we were progressively moving away from this market and Cancun started to experience the symptoms of economic recession...it is important to concentrate our efforts on restructuring of the municipality’s role in tourism development to increase the economic benefits derived from tourism for the wellbeing of the community” (Plan Municipal de Desarrollo, 1981-1984: 52, my translation).*

The strategy to promote greater participation of the local government in tourism development tasks advanced through the creation of the “Council for the Protection of Local Tourism Development” (CPLTD) in 1986. The main objective of this new sub-branch of the municipal government was to “balance the interests between tourism-related actors to ensure harmonious development in Cancun” (*Tres años de crecimiento y desarrollo, 1984-1987: 60*). The creation of this institution was perceived as a clear strategy of the municipality to acquire a more favourable position in the political arena to negotiate with the new actors. The reduction of FONATUR’s powers helped in this process, leading to the expansion of the influence of the municipality in tourism development affairs. Although the appearance of the CPLTD seemed favourable to effectively regulate tourism development in Cancun, it was perceived by the private sector as a “useless office with a weak political operation surrounded by corrupt practices” (Interview, former hotelier, May 2009)<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> It is important to mention that the creation of government branches such as the CPLTD represented a new regulatory framework that might have caused great discontent among the different private

#### 7.4.4 Regaining spaces

The election of Miguel De la Madrid as president of Mexico in 1982 marked the return of the political network that had controlled national tourism development in the late 1960s until mid 1970s. The bureaucrats that were formerly working in tourism offices were reincorporated into the public service in strategic positions of the Tourism Ministry and FONATUR. The appointment of Antonio Enriquez Savignac as Tourism Minister played a decisive role in the reconstruction of this network. As a head of SECTUR, Enriquez was able to establish a cooperation framework between the offices in charge of tourism affairs (FONATUR-SECTUR-CNT). The former was possible due to the positioning of close collaborators in these offices, ensuring a political alignment around Enriquez's decisions. However, the adverse economic conditions of the country largely constrained decision-making in this sector due to the reduction of its operational budget. Unlike the past where the financial support from the state for tourism was generous, this period was characterised by a massive reduction in state-owned tourism companies as well as any financial burden. Thus, companies such as *Operadora Nacional Hotelera*, *Mexicana de Aviación*, *Aeromexico*, several hotels and restaurants, public trusts and so on (see Jiménez, 1992: 242-245 for a greater detail) were sold to private groups in line with the objectives of the economic liberalisation agenda. The main assignment of Enriquez and colleagues was thus to reshape the role of the state in the tourism sector to resolve the difficulties posed by the economic circumstances during these years.

Despite the operational and budget constraints, the strategy employed by SECTUR to maintain the presence of the state in tourism consisted of expanding its regulatory powers. Through the formulation of a new Tourism Federal Law (LFT) in 1984, SECTUR aimed to compensate the reduction of the presence of the state in tourism development tasks. The LFT considered five areas of action: tourism planning, tourism promotion, conservation of tourism resources, protection of tourists, and the regulation and control of tourism services (SECTUR, 2001b: 11). It was stated that LFT would help to improve the quality of tourism services due to the scheme of high economic sanctions for non-compliance considered within it. Likewise, it was

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stakeholders. Considering the former, the quote provided should be interpreted taking into consideration the vision and interests of this actor.

claimed that the LFT would promote greater efficiency and coordination between the state and the private sector in tourism. However, this measure was perceived negatively by the private sector arguing that it was intrusive and restrictive by the development of the tourism industry. Three headlines of national newspapers reflected the former:

*“The new LFT is erratic and ambiguous according to the National Chamber of the Restaurant Industry” El Sol de México, 21st February 1984, my translation.*

*“The LFT is clearly an abuse of the state’s power” El Herald, 2nd March 1984, my translation.*

*“Hoteliers reject the control over accommodation charges and prices in tourism services as proposed by the LFT” El Universal, 12th March 1984, my translation.*

The introduction of LFT seemed to be creating a negative environment for the relationships between the state and the private sector. The majority of tourism-related businesses affected by this new law implemented legal measures (mainly appeals) to prevent its application. This conflict escalated to the point of questioning more severely the role exercised by SECTUR as the principal coordinator of the tourism sector. For example, SECTUR was criticised for the lack of promotion in other tourism markets such as Europe, South-America, and Japan (Excelsior, 3th November 1985), the lack of actions to ease the negative economic effects of the 1985 earthquake on the tourism industry (Excelsior, 5th October 1985), the implementation of a tax policy for Mexicans who travelled abroad (Excelsior, 24th October 1985), and the lack of attention given to *Ixtapa* needing a better promotional campaign (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES, exp. SECTUR 3/14). There is no doubt that a greater presence of the private sector in tourism politics derived from the liberalisation process contributed to diminishing the negotiation powers of SECTUR blocking the channels of cooperation. Unlike the past where the state seemed to possess a great room for manoeuvre, the new rules in the tourism arena were now favouring the interests of other actors.

Meanwhile at the local level, the municipal government continued the expansion of its powers in urban and tourism development. The political network of Quintana Roo had effectively colonised positions in the municipal government, reducing

FONATUR’s decision-making powers in Cancun. The incorporation of programs such as “*Nuevos Horizontes*” (land regularisation and housing provision) in the political agenda generated a base of social support that allowed more territorial control by the municipality. This program had a profound effect on the local policy process transforming the original planning scheme of the CIPs. The regional government effectively negotiated with FONATUR the concession of land and the budget for this project, benefiting a large sector of the population that lived in illegal settlements (Interview, former municipality official, May 2009). As the municipality presence was expanded through these types of actions, FONATUR gradually lost decision-making powers in the urban zone, handing over the total administration of the urban development to the municipality in the mid 1980s (Cancunlahistoria.org, 2007).

Period/level	National	Regional	Local
1982-1987	Miguel De la Madrid (Technocrats)	Pedro Joaquín Coldwell 1981-1987 (Quintana Roo’s political network)	José Irabien 1981-1984 (Quintana Roo’s political network)
			Joaquín González (Quintana Roo’s political network) 1984- 1987

**Table 7.2** Political organisation, period 1982-1987.

Source: Own elaboration.

### 7.5 The phase of reformulation (1988-1999)

It is proposed by the TALC model that after a “consolidation” development stage, a destination would normally follow an evolutionary path towards a “stagnation” phase (see **Figure 7.1**). The destination begins to present some signs of exhaustion reflected in a reduction in tourist arrivals and excessive pressure on its carrying capacity (Butler, 1980). However, it has to be said that not all destinations present this development pattern due to a number of circumstances affecting their evolution. It is argued here that Cancun is one of these cases that developed in an atypical way. Instead of presenting a “stagnation” phase, Cancun entered into a process of “reformulation” that was driven by the presence of an unexpected factor within its development: the destructive force of Hurricane Gilbert in 1988. This natural event

signified a watershed in Cancun's development, revealing a vulnerable side to this destination that was clearly unprepared to face a challenge of this magnitude. The enormous devastation left by this hurricane abruptly stopped tourism activities, leading to the reformulation of the local policy process. A reassessment of the development model followed until then was carried out mainly by actors related to the private sector in order to identify the new conditions in the tourism market. Although it was clear that this scenario of decline was not the result of a progressive evolutionary process, it became crucial in influencing decision-making activities in the years to come.

According to Agarwal (2006: 225) a "reformulation" stage -or "reinvention" as she called it- should be understood as "a process of exit and re-entry, including a rejection of the destination's original tourism paradigm and the creation of new tourism models, appealing to alternative markets". In this sense, a number of decisions were made in Cancun after Gilbert with the objective of restructuring the orientation of the destination leading to a new development cycle. Previous to Gilbert, the form of tourism development proposed in the CIPs policy was characterised by the construction of hotels and tourism facilities of low height seeking to attract international tourists with a high economic profile. However, the new circumstances led local hoteliers to transform this vision adopting different development and commercialisation schemes, such as domestic tourism, time-share, all-inclusive, and real estate development (Clancy, 1999; Hiernaux-Nicolas, 2003; Jiménez, 1992; Interview, Cancun Hotelier, May 2009). These new forms of development aimed to give Cancun a different face and a new growth impulse in the following years, yet the concurrence of other internal and external factors negatively affected these plans, e.g. the American economic recession of the 1990s, the Gulf War, a new economic crisis in Mexico (1994), and the appearance of new destinations competing directly with Cancun. This "reformulation" period, in the end, modified the local policy process, giving Cancun a completely new direction.

#### *7.5.1 A statistical picture of Cancun's reformulation stage*

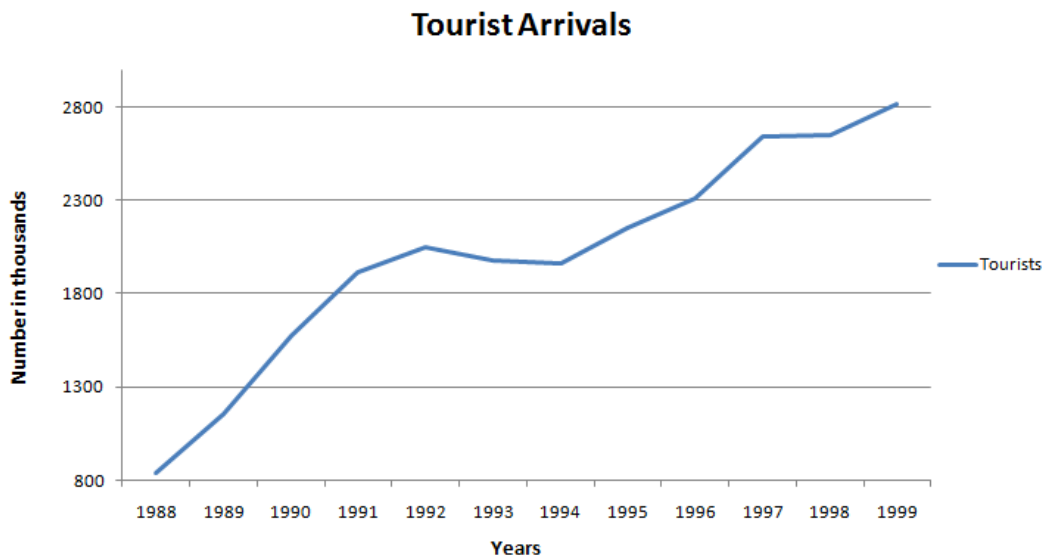
It was argued in this section that Cancun entered into a development stage of "reformulation" as a result of the negative effects caused by Hurricane Gilbert in 1988. A number of commercial strategies were implemented during this period



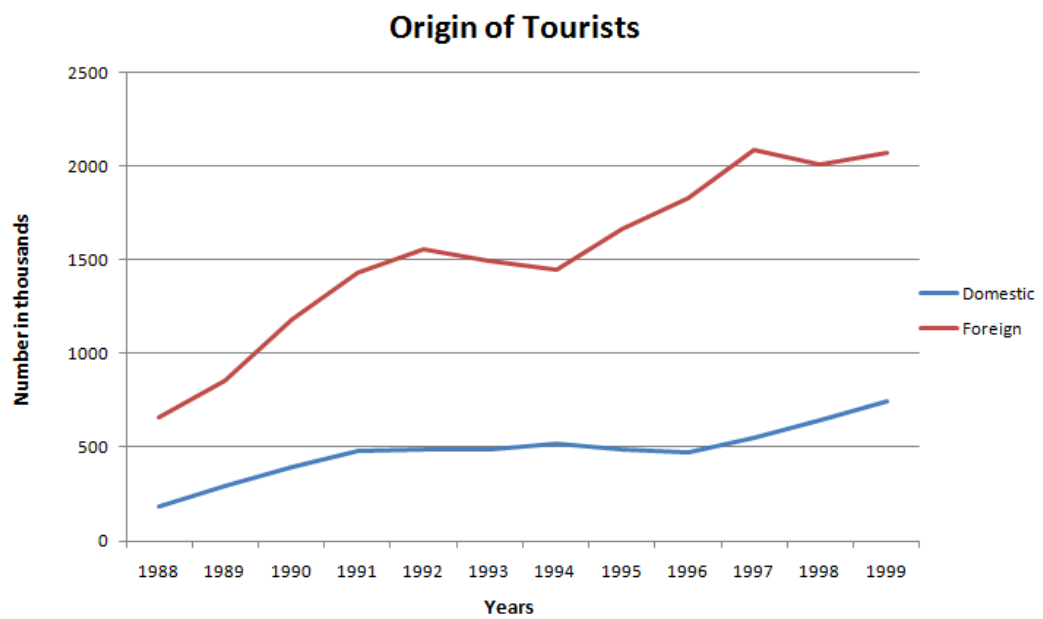
aimed to maintain the growth achieved by this destination until then. The numbers of the tourists' arrivals presented, in general terms, a positive growth trend with Cancun receiving almost one million visitors in 1988 and reaching almost three million in 1999 (see **Graph 7.16**). It has to be noted, however, that two negative periods were identified in this category: the first one from 1992 until 1994, and the second covering a one-year period (1997-1998). Cancun depended in great measure on the arrival of international tourists that clearly surpassed the number of domestic visitors (see **Graph 7.17**). However, this graph also shows that despite the adverse social and economic conditions prevailing during this historical period, domestic tourism seemed to show some signs of recuperation. The category of flight arrivals (see **Graph 7.18**) shows a trend very similar to "tourist arrivals", portraying 1994 (economic crisis) as a decisive year for the destination recovering the growth momentum. Unlike the results obtained in previous categories, the statistics related to "foreign currency" revenue showed a negative trend in a different period within the analysed time-frame (see **Graph 7.19**). While previous graphs present a contraction in the early 1990s, this category presents a fall at the end of this period (1997-1998). Despite the former, it can be said that this category generally obtained positive outcomes.

In contrast, statistics on "hotel growth", "hotel occupation", and "tourist length of stay" presented a more unstable pattern (see **Graphs 7.20, 7.21, and 7.22** respectively). The numbers in the category corresponding to "hotel growth" presented a negative trend in the early 1990s (1990, 1991, and 1992), showing a modest growth until 1997, but experiencing an important boost in the last two years (1998-1999). The graph highlighting "hotel occupation" shows consistent growth until 1992 and a second phase of recuperation from 1994 until 1997. Yet, two dramatic falls can be seen during six years within this period (1992-1994 and 1997-1999). Finally, the category corresponding to the "length of stay" presented an even more unstable pattern. The graph describes important growth for a period of two years but the numbers dramatically fell in subsequent years (1990-1991) losing 0.4 points. After 1992, a recuperation trend can be seen until 1995 reaching a stabilisation point for two more years (1995-1996). The final part of the graph portrays an additional fall and another stabilisation point situating the statistics on an

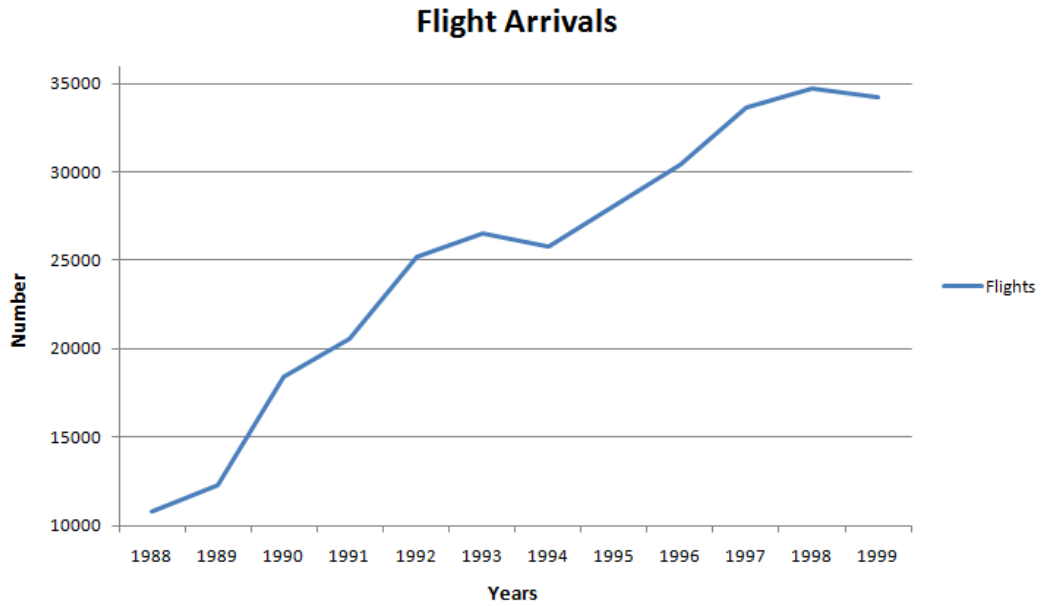
average of five nights per tourist as it appeared at the beginning of the period analysed.



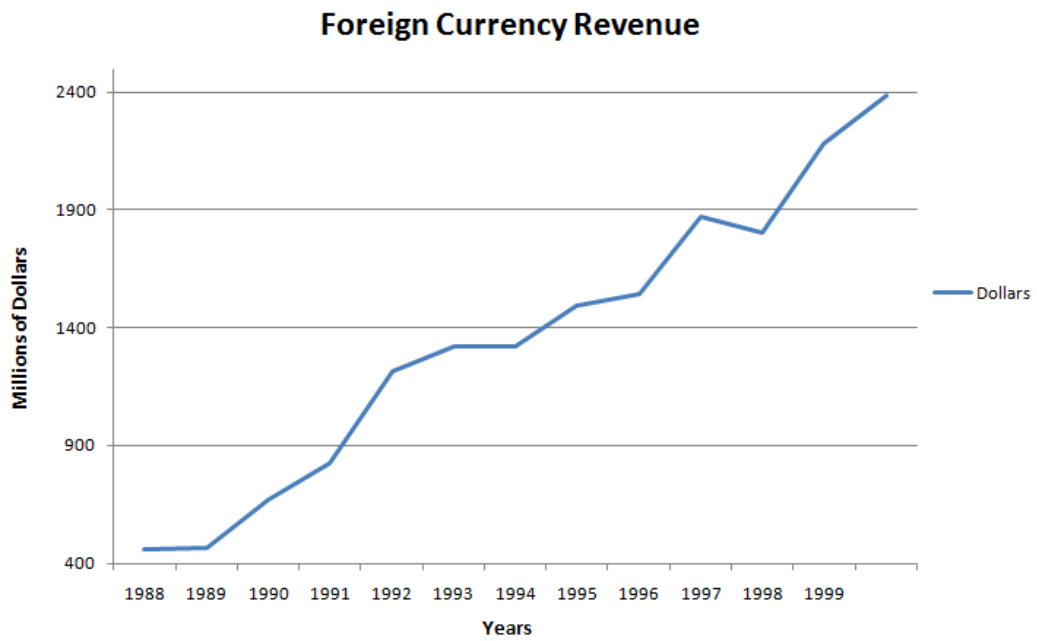
**Graph 7.16** Tourist arrivals to Cancun, period 1988-1999.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.17** Origin of tourists to Cancun, period 1988-1999.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

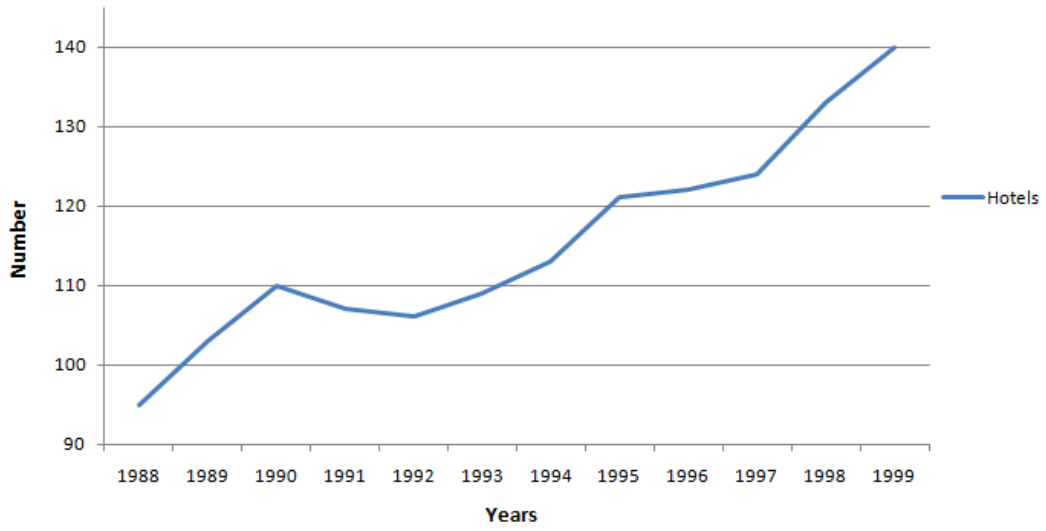


**Graph 7.18** Flight arrivals to Cancun, period 1988-1999.  
 Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



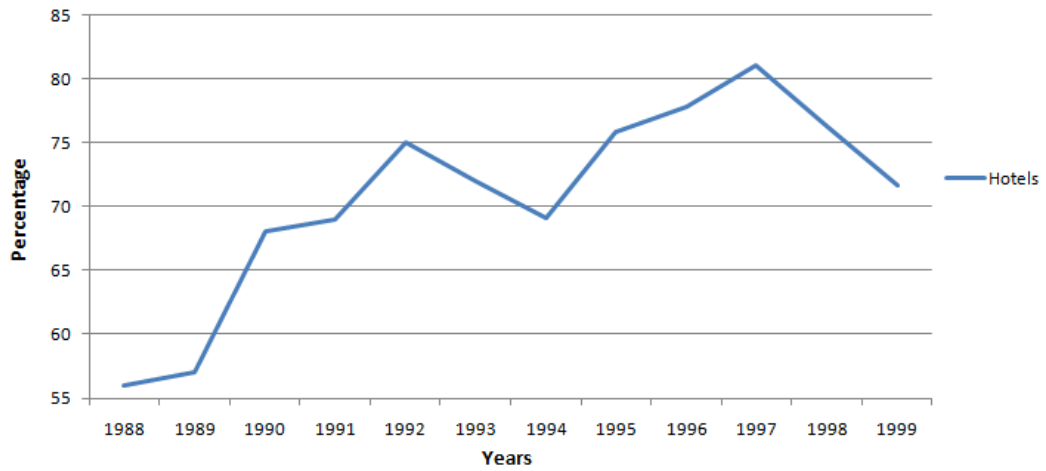
**Graph 7.19** Foreign exchange revenues in Cancun, period 1988-1999.  
 Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

### Hotel Growth

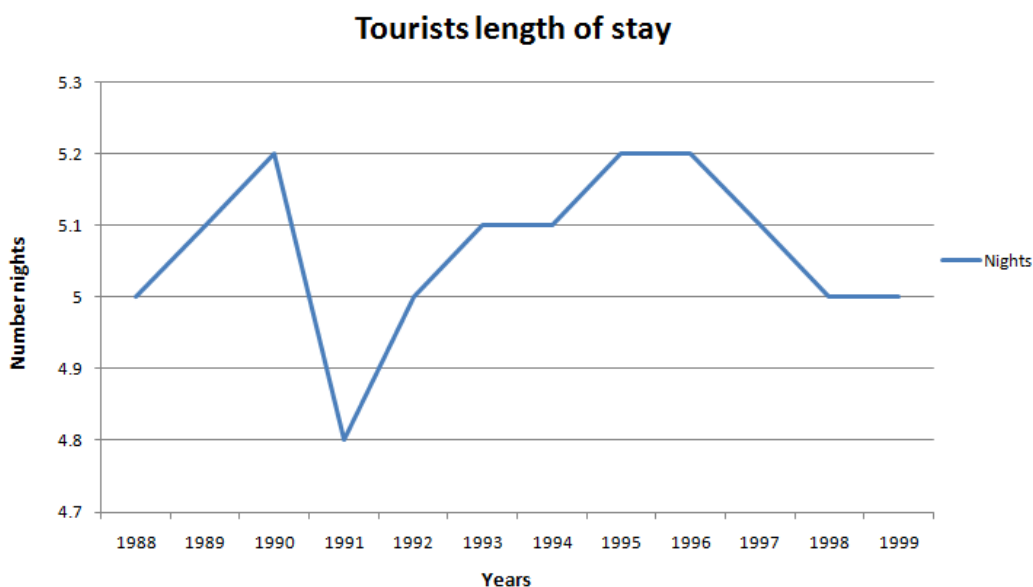


**Graph 7.20** Hotel growth in Cancun, period 1988-1999.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

### Hotel Occupation



**Graph 7.21** Hotel occupation in Cancun, period 1988-1999.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.22** Tourist’s length of stay in Cancun, period 1988-1999.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

### 7.5.2 Discourses of modernisation and sustainability

At the end of the 1980s, the negative effects of the 1982 economic crisis seemed to be mainly under control in Mexico. The main concern of the Mexican government after the 1988 presidential election was acquiring the necessary legitimacy to govern in the following years. The alleged corrupt practices in the presidential election that prevented the political opposition from acceding presidential power, created an unstable political environment that marked a point of no-return in the process of erosion of the hegemonic political system under the PRI party (see Middlebrook, 2004 for a detailed discussion). The political agenda of President Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) included the consolidation of economic neoliberal measures that were assisted by the creation of a particular discourse based on “modernisation” objectives. It was stated:

*“The strategy of **modernisation** should be understood as the initiative of our generation to defend and project our identity to the future and, in this way, achieve our national goals...therefore, the transformations considered by this **modernisation** effort will be nationalist and popular in nature” (PND, 1989-1994: 13, my translation, my emphasis in bold).*

Among the most emblematic actions of Salinas’ administration in the consolidation of this agenda were Mexico’s entrance into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada in 1994, as well as the

adoption of an environmental agenda that led to the transformation of environmental (Hogenboom, 1998) and tourism policy in Mexico. The decentralisation process initiated in the previous administration continued, putting special emphasis on the promotion of a greater participation of regional and municipal governments in developmental tasks. These intentions were formalised in the “National Agreement for Development” (CUD), claiming that it represented “a fundamental legal, administrative, planning, and financing instrument to ensure adequate regional planning” (PND, 1989-1994: 16). Although this strategy seemed to encourage a more autonomous governance framework, it was clear that the intentions of the central government were not only to transfer decision-making powers to the regions but also to reassign the financial burdens. The former was officially reflected in several reforms carried out to articles 115-122 of the Mexican Constitution in 1993<sup>29</sup>.

Following the discursive trend of “modernisation” during this period, tourism affairs were addressed accordingly, incorporating the term into the traditional tourism discourse. It was stated:

*“This sector [tourism] requires the **modernisation** of the service and impulse to construct the necessary infrastructure...tourism is the fastest and most viable **development option** for some regions of the country...the national tourism program pays special attention to the definition of a strategy that can **simplify the regulations** in this sector...this program reassesses the importance of the ecological and cultural resources little exploited by tourism until now” (Programa Nacional de Turismo, 1991-1994: 15-16, my translation, my emphasis in bold).*

The use of the term “modernisation” within this discourse is interpreted here as synonymous of deregulation and privatisation. A number of regional tourism programs (Colonial Cities, Mayan World, North Border and so on) as well as a new Federal Tourism Law (1992) were proposed to reinforce the objectives considered in the neoliberal agenda embraced by President Salinas. Nevertheless, the social, economic and political circumstances in the following presidential administration (1994-2000) changed completely, leading to the implementation of some measures to continue this process. Among the events that had a greater significance during this period were the assassination of PRI’s presidential candidate, a new economic crisis

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<sup>29</sup> These articles are related to the main functions and attributions of the states and municipalities (*Título Quinto, Folios 8289-8296*).

(Tequila effect), and the uprising of the Zapatista's social movement in 1994. Thus, the attention of Zedillo's administration was mainly focused on restoring the economic conditions of the country and resolving the issues related to the civil unrest. The PND (1995-2000) included these objectives, establishing specific austerity measures aimed at stabilising the national economy as well as a political plan to restore the conditions of peace in the southern part of Mexico.

Likewise, the PND proposed the consolidation of the environmental agenda initiated by the previous administration, incorporating the term "sustainable development" into the political discourse. Given the difficult social and economic conditions of this period, tourism was not a priority area for the central government. Despite the former, a new global agenda in tourism emerged, aiming to support the development of alternative forms of development away from the traditional "sun, sand, and sea" model (BM-SECTUR, 2005: 21). Thus, influential actors in the international tourism arena such as the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the World Bank, UNESCO, among many others, were constructing and reproducing a discourse where sustainability was portrayed as the new development path (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). Mexico's government reacted through SECTUR, incorporating this global discourse at the local level through the *Programa de Desarrollo del Sector Turismo* 1995-2000. It was stated:

*"The priority of tourism is to take advantage of our natural resources in a sustainable way incorporating these objectives into the traditional product of beach and sun as well as our valuable cultural and historical heritage" (ibid: 2; my translation).*

The discursive strategy was complemented with other actions such as the creation of the National Council of Tourism Promotion (CNPT) during this period. This new institution had the main objective of organising promotional campaigns abroad to attract a larger number of tourists and related revenues to the country (SECTUR, 2001b: 16). The private sector identified an opportunity window in the activism of the state, leading different associations related to the tourism industry such as hotels, developers, transport, travel agencies, car rental and so on to the creation of a new organisation in 1999 (the National Council of Tourism Businesses, CNET) in order to acquire a better representation in the state's tourism-related decisions. Thus, the CNET emerged as a lobbying strategy for the elaboration and implementation of national plans and regional programs related to the tourism sector (*Archivo*

*Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. CNET 1999, 1/4*). This new scenario of representation helped to reconfigure the relationships between the state and the private sector, strengthening the presence of the latter in the decisions adopted by the state in the following years such as the elaboration of the PNT 2001-2006.

### 7.5.3 The “all-exclusive” strategy

After Hurricane Gilbert in 1988, tourism-related activities ceased abruptly as both the urban and touristic zones were severely damaged. This natural event revealed the main managerial, organisational, and financial weaknesses in the local tourism industry and the municipal government. All the efforts -state and private- were concentrated on restoring the conditions for continuing the operation of Cancun as tourism destination. The immediate actions adopted to re-launch this destination were the creation of a special fund for reconstruction, and an extensive promotional campaign abroad. The organisation of world events in Cancun in 1989, such as Miss Universe and the annual congress of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), helped Cancun to recuperate the flow of tourists in the short-term.

Despite some signs of recovery in the early 1990s, the inability of the municipal government to adopt a leadership role in the reformulation of the local policy process was evident. This role was adopted, instead, by the private sector through a greater presence in the local arena. The former was more evident in the hotel sector, where new development and organisational opportunities flourished (Interview, Cancun’s hotelier, April 2009). The construction of small-dimension hotels, for instance, was replaced by hotels of greater dimensions owned by new hotel chains and mainly built with foreign capital. These new actors contributed to the implantation of a particular form of tourism development based on an “all-inclusive” model in the early 1990s that had profound economic and social repercussions in Cancun. This form of development signified the proliferation of enclave-like resorts, concentrating the offer and supply of tourism services and its related revenues. This produced a negative economic effect as the participation of several local tourism-related businesses was reduced. A key informant commented in this regard:

*“The introduction of the “all-inclusive” model in Cancun mainly by Spanish, German, and Italian hotel chains created a negative scenario for the local community that depended until then on tourism activities, providing alternative services such as food, transport, commercial activities, and so on.*



*This new model came to break the productive chain relegating local participation to the scraps left by these big tourism players. Several businesses, mainly in the town, went bankrupt and the local economy was clearly damaged...” (Interview, former hotelier, April 2009, my translation).*

Although this form of tourism development was not new in the world (e.g. Club Med in the 1970s), it gained more prominence during the 1990s in coastal destinations such as Cancun (Freitag, 1994; Hiernaux-Nicolas, 2003; Matarrita-Cascante, 2010). The adoption of the model of “all-inclusive” helped to modify the tourist profile considered in the CIPs policy, supporting development forms more related to mass tourism. Unlike the past where the main goal was to attract tourists with a high economic profile, the interest from private actors this time was focused on increasing tourist numbers regardless of their economic profile or potential expenditure within the destination. Thus, although the number of tourists may have increased during this period (see **Graph 7.16**), the absolute revenues from tourism-related activities were not growing at the same rate. Likewise, the increase of commercialisation forms such as “time-share” also contributed to modifying the development pattern envisioned within the CIPs policy. The time-share model privileged the construction of more hotel rooms contributing, seemingly, to extending the length of stay of visitors as well as to increasing the numbers of returning tourists. However, this model was unable to guarantee greater economic benefits for the local community since this type of development required a great investment for the provision of infrastructure and public services, whereas the use of tourism facilities and related services was presumed to be minimal (Interview, Municipality official, May 2009).

The progressive change in Cancun’s development pattern did not provoke a strong reaction from neither the central or the local government. Although the discourse of the local government emphasised the need to increase local control over tourism and urban development, this was not reflected in specific actions throughout the 1990s. The Municipal Development Plans (PMD) 1987-1990, 1990-1993, 1993-1996, and 1996-1999 systematically reproduced the message of the municipality being interested in participating more actively in decision-making and planning tasks. However, the political discourse was focused instead on denouncing the lack of political will from the central administration to provide more legal tools to effectively expand the municipality’s room for manoeuvre (PMD, 1987-1991: 56; PMD, 1996-1999: 13). Thus, the actions of the municipality were oriented to

exercise its *de facto* powers in decisions related to Cancun's development such as the modification of the original development Master Plan. Different municipal administrations progressively dismantled the planning scheme considered by the CIPs policy in both, the urban and the touristic zones. New constructions were allowed in areas where tourism development was not considered and ecological reserves were reduced due to the rapid rate of growth and urban development under consent of the municipality. Although the political discourse at the national and local levels stressed the importance of the objectives of the sustainability agenda, the urban and tourism developers encountered a very relaxed application of existent ecological and development regulations with bribes considered the main mechanism for the successful implementation of their business plans (Interview, civil association representative, April 2009). The great contempt shown by both local government officials and developers, towards the local development plans harmed not only the municipality's moral authority to enforce the law, but also the original image of Cancun as a fully-planned destination. There seemed to be one objective during this historical period: to employ the necessary means to get rid of the legal "straight-jacket" and continue Cancun's growth irrespective of the economic, social, political and environmental consequences in the short and medium term. The main implications for the local policy process were reflected in the abandonment of the development framework considered by the CIPs, progressively eroding the mechanisms of control from the state at different levels.

*"...It is clear that the original Master Plan is no longer viable given the pace of growth of tourism and the evident deficit in infrastructure...if we don't take action now, the risk for the local economy is very high and Cancun will fall as other destinations did such as the case of Acapulco" (Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES, exp, COPLADES, Plan Regional del Caribe Mexicano, 1999, 1; my translation).*

#### *7.5.4 A quest for direction and a local truce*

After the completion of his period as Tourism Minister of Mexico (1982-1989), Antonio Enriquez Savignac was elected as the new General Secretary of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 1989. This event clearly extended Mexico's representation in the international tourism arena as Enriquez embarked on the task of promoting Mexico's achievements in tourism planning. Cancun was portrayed by Enriquez in official speeches as the best example of a successful state strategy that

had to be replicated in other countries with similar developmental needs. In his own words, Cancun meant “the triumph of a vision of the Mexican state, identifying the development of this economic sector as crucial for national benefit and that of the people living in the local community” (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES* exp. SECTUR 1/52). However, his role as UNWTO’s general secretary went beyond these promotional tasks as he was the actor responsible for spreading a global discourse based on the promotion of ‘greener’ forms of tourism development during his administration (1989-1996). The importance for countries to embrace alternative forms of tourism development away from the traditional ones embedded in a mass tourism ideology was stressed. These new development forms that included ecotourism, rural tourism, alternative tourism, pro-poor tourism, and so on gained sufficient political currency through the reproduction of this discourse. The development and specialisation of particular market segments closer to the goals of environmental protection was thus encouraged in nations such as Mexico and the reproduction of the local discourse on sustainable development was reinforced (Hiernaux-Nicolas, 2003).

Due to the reduction of the presence of the state in tourism development tasks, tourism offices were not seen anymore by Mexican bureaucrats as political plunder but as a temporal refuge in their political careers. The successive changes of directors in SECTUR (five different ministers during this period) and FONATUR’s offices (unrecorded) contributed to the creation of an environment of uncertainty in the state’s decision-making in the tourism sector. The accumulated expertise in tourism planning and policy-making was progressively crumbled by different administrations appointing inexperienced and corrupt politicians in crucial positions within tourism offices (Several interviews with former FONATUR and SECTUR officials, November, December, 2008, January, and February 2009). The inability to understand the functioning of this sector as well as the interest to build personal fortunes led several politicians to implement some actions that were considered suspicious and controversial at the time. For example, the original objectives considered in the Master plans of *Huatulco* and *Los Cabos* were modified without any local consultation process, favouring the expansion of the real estate industry in these tourism zones (Interview, former Banco de Mexico official, November 2008). Another example was found in the proposal to reform the legal framework to allow

gambling activities within the CIPs destinations in 1995<sup>30</sup> (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, colección AES exp. SECTUR 1995, 1/52*). The role of tourism offices was thus redefined, circumscribing their participation to the support of the growth of the hotel sector and consultancy work in the elaboration of tourism projects in several parts of the Mexican territory.

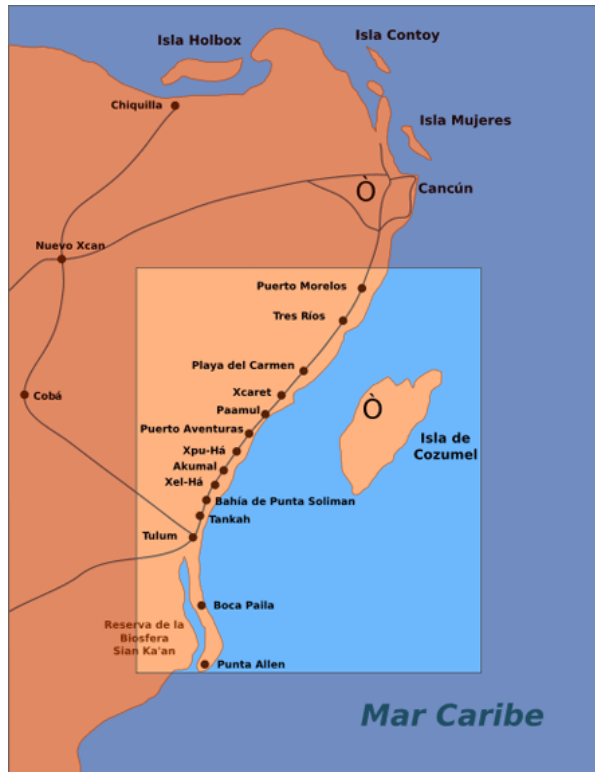
Despite the former, FONATUR regained presence and decision-making influence in Cancun in the mid-1990s. Due to the total absorption of the financial burden of the urban zone and a progressive reduction in the subsidies from the central government, the municipality's budget was stretched to the limit. This situation led different municipal administrations to reconsider the historical strategy of confrontation with FONATUR, adopting a more friendly approach. The former was reflected in the following quote: "All the social and economic achievements in Cancun must be understood as the outcome of a fruitful and longstanding cooperation relationship maintained between the municipality and FONATUR over time" (PMD, 1993-1996: 21). However, as the evidence presented in this research suggests, this statement did not reflect the historical conflictive nature of their relationship. The question that arises is: what was the interest of the municipality in adopting a different posture and discourse? An interviewee commented in this regard that the main interest of several municipal administrations during this period was to reactivate the flow of financial funds from the central government through FONATUR to this destination (Interview, FONATUR's official, May 2009). A scenario of reconciliation between these actors was sought, becoming a reality once Rafael Lara was elected as municipal governor (1996-1999). This event was crucial for the configuration of a new relationship as Lara became the main factor in the construction of the necessary cooperation bridges. He had worked for FONATUR during the implementation phase of Cancun and had maintained his political and social networks throughout this time. Considering the former, FONATUR showed its willingness to again take over local tourism development projects such as "*Puerto Cancun*", "*Malecón Cancun*", and "*San Buena Aventura*" that had been handed over to the municipality in previous years. Thus, an environment of institutional cooperation flourished at the local level in the late 1990s not only to finance tourism development projects but also to co-finance urban

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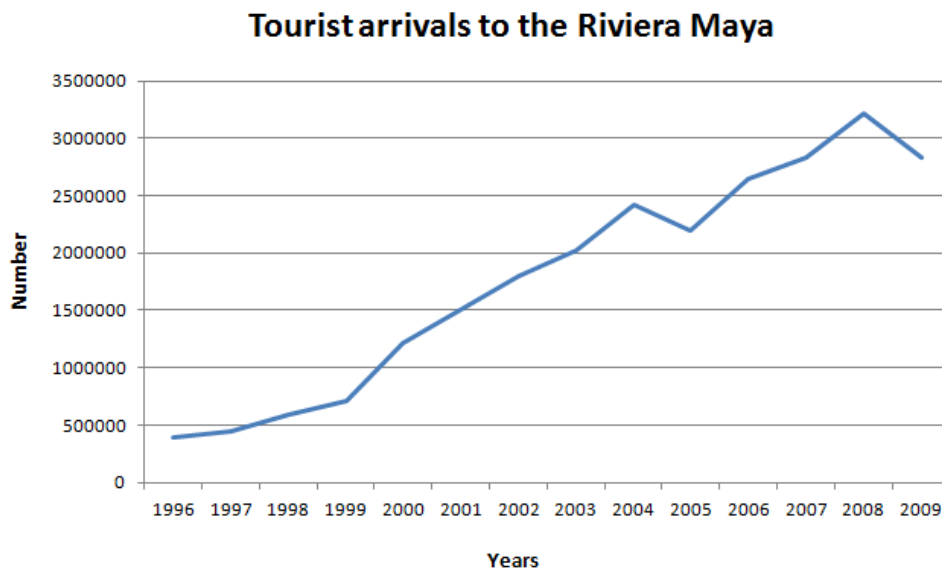
<sup>30</sup> This proposal would be accepted until 2004 (DOF, 2004 17/09/2004).

projects such as the *Kabah* Public Park (Interview, civil organisation representative, March 2009).

Nevertheless, the explosive and uncontrolled growth of the tourism corridor that is now known as the “Riviera Maya” (Municipality of *Solidaridad*) constituted a major source of conflict for Cancun during this period (see **Map 7.2**). The lack of a planning scheme for the construction of tourism facilities in this 120km area led to a reconfiguration of the territory dominated by the interests of new actors. The minimal presence of the state in this process of tourism development was reflected in the proliferation of giant resorts throughout this corridor flagrantly contravening most of the essential development and environmental regional regulations (*Archivo Universidad del Caribe, Colección AES exp. Cancun 2001-2002, 8/4*). In a relatively short period of time (less than 10 years) the Riviera Maya became the greatest zone of tourism development in Mexico (see **Graph 7.23**). The immediate effect of the former was a progressive diversion of the tourism flows towards this new development. Cancun’s growth decelerated, as it was unable to compete with the Riviera Maya’s development that centred its promotional strategy on making explicit the difference between its tourism product and Cancun. Thus, big tourism hotel chains such as the Barceló, Riu, Iberostar, Blue Bay, Omni, Occidental, and so on acquired greater territorial control not only over the pace of growth of tourism facilities, but also the flow of tourists, and the related revenues (Interview, Municipality official, May 2009). Given its geographical constraints, Cancun had to witness how new investors preferred to invest their capital in the Riviera Maya because Cancun was seen as a destination “out-of-fashion”.



**Map 7.2** Geographical location of the Riviera Maya.  
 Source: [www.turismo-maya.com](http://www.turismo-maya.com) retrieved 29 August 2011.



**Graph 7.23** Tourist arrivals to the Riviera Maya.  
 Source: Fideicomiso para la Promoción Turística de la Riviera Maya (2010).

Period/level	National	Regional	Local
1988-1994	Carlos Salinas de Gortari (Technocrats)	Miguel Borge Martín 1987-1993 (Quintana Roo's political network)	José González 1987-1990 (Quintana Roo's political network)
			Mario Villanueva 1990-1992 (Quintana Roo's political network)
			Arturo Contreras 1992-1993 (National PRI)
			Carlos Cardín 1993-1995 (FONATUR-Quintana Roo's political network)
1994-2000	Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León (Technocrats)	Mario Villanueva 1993-1999 (Quintana Roo's political network)	Edmundo Fernández 1995-1996 (Local PRI)
			Rafael Lara 1996-1999 (FONATUR-Local PRI)

**Table 7.3** Political organisation, period 1988-2000.

Source: Own elaboration.

## 7.6 The stagnation stage (2000-2005)

At the beginning of the 2000s, Cancun began to present some signs of exhaustion constraining its operation and growth. The TALC model suggests the observation of three main parameters in order to determine whether a destination has arrived at the “stagnation” development phase or not: environmental, physical, and social. During this period, the panorama of Cancun presented some constraining features in tourism development such as land scarcity and clear signs of pollution in both, the touristic and the urban zones (Murray, 2007). Due to the limited amount of available land to maintain the pace of growth mainly for the construction of new hotel facilities and tourism-related businesses, the growth of tourism facilities during these years was rather modest. In contrast, the growth in the urban zone was excessive, driven by the high rates of immigration into the municipality (5.8% on average, ULSA, 2005: 72), reaching 572,973 inhabitants by 2005 (INEGI, 2007: 14). The continuous enlargement of the urban sprawl posed new challenges not only for the provision of public services but also to satisfy the employment demand of the incomers.

Considering these circumstances, it is argued that Cancun entered into a development phase referred to by the TALC model as “stagnation”. The problems associated with the pressure over the carrying capacity of the suggested parameters in combination with the appearance of additional factors suggested that Cancun was experiencing the symptoms characteristic of this phase.

Mexico suffered important changes in the orientation of tourism-related institutions during this period. For the first time in the contemporaneous history of this country, an opposition political party (PAN, conservative) finally triumphed and gained the presidency in 2000. This fact helped to mould the contours of the tourism sector according to new political and ideological conditions. Institutions such as SECTUR and FONATUR were thus reconfigured, adopting different commercialisation, promotion, and development schemes. Likewise, a number of important changes also occurred in the political structure at the local level. As had happened in the elections at the national level, an opposition party (PVEM, green party, see **Table 7.4**) won the elections in the municipality of Benito Juárez in 2002. The former contributed to the establishment of new forms of political operation and the opening of new negotiation channels between the local government and the private sector. However, derived from the massive incursion of new private actors in the local scene throughout the 1990s, tourism development in Cancun depended less and less on the decisions made by the local government. Given the important participation and economic power of these actors for the growth of tourism activities, they were able to establish a development agenda closer to their objectives and interests. Finally, it has to be noted that two key events were identified in this research to have contributed decisively to lead Cancun towards a “stagnation” phase during this period: the 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001, and Hurricane Wilma in 2005. The negative effects of the terrorist attacks were evident, provoking a reduction in the flow tourists and flights to Cancun that, until then, depended almost entirely on the American market. In the case of the hurricane, its effects at the local level were also devastating. The cyclone had practically destroyed the whole touristic zone leading to a new reconstruction episode. Unlike the experience after Hurricane Gilbert, Cancun this time had not only to recover its functionality as a destination but also to face the competition challenge posed by the growth of the Riviera Maya. This historical period reflects how the combination of particular circumstances -internal and external- in

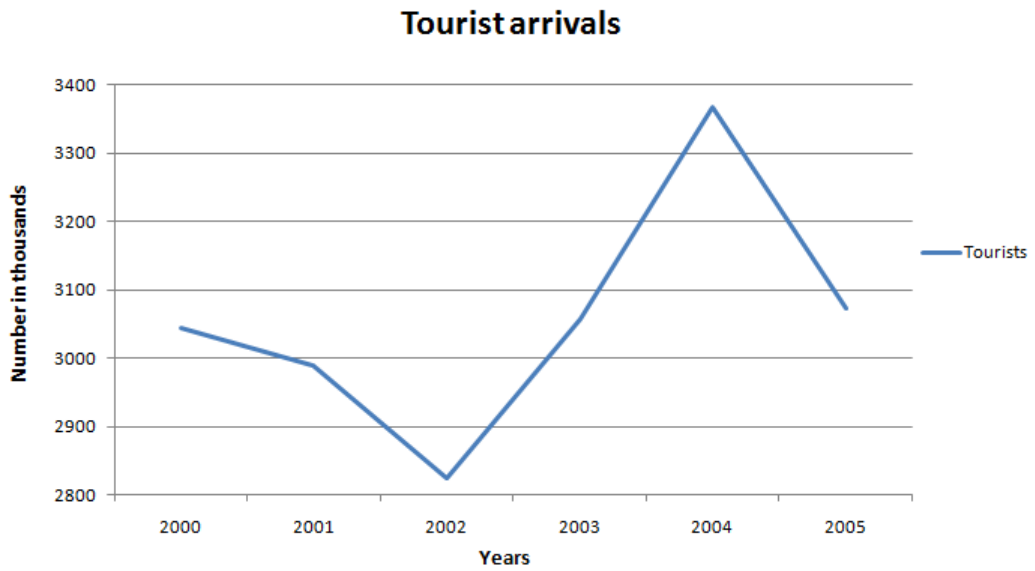


destinations such as Cancun largely determined their future participation in the tourism industry at the global, national and local levels.

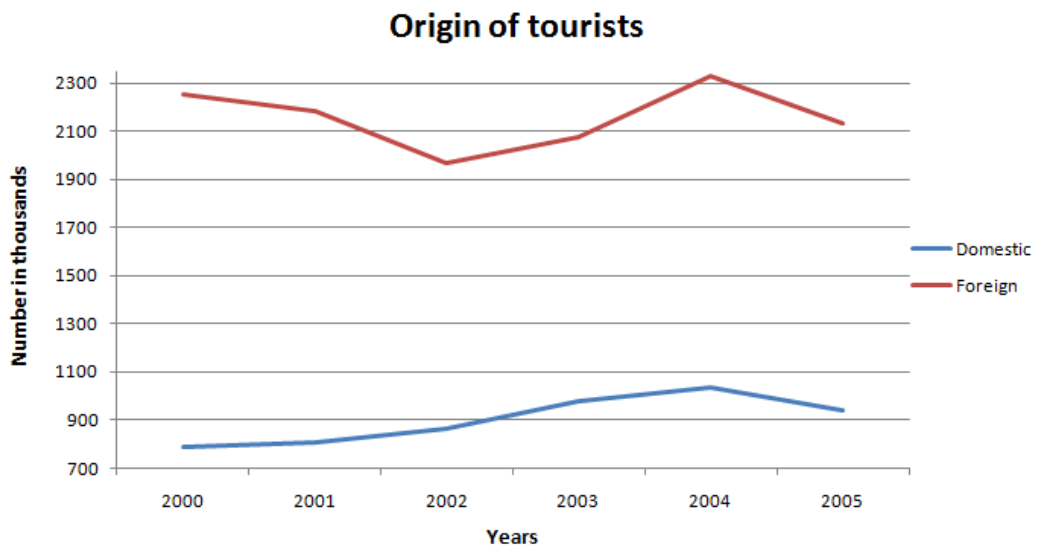
#### *7.6.1 A statistical picture of Cancun's exhaustion phase*

It was argued in this section that Cancun started to portray some signs of the “stagnation” phase described in the TALC model. The arrivals of tourists to this destination decreased at the beginning of the 2000s, portraying the year 2001 as decisive in the consolidation of this negative trend (see **Graph 7.24**). It is argued that the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US in 2001 had a direct effect, contributing to a diminution in the statistics generated during this period. A recuperation trend is evident for a two-year period (2003-2004) in the graph but it shows a dramatic fall in 2005, presumably due to the negative effects of Hurricane Wilma. In **Graph 7.25** it can be seen that Cancun maintained its reliance on the arrival of foreign tourists. However, although the domestic market has had a relative representativeness in this destination historically, a modest but steady growth was seen during this period. The category of “hotel occupation” showed a very similar trend to the “tourist arrivals”, losing 10% at the beginning of the 2000s, with a following recovery period and a fall at the end of the time-frame analysed (see **Graph 7.26**). It has to be noted, however, that it never surpassed 77% as it did in the 1980s and the 1990s (1987, 1997). The growth of hotel facilities suffered minor changes reaching a “growth peak” of 147 hotels in 2004 (see **Graph 7.27**). Nevertheless, it also presented a contraction episode after 2001, recovering growth momentum in the following years.

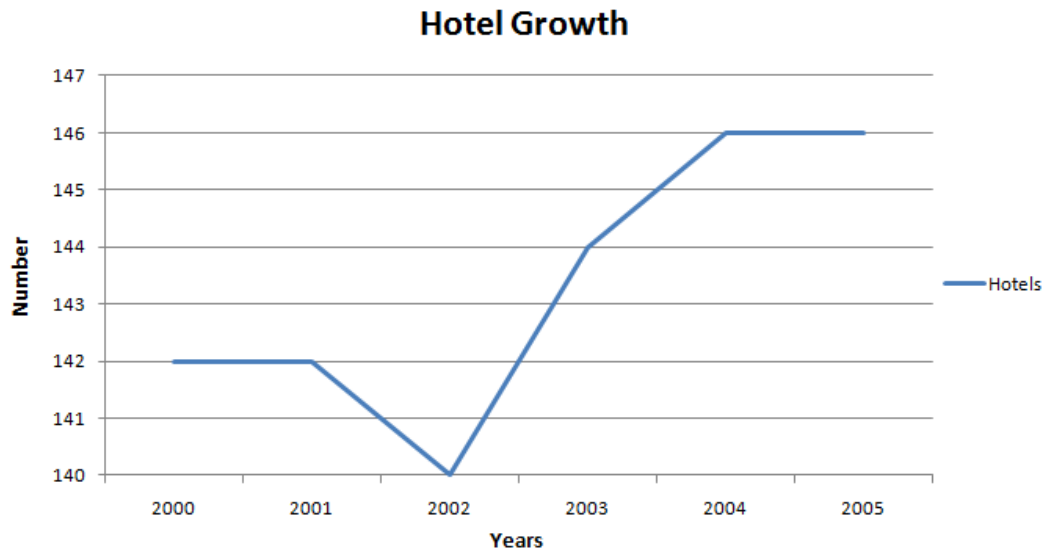
The most relevant discrepancies were reflected in the categories regarding the “length of stay of tourists” as well as the “flight arrivals”. On the one hand, this category presented a uniform trend from 2000-2004 maintaining an average stay of five nights (see **Graph 7.28**). Similar to the rest of the graphs presented in this section, it portrays a dramatic fall in 2005. On the other hand, the category of “flight arrivals” did not reflect the negative effects of 2001 (see **Graph 7.29**). The explanation can rest in a possible increase in domestic flights to the Riviera Maya. However, this research was unable to find any related information that can support this supposition. In general terms, the results in this category suggest a positive scenario until 2005, where the negatives effects of that specific year are reproduced.



**Graph 7.24** Tourist arrivals to Cancun, period 2000-2005.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.25** Origin of tourists to Cancun, period 2000-2005.  
Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



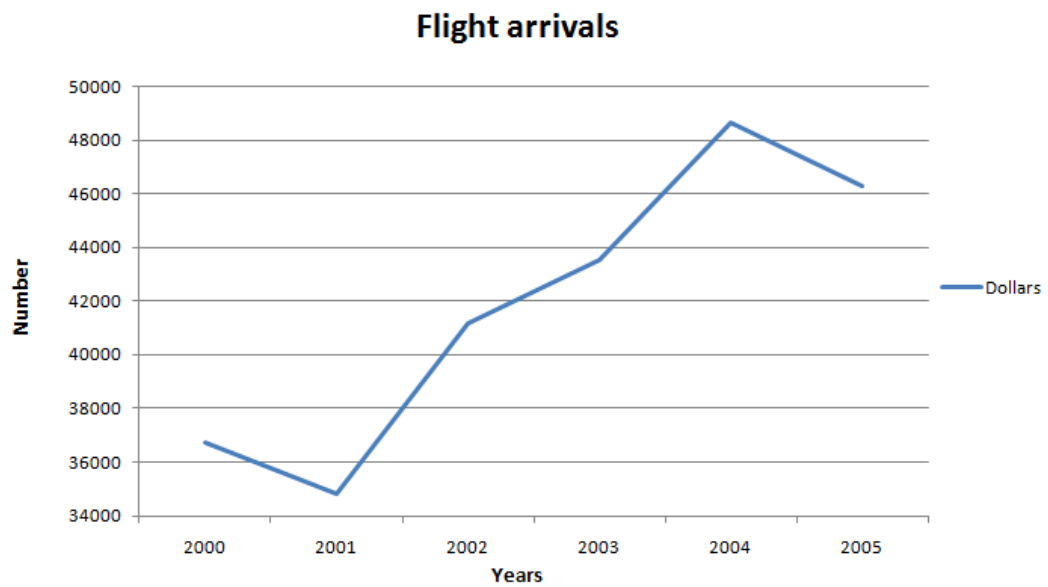
**Graph 7.26** Hotel growth in Cancun, period 2000-2005.  
 Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.27** Hotel occupation in Cancun, period 2000-2005.  
 Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.28** Tourist length of stay in Cancun, period 2000-2005.  
 Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).



**Graph 7.29** Flight arrivals to Cancun, period 2000-2005.  
 Source: Own elaboration with data from FONATUR (2007).

### *7.6.2 A new agenda of competitiveness and market diversification*

There is no doubt that the most relevant event during this period was the presidential election in the 2000s. For the first time in Mexico, a right-wing party (the National Action Party, PAN) had been able to prevail and take the presidency, defeating the political regime established by the PRI since 1928. This fact can be considered a social watershed in Mexico as it helped to transform not only the forms of political operation but also the notions of democracy in Mexican society. The new government -headed by Vicente Fox- was confronted with the responsibility to carry out the necessary reforms in the state apparatus in order to satisfy the expectations built during his electoral campaign. Above all, the need to establish a new governance system based on more democratic principles was emphasised. Despite the reformist intentions of the Fox administration, they could not be translated into the realms of actions. Casar (2009) points out that the outcomes of the state reform suggested by Fox were rather modest due to the lack of an effective political operation with the opposition parties and the inexperience of the people appointed in strategic positions of the Mexican government. Thus, no major changes occurred in the corporatist structures of the state and the PND was maintained as the principal instrument to coordinate the actions of the whole governmental apparatus. The PND (2001-2006) communicated the intentions of the central administration to lead an economic, social, and political transformation in the country. The discourse in this document was framed through the development of four main concepts: “inclusiveness”, “sustainability”, “competitiveness”, and “regional development”. Although nothing innovative was perceived from the use of these terms within a political discourse, the inclusion of the term “competitiveness” made evident the particular vision possessed by the new presidential administration. It revealed, above all, the intention of the state to expand the role of the private sector in the economic system during this period. In this sense, the political discourse paid special attention to stressing the need for Mexico to be “competitive” in different sectors of the economy in order to produce “qualitative” growth in the country (PND, 2001-2006: 111).

This discursive trend also permeated the tourism agenda, reproducing these terms in the objectives considered within the tourism policy. A testimony of the former can be found in the following statement in the PND:

*“The tourism sector is a priority for the Mexican state and all the state’s actions will be focused on ensuring its **competitiveness**...a diversification of the national tourism product will be sought [...and] special attention will be paid to promotional tasks and the **modernisation** of businesses related to the tourism industry” (PND, 2001-2006: 113, my translation, my emphasis in bold).*

This quote reflects, above all, the intentions of Fox’s administration to circumscribe the participation of the state in tourism adopting, a *laissez-faire* stance. A non-interventionist role signified the allocation of the responsibility of the development of this industry to the private sector. This is not to say, of course, that a complete retreat of the state was effectively exercised during this period. Although the state’s discourse officially claimed to be playing a mere coordinator role, it was also preparing, the ground for a new series of investments (state and private) in regional tourism projects<sup>31</sup>. In this sense, with a clear differentiation between discourse and action, the attention was focused on reproducing the traditional discourse of tourism as a vehicle of social and economic development in order to bring to life new tourism projects.

The National Tourism Plan, for instance, clearly reflected the former (PNT, 2001-2006: 15), framing the objectives of the three offices responsible for overseeing tourism affairs: -SECTUR, FONATUR, and CNPT- under this agenda. SECTUR’s operation, for example, included the implementation of two main projects: the creation of a Tourism Satellite Account (CST) and, the formulation of programs to achieve the objectives considered in Agenda 21<sup>32</sup>. These programs reflected the commitments of the Mexican government to external agendas set by influential actors such as the United Nations through its different agencies (UNWTO and UNEP). Under the flag of better management of natural resources, the state was able to define parameters (social, economic, and environmental) which any tourism development should observe. The former meant an effective enlargement of the decision-making powers of the state for defining new areas for tourism development.

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<sup>31</sup> One of the most famous examples during this period was the project headed by FONATUR called “*Escalera Náutica*”. The project consisted of the construction of several piers throughout a nautical route in the states of *Baja California Norte*, *Baja California Sur*, *Sonora*, and *Sinaloa*. It was severely criticised for the excessive state budget assigned to it and the lack of a strong technical proposal for its success (LA Times, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2002).

<sup>32</sup> This global agenda is related to sustainable development principles and proposes a coordination program for environmental protection.

However, the simple adoption of an environmental agenda could not guarantee a fairer and/or a more transparent process in the introduction of new tourism projects.

In the case of FONATUR, the operation of this institution was oriented to perform three main tasks: technical assistance for regional projects, the evaluation of new tourism developments, and the promotion of new investments in the country (PNT, 2001-2006: 70). Through the establishment of cooperation networks at the regional level, FONATUR maintained its presence as the institution responsible for tourism planning and actively participated in an important number of local tourism projects. Thus, FONATUR provided technical assistance for the development of projects such as *Barrancas del Cobre*, *Cañon del Sumidero*, *Puerto Peñasco* and so on, and served as an intermediary between the local governments and tourism investors. Finally, the CNPT's operation was oriented to the creation and promotion of regional tourism products away from the consolidated Mexican product of "sun, sand, and sea". Derived from this strategy, a number of promotional programs emerged (e.g. Colonial treasures, Mexico's heart, Magic Towns, The north of Mexico, The Route of Gods and so on) as an attempt to redirect the flows of tourists towards other parts of the territory. The appearance of more promotional programs *per se*, however, could not guarantee neither that these flows were willing to engage with these alternative options nor that these destinations were prepared to receive them. Thus, the tourism agenda at the national level was subjected to the operation of these institutions, utilising renovated discursive tools during this period.

### 7.6.3 *New rules at the local level*

Similar to the national panorama, the political structures at the local level were also transformed. The surprising victory in the municipal elections of 2002 by an opposition party (Green Party, PVEM) led to the reconfiguration of the power structures and channels of negotiation between the government and the private sector<sup>33</sup>. Since the creation of the municipality (in 1974), the political control had rested within the structure of the hegemonic party (PRI) and its related networks at the local and regional levels. Despite the minimal representation of the Green Party in the Mexican political system at the time, it was able to draw the attention of the

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<sup>33</sup> The Green Party of Mexico has its origins in 1986 when an environmental NGO (*Alianza Ecológica Nacional*) attempted to contend in the 1988's presidential elections. This association, however, was not officially recognised as a political party until 1993 and, since then, it has gained prominence in the Mexican political system.

voters through the reproduction of a discourse based on the protection of the natural environment. This political incursion, above all, meant a power readjustment of the local arena, changing the strategies of different actors to negotiate and achieve their objectives.

During this period, the regional government (Quintana Roo) centred its discursive agenda on stressing the need to balance the persisting inequality in terms of economic development between the southern and the northern parts of Quintana Roo (see CONAPO, 2010: 25-47 for detailed statistical data). The strategy consisted of legitimising a greater intervention of the regional government in the regional economic system, proposing the creation of a new development plan that could resolve the inequality-related issues. Considering the former, the Urban and Ecological Development Plan 2000-2005 (POET) emerged with the main objective of strengthening the presence of the regional government in economic planning and developmental tasks. It was stated that this plan “was designed to allow the state [Quintana Roo] to articulate public policies at the regional and local levels in order to improve the socioeconomic development conditions of the territory, adopting a more sustainable approach” (POET, 2000-2005: 7). However, an interviewee of this research commented that despite the considerable budget and time assigned to its formulation (20 million Mexican pesos, approximately), its application and benefits have remained unknown until now (Interview, Civil Association Representative, April 2009). The former can be understood as the consequence of the lack of a monitoring plan to evaluate the results and the lack of transparency in the management of the public spending by the different municipalities, not only in Quintana Roo but also in the majority of the Mexican territory.

Parallel to the creation of the POET, the government of Quintana Roo expressed the need to break the dependence on tourism as the dominant economic activity in the territory. The *Plan Básico de Gobierno* (1999-2005: 2) expressed the interest of the government to promote the diversification of the economy in order to incorporate the disadvantaged sectors of society into productive dynamics. It was claimed that, with the appropriate financial and technical support, alternative activities such as forestry, agribusiness, manufacture, and fisheries could flourish, helping to reduce the historical overdependence on tourism activities (*Plan Estratégico de Desarrollo Integral Quintana Roo*, 2000-2025: 10). Nevertheless, it has to be said that proposals



such as this were never accompanied by the necessary financial or logistic support (Interview, Municipality official, May 2009). The fundamental reason for the former was a poor follow-up on its achievements or constraints on the ground making it difficult to know with exactitude to what extent initiatives, such as this, achieved the objectives for which they were created. Far away from the good intentions in these types of plans, uncontrolled growth, especially in the Riviera Maya, continued, reflecting the inability -and perhaps unwillingness- of the governments (central, regional, and local) to enforce more effective mechanisms to control tourism development.

At the local level, the discourse of the administration of the Municipal Mayor Juan García (2002-2005) was oriented to portray the new municipal government as reformist. From the beginning, it was claimed that the focus of the municipality's actions would be, above all, a different governance model from their predecessors, stressing the need to finally achieve the unfulfilled socioeconomic development objectives as well as to more effectively protect the natural environment in Cancun (*Plan Municipal de Desarrollo*, 2002-2005). Following this discursive trend, the municipality stressed the need to promote alternative forms of tourism development at local level, such as ecotourism, rural tourism, agricultural tourism, community tourism, and so on (Ibid: 15), portraying them as indispensable to ensuring the continuity of the tourism destination. Complementary to the former, the need to support other activities, such as the production of handicrafts, agriculture, and local industry was also mentioned. Despite the apparent "winds of change" that this administration proposed for Cancun, it will not be remembered by the achievement of any of these objectives but rather as being a government surrounded by public scandal. Juan García was formally accused by regional and federal authorities of mismanagement of public resources and corrupt practices in granting permits for tourism development (LA Times, 21st July 2004). This is not to say that it was the first municipality administration accused of corruption or mismanagement offences<sup>34</sup> but the investigations in this case led to the removal of the Mayor before the end of his period of administration for the first time in Mexico. This contributed to create a turbulent political environment at the local level, revealing the weaknesses of the

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<sup>34</sup> One of the best documented cases involves a former Mayor Mario Villanueva (1990-1992). He was linked to money laundering, drug trafficking, and corruption practices and was convicted and sentenced to 36 years in a Mexican Federal prison in 2008 (La Jornada, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008).

incipient democratic system and raising questions about the real motivations behind this prosecution.

Despite the great amount of attention that this political event attracted, the appearance of a hurricane in 2005 (Wilma) can be considered as the most relevant event during this historical period. This cyclone hit Cancun on the 18th of October leading to the collapse of the hotel and the urban zone due to its destructive power. Unlike Hurricane Gilbert, Wilma caused larger damages to the infrastructure and the tourism facilities due to the greater intensity of the cyclone. The reduction in the extension of the beaches in the hotel zone was one of the clearest examples of the extent of the destruction left by this hurricane. It took more than five months for Cancun to regain its functionality as a tourism destination with the Riviera Maya being crucial for the maintenance of the flow of tourists to the zone while the reconstruction work in Cancun was carried out, as this geographical area was less affected. Wilma evidenced, once more, the vulnerable condition of this destination and the long-lasting infrastructural and planning problems, raising questions about its continuity taking into consideration the increasing frequency and intensity of these natural phenomena in this geographical area.

#### *7.6.4 One road, two different directions*

The changes in the political structures at the local and national levels during this period contributed to creating diverse agendas according to the objectives of the new political actors. Fox's administration put special emphasis on appointing people with an entrepreneurial profile to strategic positions of the central government. This was the case for Leticia Navarro, Tourism Minister for the period 2000-2004 who had worked formerly for brands such as Gillette and Jafra at directorship levels, and John McCarthy, FONATUR's director (2000-2006) who had worked for several private tourism and financial-related firms (Bancomer, Hoteles Presidente, Club Med, and Raintree Resorts, to mention some examples). Despite the apparent alignment in the profiles of these officials, a disassociation of institutional objectives and personal agendas was evident. Navarro's interests were focused on giving a new face to this sector, based on support to small-scale tourism development. The main interest was to expand the coverage of SECTUR's regulatory powers in rural communities, promoting alternative forms of tourism development such as ecotourism, rural

tourism, community tourism, and so on (cf. *Convenio Turismo Rural y Ecoturismo*, 2004). The financial, logistic, and administrative responsibilities related to these types of tourism projects, however, were assigned to the local governments, establishing the extent of SECTUR's involvement. In contrast, the agenda that FONATUR pursued (headed by McCarthy) was concentrated on reactivating the intervention powers lost of this office throughout the 1980s and 1990s in national tourism development. Unlike in the past, when budget and political will coincided to support FONATUR's projects as in the case of the CIPs policy, the survival of this office this time depended on the generation of profits derived from consultancy work at national and international levels as well as the money generated through the sale of land within CIPs destinations. Irrespective of the objectives set by the SECTUR, FONATUR maintained its agenda supporting the development of coastal destinations under the model of mass tourism. Thus, an important number of tourism projects were brought to life (e.g. *Escalera Nautica*, *Litibu-El Capomo*, *Riviera Nayarit* and so on) under the traditional "sun, sand and sea" model, clearly contravening the objectives proposed in the PND for the tourism sector during this period.

At the local level, the dismissal of Cancun's Mayor created an environment of political uncertainty. Juan García declared at the time that his removal and subsequent imprisonment reflected the interest from some members of Quintana Roo's political network to recover control over Cancun (LA Times, 21st July 2004). The governor of Quintana Roo, Joaquín Hendricks (1999-2005) and Jorge Gonzalez (PVEM national president) were pointed out by the Mayor as the principal organisers of this political strategy to discredit his administration (*Periódico Reforma*, 26th May, 2004). Although the mentioned individuals publicly denied any type of involvement, the version gained some currency once Juan García was released from prison in 2006. This political struggle reflected that Cancun was still considered a strategic political post despite the increasing presence of the Riviera Maya. In the tourism arena, this period was characterised by the progressive incursion of new decisive actors in the regional and local scene. The implantation of an environmental agenda in tourism throughout the 1990s produced the appearance of more regulatory organisations so as to enforce the existent legal framework for tourism-related projects. Thus, actors such as the Environment and Natural Resources Ministry (SEMARNAT), National Institute of Ecology (INE), and some local environmentalist associations such as the

*Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA), the Grupo Ecologista del Mayab (GEMA), the Mesoamerican Reef Tourism Initiative (MARTI), among many others, gained political prominence due to their decisive role in evaluating and granting the necessary permits to tourism projects and subsequent verification tasks. However, the presence of these actors was not perceived as positive by tourism developers as they claimed this represented a constraint for the growth of the sector rather than a genuine effort to protect the natural environment. A key informant of this research commented in this regard:*

*“I would not say that I am totally against these ecological institutions and organisations because I also believe that the preservation of the environment is indispensable for the continuity of tourism but the complex legal framework that has emerged from this sustainability agenda prevents any further investment in the zone...If you want to carry out a tourism project like the construction of a hotel, it will take triple the amount of time than it used to in the past, not to mention that verification processes are fully plagued with corrupt practices delaying the whole process and increasing the costs. I do not think these organisations are contributing effectively to the purpose for which they were created...I think they are more interested in gaining economic benefits rather than protecting the environment” (Interview, former hotelier, April 2009, my translation).*

It was clear that the existence of these institutions could not guarantee better environmental conditions in Cancun or elsewhere in Quintana Roo, but at least their agenda seemed to diminish, to some extent, the power of the private sector to make decisions over tourism development. Even so, private interests were still largely represented in the decisions of the municipal government. The former was reflected in the changes made to the Master Plan in 2005, establishing the vision of a vertical development of Cancun (*Gaceta Oficial del Municipio de Benito Juárez*, 2005: 46). Considering the natural reduction of land for tourism development over the years, the need to create growth alternatives was identified as a priority. This opened the door to a particular form of development that favoured the proliferation of taller constructions to maintain the flow of investment in Cancun. Thus, buildings such as the Riu Hotel in Punta Cancun, the Hotel Aqua, the apartment towers in Puerto Cancun, and many other construction projects, transformed the local landscape that traditionally had followed horizontal development. The implementation of these types of strategies reflected the main concern of the municipality and the private

sector that was, the possibility that Cancun could enter into a decline scenario causing a deterioration of this destination in the short term.

Period/level	National	Regional	Local
2000-2005	Vicente Fox Quesada (Conservative, free market)	Joaquín Hendricks 1999-2005 (Quintana Roo's political network)	Magaly Achach 1999-2002 (Local PRI)
			Juan García 2002-2005 (PVEM, Green Party)

**Table 7.4** Political organisation, period 2000-2005.

Source: Own elaboration.

### 7.7 A possible scenario of decline? (2006-2011)

The controversial presidential election of 2006 largely contributed to creating a panorama of social polarisation and political instability in Mexico. The conservative party (PAN) was able to retain the presidency amid the accusations of fraud made by the candidate and supporters of the left party (PRD) who lost the election by only 0.56%. The social and political conflict that emerged after this election revealed the weaknesses of the incipient democratic system in Mexico which was not prepared to deal with these types of scenarios. In order to gain the necessary legitimacy for his government that could not be obtained through the electoral process, the president (Felipe Calderón) decided to declare a war on drugs in 2007 as the principal political strategy of his administration. After more than 43 thousand deaths associated with this war (Grupo Milenio, September 2011) and a climate of violence spreading throughout the country, this strategy seems to be falling to pieces, leading several sectors of society to express their discontent and demand a change of direction in order to regain the conditions of peace.

Despite President Calderón declaring the year 2011 as “the year of tourism in Mexico”, the implementation of this measure is interpreted here as an attempt by the government to maintain a positive image of the country as a tourism destination abroad rather than a strategy to strengthen the sector at the national level given the conditions of violence that prevail in the country. It is important to mention that tourism has been one of the activities that has suffered the most in recent years in Mexico. The combination of several factors, such as the global economic recession, the outbreak of the influenza AH1N1 in 2009, the suspension of activities of the national airline *Mexicana de Aviación* in 2010 and the situation of insecurity, have

produced a decrease in the activities related to the tourism sector. According to a BBVA report on the automobile and tourism industry in Mexico released in January 2011, tourism foreign revenue fell 55.9%, airplane passengers were 41.1% lower, and foreign visitors to hotels declined 77.4% in 2009 (BBVA, 2011: 43).

Under this complex panorama, the attention of the tourism agenda at the national level has been focused on encouraging growth of this sector in order to reverse these negative trends. The objectives of the PNT (2007-2012) are six: 1) to expand tourism development to fight against poverty; 2) to improve the diversification of the dominating tourism product (sun, sand, and sea); 3) to create new tourism programs that ensure quality and satisfaction of the service; 4) to update the legal framework according to the current circumstances; 5) to implement promotional campaigns in new markets, and; 6) to design a more participatory approach in tourism development tasks. It is stated:

*“There is an opportunity to **redefine the tourism development model** taking into account the things that have been done so far in order to give a better direction to the current programs of regional tourism development” (PNT, 2007-2012:10, my translation, my emphasis in bold)*

According to the information contained in these objectives and this quote, it can be said that the main intention of the state is to regain a presence in the decisions related to this sector, proposing a new period of intervention. The inclusion of some terms such as “poverty”, “diversification”, “quality”, “redefinition”, and “participation” within this document reflects the evolution of the tourism discourse that was oriented to reposition the state as a dominant actor in this political arena.

In order to achieve this objective, this discourse was assisted with specific actions, such as the formulation and implementation of a new tourism law (*Ley General de Turismo*) in 2009 (DOF, 17/06/2009). This new law provided the state with new attributions, budget and, above all, a renovated agenda in tourism development. The institutions responsible for carrying out this task (SECTUR, FONATUR and CNPT) acquired new powers through this law, reshaping the functions of the state in tourism once more. For example, this law allowed SECTUR to have a more active role in the formulation and execution of strategies related to territorial planning. The former signified the possibility of the central government to influence decisions at the local level as had happened in the 1970s with the CIPs policy. Likewise, FONATUR was

allowed to expand its coverage in the formulation of tourism development projects, becoming the main link between the states and the potential financial sources (state and private). The former has a special relevance since FONATUR is able to define priority zones for tourism development, favouring and/or disregarding specific projects. Finally, the CNPT was allowed to establish the criteria for the allocation of financial resources to the states for promotional purposes. As had happened with FONATUR, the CNPT also acquired a privileged position to determine the agenda to be followed as well as the allocation of budget for particular promotional projects.

The question that arises is: to what extent has the state (through these institutions) been able to effectively exercise the new attributions conferred by this law? Considering the greater participation of the state in tourism development-related projects in recent years, it can be said that the objectives of this agenda have successfully advanced. Many examples can be found of the former in projects such as the CIPs in Nayarit (*La Peñita, El Capomo* and *Litibú*), *Puerto Peñasco* in Sonora, *Marina Cozumel* in Quintana Roo, the CIPs in Sinaloa (*El Rosario* and *Escuinapa*), *Cabo Cortés, Costa Baja, Cabo Pacifica, Loreto Paraíso, Puerto Los Cabos, Riviera Loreto, Seramai y El Saltito* in Baja California, *Puerto Escondido* in Oaxaca, and so on. Despite the great activism of the state in these projects in different forms (through concessions, finance, promotion and/or direct participation), they are not characterised by producing an increase in the flow of tourists or tourism-related activities in Mexico. These projects are associated, rather, with real estate objectives with a minor interest in tourism, implementing their plans through land dispossession, ecological depredation and corrupt practices (Gutiérrez, 2011: 44-47). Thus, former communal lands in the communities affected by these projects are illegally dissolved with the objective of converting these territories into private property that is subsequently sold to developers at very cheap prices. The business of these companies is not to construct hotels or tourism infrastructure but to speculate with land once it is announced that a tourism project will take place. Although the majority of these projects claim to be considering the objectives considered in the tourism agenda (i.e. sustainable development), the experiences on the ground tell a completely different story: hundreds of people are being displaced everyday from their communities without the opportunity to obtain any benefit or participate in any sense in tourism and witness how these new developments exploit the local natural

resources in a reckless way (cf. Chávez, 2008; Rogers, 2010). In this sense, it can be said that the central administration successfully enlarged its participation in tourism development, granting the concessions for these projects; however, the former contributed to create a situation of anarchy in this sector due to the absence - intentional or not- of control mechanisms to regulate the actions of these actors in related projects.

The picture at regional (Quintana Roo) and local (Cancun) levels has not been very different from the national one. The reproduction of a political discourse based on a 'sustainable' rhetoric continued stressing the commitment of the regional government to pursue the objectives considered in the national tourism agenda. Evidence of the former can be found in the *Plan Estatal de Desarrollo* (2005-2011) where it was claimed that the main objective of the administration of Quintana Roo's governor, Félix González, in tourism consisted of the implementation of the necessary strategies to achieve these objectives. It was stated:

*"The review of the tourism development model is necessary in order to search alternative options closer to sustainable models as well as the promotion of tourism products directed to tourist segments of higher profitability to achieve a balance between tourism development and environmental protection in the different regions of the state [Quintana Roo]"* (PEDQR, 2005: 32, my translation)

In a similar vein, the objectives of the Municipal plans during this period were framed under this political discourse, stating that the actions would be oriented to promote integral sustainable development in Cancun (*Plan Municipal de Desarrollo*, 2005-2008: 3). However, the principal problem of the municipality is still related to the effective provision of infrastructure and public services at the local level. These issues are far from being resolved due to the historical inability of the different municipal administrations to manage the public budget in an appropriate way. The public debt of the municipality of *Benito Juárez* was estimated at approximately 112 million dollars by the end of 2010 (Ramos, 2011), compromising the operation of the local government in the short term. What is more, the expensive projects to recuperate the beaches and clean the lagoon system (18 million dollars up to 2007) in the hotel zone after Hurricane Wilma have not produced the expected outcomes, leading this destination to a possible decline scenario (Sosa, 2009). As in other parts of the country, the proposed solution to give a new impulse to Cancun by the local



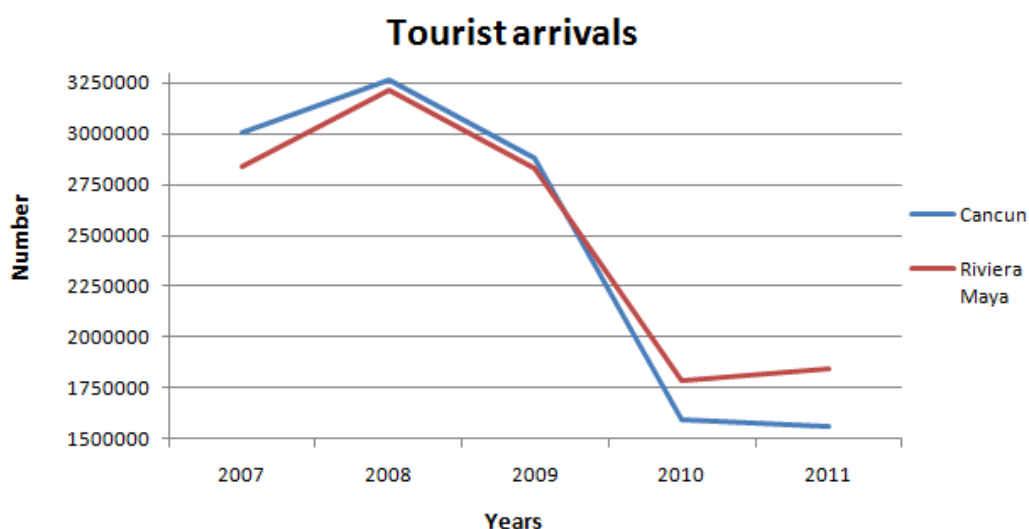
government is through the concession of more real estate projects. Evidence of the former can be found in residential and commercial approved projects such as *Puerto Cancun*, *Malecón Cancun* and *San Buena Aventura* in the urban zone as well as new projects such as the case of the possible construction of three towers of 2,553 apartments in the hotel zone (IMPLAN, oficio SMEDU/062/2009). This project in particular has caused great social discontent as the developer (Hazama Corporation/Corporation *Desarrollo de Turismo* S.A. de C.V.) proposed to build these towers on a golf course belonging to a very expensive residential area. The neighbours of this area have protested publicly against this project claiming that it would provoke serious environmental damage as well as several problems associated with local infrastructure and the image of the destination. This social mobilisation has prevented the implementation of this project until now but its future is uncertain as it represents a million dollar business that will not be easily abandoned by its advocates. As this development trend continues in destinations such as Cancun in Mexico, the result will be favourable only to the big companies and colluding politicians and the costs (economic, social, and environmental) will be absorbed by the local communities where these projects take place. It seems that the objective of consolidating Cancun as the best sustainable destination in the country will remain in the realms of discourses, leaving a blurred panorama for the years to come.

#### *7.7.1 A statistical picture of Cancun and the Riviera Maya*

After the appearance of Hurricane Wilma in 2005, Cancun and the Riviera Maya faced the challenge of recovering the growth momentum experienced during the 1990s and early 2000s. The arrival of tourists reported a dramatic fall after 2008 as a consequence of the combination of two main factors: the global economic recession and the influenza epidemic (see **Graph 7.30**). The two destinations present a very similar trend until 2010 where the Riviera Maya seemed to recover a positive trend toward 2011. The category of “hotel growth” shows a steady pattern in Cancun and a modest growth in the Riviera Maya during this period (see **Graph 7.31**). Due to the large differences between these destinations in terms of land available for construction, it is understandable that the Riviera Maya maintained this growth pattern. With regards to the category of “hotel occupation”, the variations are very similar reporting occupation levels above 60% and up to 75% (see **Graph 7.32**). The results of this graph show that the Riviera Maya reported higher levels with a

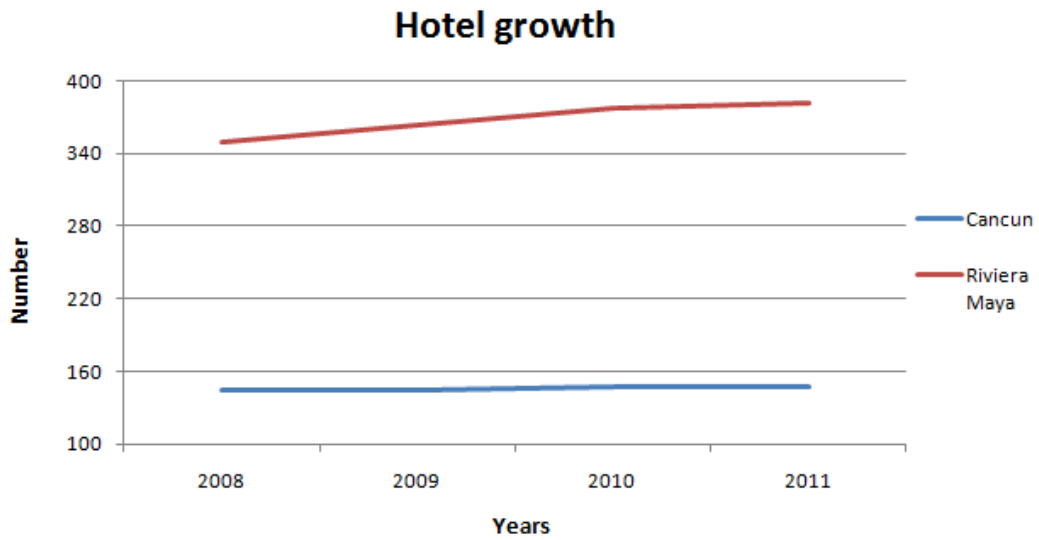
constant difference of 4% over Cancun during this period. In contrast, the data regarding the category of “foreign revenue” presents a different pattern portraying Cancun in a leading position (see **Graph 7.33**). The difference between these destinations, however, is reduced as the years advanced, reaching a stabilisation point in 2010.

In the category of “tourist expenditure”, Cancun showed a negative trend over the years whereas the Riviera Maya maintained a very stable pattern (see **Graph 7.34**). It is important to note that the source of the information for these results (SEDETUR, 2011) does not specify the method used to calculate them, making the formulation of hypotheses a difficult task. The unchanging pattern of the Riviera Maya raises some questions about the reliability of the data and the sources of information employed for the construction of these results in this particular category. Finally, **Graph 7.35** presents a comparison between the total foreign currency revenue produced by the tourism sector in Mexico and the contribution of the state of Quintana Roo during this period. As it can be seen in this graph, Quintana Roo represents on average one third of the total foreign revenue produced. These results position this state as one of the most important sources of foreign currency, just behind oil exports, remittances, and direct foreign investment in the country.



**Graph 7.30** Tourist arrivals to Cancun and the Riviera Maya, period 2007-2011 (\* figures 2011 until June).

Source: Own elaboration with data from SEDETUR (2011).



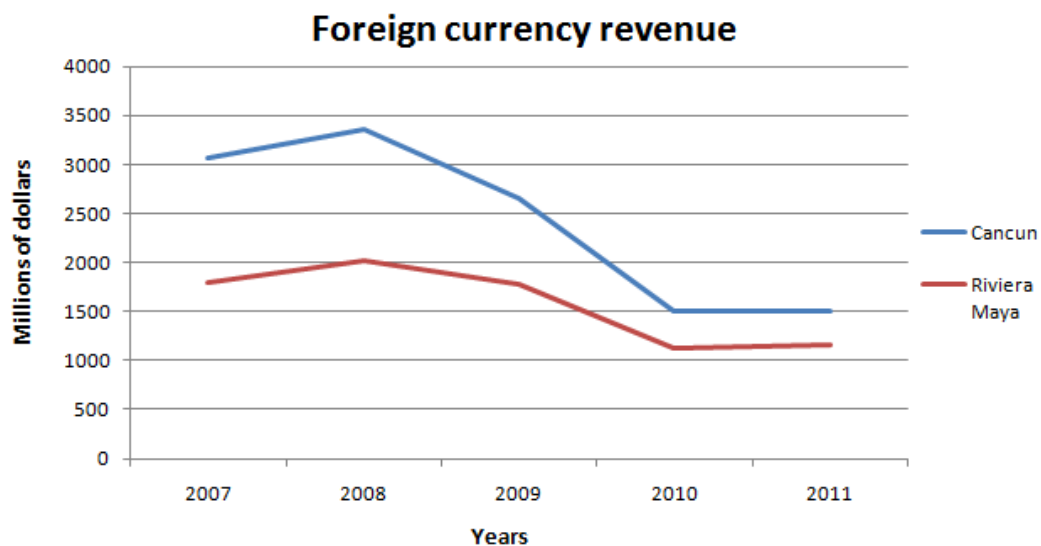
**Graph 7.31** Hotel growth in Cancun and the Riviera Maya, period 2007-2011 (\* figures 2011 until June).

Source: Own elaboration with data from SEDETUR (2011).



**Graph 7.32** Hotel occupation in Cancun and the Riviera Maya, period 2007-2011 (\* figures 2011 until June).

Source: Own elaboration with data from SEDETUR (2011).



**Graph 7.33** Foreign currency revenue in Cancun and the Riviera Maya, period 2007-2011 (\* figures 2011 until June).

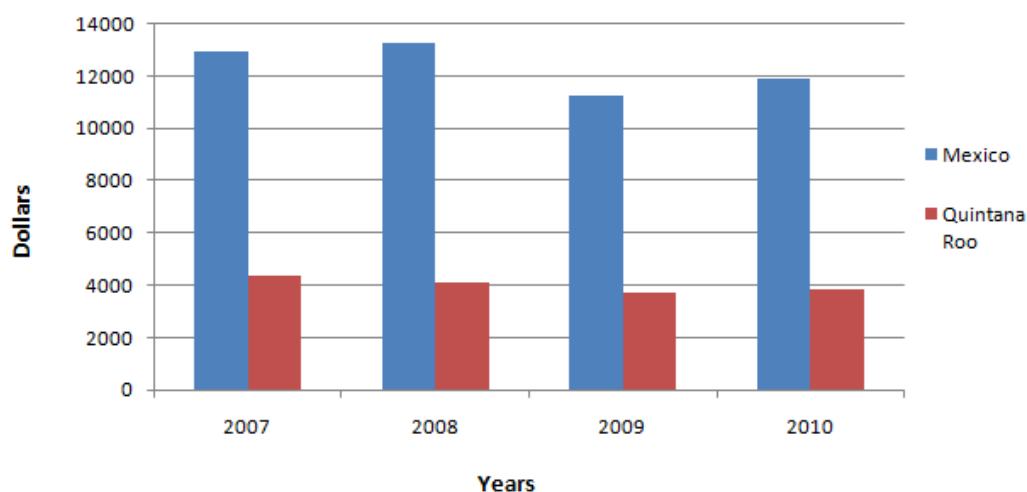
Source: Own elaboration with data from SEDETUR (2011).



**Graph 7.34** Tourist expenditure in Cancun and the Riviera Maya, period 2007-2011 (\* figures 2011 until June).

Source: Own elaboration with data from SEDETUR (2011).

### Tourism revenues (foreign currency)



**Graph 7.35** Tourism revenue contribution, period 2007-2011 (\* figures 2011 until June).  
Source: Own elaboration with data from SEDETUR (2011).

Period/level	National	Regional	Local
2006-2011	Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (Conservative, free market)	Félix González Castro 2005-2011 (Quintana Roo's political network)	Francisco Alor 2005-2008 (Local PRI)
			Gregorio Sánchez 2008-2011 (PRD, left-wing)

**Table 7.5** Political organisation, period 2006-2011.  
Source: Own elaboration.

Historical period	Tourism Development features	Main actors	Structural features	Contextual Issues
1974-1981	<p>Coastal development under the CIPs planning approach.</p> <p>Construction of new destinations (Cancun 1974, Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo 1976, Los Cabos 1978, and Loreto 1980).</p> <p>Small-scale tourism development in peripheral areas to the CIPs projects.</p>	Banco de Mexico, BID, FONATUR, INFRATUR, local hoteliers, NAFINSA, SECTUR, the SHCP, the Quintana Roo's political network and the WB.	<p>Expansion of the presence of the state (populist approach).</p> <p>Creation of the state of Quintana Roo and the Municipality of Benito Juárez.</p> <p>Creation of FONATUR and SECTUR.</p> <p>Progressive dismantling of the "technocrats" network.</p>	<p>Global oil crisis, discovery of new oil fields, construction of a positive discourse of tourism development and the organisation of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the BID in Cancun.</p>

1982-1987	<p>Expansion of tourism facilities in Cancun.</p> <p>Construction of Huatulco in 1984.</p> <p>Privatisation process of tourism state-owned companies.</p> <p>Continuation of the reproduction of a positive discourse of tourism development.</p>	Benito Juárez Municipality, CNT, FONATUR, foreign and domestic hotel entrepreneurs, civil organisations, and SECTUR.	<p>Withdrawal of the state in developmental tasks.</p> <p>Restitution of the “technocrats” network in power.</p> <p>Instauration of the National Development Plan.</p> <p>More presence of the municipality in tourism management tasks.</p>	North-South Summit for Cooperation and Development in 1981, economic crisis 1982, implementation of SWAPS policy, 1984’s Tourism Federal Law, 1985’s earthquake, and Mexico’s entrance to GATT in 1986.
1988-1999	<p>Reformulation of Cancun’s development path.</p> <p>Expansion of time-share and all-inclusive forms of development.</p> <p>More presence of private actors in tourism planning and policy-making activities.</p> <p>Progressive changes to the Master Plans of the CIPs destinations.</p> <p>Continuation of the coastal development approach.</p>	Benito Juárez Municipality, CNET, CNPT, FONATUR, Foreign and Domestic Hotel Chains, SECTUR, and the UNWTO.	<p>Adoption of a neoliberal agenda.</p> <p>Erosion of the PRI’s political system.</p> <p>Reproduction of a discourse based on a sustainable development ideology.</p>	1988’s Gilbert hurricane, new forms of tourism development globally, reproduction of a negative discourse of mass tourism, 1990s American economic recession, the Gulf War, 1994’s economic crisis in Mexico, entrance to NAFTA, Zapatista social movement, emergence of “sustainable development” term within the political discourse, and the expansion of tourism activities in the Riviera Maya.
2000-2005	<p>Stagnation of Cancun’s development.</p> <p>Expansion of coastal development in the Riviera Maya.</p> <p>Increase of greener and cultural forms of tourism development in</p>	Benito Juárez Municipality, CEMDA, CNPT, FONATUR, Foreign Hotel Chains, GEMA, INE, local NGOs, SECTUR, SEMARNAT, and Quintana Roo’s government.	<p>State operation under PAN at the national level and PVEM at the local level.</p> <p>Adoption of an agenda of competitiveness and market diversification.</p>	Changes in the political power structures, US 9/11 terrorist attacks, 2005’s Wilma Hurricane, CST agenda, and the adoption of Agenda 21 objectives.

	<p>Mexico.</p> <p>Development of the tourism industry in the hands of the private industry.</p> <p>Appearance of new tourism development projects in the Pacific Coast.</p>		<p>Reformulation of SECTUR and FONATUR's tasks and attributions towards the consolidation of a coordinator role.</p>	
2006-2012	<p>Decline symptoms in Cancun.</p> <p>Design and implementation of new CIPs destinations in the Pacific Coast.</p> <p>Promotion to cultural forms of tourism development.</p> <p>Private activism in the development of greener forms of tourism development.</p> <p>Instauration of promotional campaigns at national and global levels.</p>	<p>Benito Juárez Municipality, CNET, CNPT, FONATUR, Real estate developers, SEDETUR, SECTUR, and the Quintana Roo's government.</p>	<p>State operation under PAN.</p> <p>Adoption of a national security strategy to gain legitimacy.</p> <p>Tourism Federal Law expanding the room for manoeuvre in tourism-related institutions.</p>	<p>Controversial election for the presidency in 2006, declaration of a war on drugs in 2007, and the Influenza AH1N1 outbreak in 2009.</p>

**Table 7.6** Main stages of tourism development in Mexico, period 1974-2012.  
Source: Own elaboration.

## 7.8 Conclusions

This chapter discussed the generation and exercise of power in the political arena of Mexican tourism, exploring the case of Cancun. These manifestations of power were identified through the examination of the different negotiations and disputes of actors aiming to control the CIPs policy process at the local level in several historical episodes. The information included in this chapter sheds some light on the role that networks play to create sufficient room for manoeuvre for the achievement of the objectives considered in their agendas. The mobilisation of different resources

(political, discursive, economic, and so on) by these networks of actors was recognised as crucial to control access to this arena, reducing the channels of negotiation and subjecting important decisions to a reduced group of actors. These actions largely contributed to shaping the power structures and power practices through which the CIPs policy process unfolded in Cancun over time.

As already mentioned in other parts of this thesis, one of the most important resources identified by this research was the use of the discourse. It was interesting to see that the traditional tourism discourse in Mexico did not experience a substantial modification since the 1970s onwards. The systematic portrayal of tourism as a development vehicle allowed the legitimisation of government interventions in tourism development in places such as Cancun. Although some terms were incorporated within this discourse in the 1990s and 2000s (e.g. modernisation, sustainability, competitiveness, quality, diversification, poverty eradication and so on), the former was interpreted in this research as the adoption of a global discourse rather than the formulation of a different strategy of tourism development away from the vision proposed in the CIPs policy (i.e. sun, sand and sea). Thus, the support to alternative forms of tourism development such as ecotourism, rural tourism, community tourism, and so on has remained at the discursive level in Mexico without the existence of a comprehensive policy to develop them. The analysis of the evolution of the tourism discourse at different levels (national, regional and local) helped this research to reflect on the importance they acquired to impose a particular ideology and to shape compliance from some actors within the CIPs policy process in Cancun.

The construction of the narrative surrounding the evolution of the local policy process also enabled this research to gain a better understanding of the different factors (human, structural, and contextual) that contributed to mould the policy outcomes. It was discussed how economic factors (e.g. economic crises 1982, 1994, global economic recession, and the liberalisation process in the 1980s), social factors (growing social discontent expressed in the Zapatista movement, the presidential election of 2006, and the prevailing situation of violence), political factors (erosion of the PRI representation at the national and local levels and formation of regional and local political networks), and environmental factors (the incidence of two hurricanes and spread of pollution) had a direct effect on the evolution of the local



policy process. It is argued that these circumstances determined the extent of success and/or failure in the achievement of the original objectives considered in the CIPs policy. Based on the information collected and analysed by this research, it can be said that the developmental objectives that oriented the formulation of this tourism policy were progressively abandoned as tourism activities increased in Cancun. Control over the local policy process was reduced due to explosive expansion of different agendas and interests surrounding tourism development. The operation and decision powers of the central government, for example, progressively diminished as a result of the systematic implementation of strategies of regional and local actors to achieve this particular purpose. In this sense, the control over decisions related to tourism development in Cancun was captured by different actors -state and private- establishing new objectives and agendas. The former profoundly transformed the initial vision considered by policy-makers where the state, through its different levels (national, regional, and local), would operate in a scenario of total control. However, the inability -or perhaps unwillingness- of the local and regional governments to direct the policy process encouraged other actors to attack these functions, proposing a completely different direction. The vision of these actors was focused on the continuous growth of Cancun irrespectively of the social, economic and environmental consequences in the short term. Thus, the big losers in this process were the local population that witnessed how the developmental promises of the CIPs policy evaporated as the years passed. The dissociation of social and tourism agendas in Cancun created a conflict of interests between tourism developers and the community that seems to be far from being resolved due to the great power acquired by the private sector and the absence of the state to guarantee an effective representation of the interests of the local society.

Finally, with regards to the value of the TALC model to analyse the evolution of tourism destinations such as Cancun, it should be said that it presents several limitations. This model may represent an excellent starting point to build some economic and territorial interpretations but it clearly fails to promote a reflection on the social aspects inherent to the evolutionary process. Looking at the example of Cancun in this chapter, it could be seen that the development pattern suggested in the model is rarely found in reality due to the concurrence of multiple factors. It was corroborated that an analysis of the supply-demand factors alone is not sufficient to

explain why destinations such as Cancun evolve in the way they do. The analysis of other factors (such as institutional structures, power arrangements, local circumstances, the grouping of actors and their agendas and so on) is considered fundamental to constructing a broader picture that can shed some light on the relevance of actors in this process. Although the objective of this research was not to redevelop the original model, the modified variant presented in this chapter can help to gain a better understanding of the evolution of similar destinations, suggesting the adoption of a more holistic approach in the analysis.

## **Chapter 8. Conclusions**

### **8.1 Theoretical contributions of this research**

This study contributes theoretically to a better understanding of the policy process drawing the attention towards the important role that actors play in influencing the way in which policy agendas are constructed, public policies are designed, and delivered to the public. By examining the introduction of the CIPs policy in the political arena of tourism in Mexico, this study has explored the constraints and dynamics of this process paying special attention to describing the human, structural and contextual features surrounding the decisions and events related to it. Above all, the analysis of the political dimension of tourism in Mexico over a period of 80 years in this study has attempted to contribute to the debate of development theories, illustrating the participation of governments in the promotion of development policies and, more particularly, in the adoption of tourism as a development strategy.

This research forms part of the theoretical discussion to determine whether the policy process should be seen as a linear and rational process or a complex one characterised by change. This thesis has attempted to demonstrate that policy-making activities are embedded in multiple scenarios of conflict, resistance, uncertainty and ambiguity, largely influenced by the values, agendas and ideologies of related actors. In this sense, it is widely recognised here that any analysis of the policy process should not be limited simply to assessing whether policy objectives are reflected in the outcomes on the ground but should explore in greater detail the processes related to policy development. The former can help to gain a better understanding of what has actually happened during this process and, perhaps more importantly, why. Thus, the main theoretical contribution of this study is that it offers an alternative analysis of the policy process with reference to tourism and development. It has been argued in this thesis that policy-making should be seen as the result of a constant ideological battle between different actors where divergent interests and agendas concur, aiming to establish a particular vision of “problems” and “solutions” in society rather than a linear process where the formulation and implementation of policies proceed in a sequential and unproblematic manner. Conceiving the policy process in this way enables a deeper reflection on the effects that actors’ decisions, power, perception and values have on policy-making activities.

The actor-oriented approach adopted in this research offered the main epistemological advantage of broadening the understanding of the social changes produced by the emergence and implementation of policies such as the CIPs, paying special attention to the role of human action and consciousness in this process. This involved recognising that the appearance of policy agendas is not exclusively determined by structural factors but also -and perhaps more importantly- by the interests of the actors that control the different organisational channels where policies are brought to life. By placing actors at the centre of the enquiry, this study attempted to stress the active role of actors in the policy process, portraying their ability not only to interpret and internalise the information, experiences and events surrounding it, but also to react and take action in favour and/or against any particular interest. Thus, the notion of ‘agency’ in this study had a special theoretical importance to reflect on how policy agendas are constructed and how related actions and decisions largely contribute to shaping the contours of the policy process over time. It is important to note, however, the importance of understanding this notion of ‘agency’ as sensitive to context since it is recognised here that it can be constructed in different ways according to the society that is studied. In this sense, this study interpreted the actions and decisions of the actors related to the CIPs policy process, paying special attention to contextualising them according to the different social features of Mexico in the periods analysed. The former should be considered as an important requisite to acquire a better understanding of how human action can be influenced by the prevailing construction of agency in the society under analysis.

Additionally, this study contributed to a better understanding of the diverse scenarios of conflict and negotiation surrounding the policy process, developing four social interface analyses throughout this thesis: ‘interlocking relationships and intentionalities’; ‘the centrality of knowledge’; ‘clash of cultural paradigms’, and; ‘power as the outcome of struggles over meanings and strategic relationships’. Conceiving ‘social interface’ as “a critical point of intersection between lifeworlds, social fields or levels of social organisation where *social discontinuities*, based upon discrepancies in values, interests, knowledge and power, are most likely to be located” (Long, 2001: 243; emphasis in original), this study recognised the importance of deconstructing the different episodes of confrontation and/or connection between divergent agendas illustrating the main social transformations produced by the

evolution of the CIPs policy process. The social interface analysis in this study has been useful to expose the political dimensions of tourism in Mexico as well as to elucidate the social, economic, and political effects generated by the introduction of the CIPs policy in the particular case of Cancun. The analysis of these four elements of the 'social interface' concept was useful to reflect on the diverse forms of social organisation surrounding the arena of Mexican tourism as well as to identify the different strategies employed by related actors to bridge, accommodate, and/or negotiate their visions and interests *vis-à-vis* the situations generated by the policy process over time. Above all, the interface analysis helped this research to gain a better understanding of the different encounters and forms of social organisation produced by the policy process from the perspective of the actors that experienced it.

With regards to the analysis of the generation and exercise of power in the policy process, this study explored the three-dimensional perspective proposed by Steven Lukes (1974, 2005). By discussing the issues related to decision-making, control over the political agenda and observable conflict, this research has attempted to prove the existence of this power dimension within the CIPs policy process. The Lukesian perspective of power was useful to reflect on how specific social practices associated with policy-making activities are perpetuated to control the structures through which policies emerge. In this sense, the central question surrounding the exercise of power in this study was: how do the powerful secure the compliance of those they dominate? This was an important consideration since it implied to acknowledge the existence of unequal power relations and hegemony within this policy process. Unlike the pluralist notion that maintains that power is widely distributed through society, a Lukesian notion argues that its exercise is restricted to privileged groups of actors that seek to shape the interests of other actors in their favour. It has to be noted, however, that the degree of control of certain groups over others in a policy process will depend on the prevailing forms of social representation (elitist, corporatist, pluralist, democratic and so on) of the society under analysis. In this sense, a three-dimensional view helped to understand how power was defined in the arena of tourism, by whom, to what end as well as the characteristics of the structures where it was manifested. Likewise, the three-dimensional view of power was useful to identify the barriers that powerful actors created to prevent other actors from entering the decision-making table, dominating

the negotiation channels within the CIPs policy process. By focusing the attention on how potential issues were kept out of the discussions, the operation of power emerged more clearly exposing the interests of those who aimed to control the evolution of this policy process. What is more, a Lukesian perspective of power was useful to shed some light on how important actions and decisions structured the way in which certain groups of actors operated, moulding the contours of the policy process.

Since issues of power have not been at the centre of understanding tourism (Hall, 2007: 247), it can be said that this study is contributing to the former by illustrating the operation of power in the case of the CIPs policy process under a Lukesian perspective. It is important to mention, however, the two main limitations encountered in this analysis. Firstly, this research focused on analysing issues related to power based on observable decisions and conflicts within the CIPs policy process. Although the attention to non-decisions and latent conflict is the foundation of the three-dimensional view of power, the collection of conclusive evidence to illustrate what did not happen in this policy process proved problematic. The former does not mean that several passages of this thesis did not suggest the existence of latent conflicts and periods of deliberate political inactivity within the evolution of this policy process. However, given the subtle nature of these power features, I considered that any claim confirming their existence could potentially be perceived as insufficiently evidenced. Secondly, as Morriss (1987), I also acknowledge the existence of a moral element in any analysis of power. In this sense, the analysis of power presented in this thesis should not be seen as 'objective' or 'neutral' because my own understanding of power exercise in the Mexican context is widely reflected across the chapters of this thesis. This is not to say that my power positionality negatively affected the analysis of the evidence collected in this study but, rather, that I became more aware of the subjective nature of the analysis of power. Considering the former, I believe that any investigation dealing with the analysis of power exercise in policy-making should consider the researcher's perspective of power with special attention to the construction of interpretations about the policy process in order to better understand the political motivations behind the study.

Finally, this study offers an additional theoretical contribution through the construction of an analytical approach to study the evolution of the policy process

(**Figure 2.1**). This approach offers a simplified vision of this complex process, focusing the attention on the analysis of the constant interaction between human, structural and contextual factors over time. By examining the links between the different levels of analysis and the evolutionary pattern followed, this analytical tool aims to help to reflect on the levels of influence of these three units within the policy process. It has to be noted, however, that the extent of the influence of these elements is dependent on the particular features of the political arena as well as the prevailing contextual circumstances of the period analysed. In this sense, it is believed that this approach can help the analyst to identify not only the different agents of change surrounding this process but also a possible domination pattern from one of these elements over time. This approach, ultimately, should be seen as an attempt to bridge actor-oriented and structural visions of the policy process, recognising the enduring nature of their relationship as well as the importance that the contextual environment plays surrounding the actions and decisions of the policy process.

## **8.2 Empirical contributions of this research**

With the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the policy process, this study has explored the case of a tourism policy (the CIPs) in the context of Mexico. The discussion of this thesis illustrated the main features surrounding this process, paying special attention to describe the social transformations produced by the formulation and subsequent introduction of this policy at national, regional and local levels. Aiming to provide some answers to the research questions proposed in chapter one (see **Table 1.1**), this section presents the main empirical findings obtained in this study.

### *8.2.1 Actors influence in the CIPs policy process*

This study has illustrated the important role that networks played in the construction of policy agendas, the establishment of a dominant ideology, the representation of knowledge and the construction of power structures within the CIPs policy process. By examining the antecedents of the tourism arena in chapter four, this study illustrated the influence acquired by certain groups of actors to construct an agenda in this sector. Contrary to the claim of some researchers about a minor participation of the state in tourism during the embryonic period of the policy process (cf. Castillo, 2005; Collins, 1979; Clancy, 1999; Truett and Truett, 1982), this study found that the

actors operating within the government's structures (e.g. Presidents, cabinet advisors, ministers, and so on) largely contributed to shaping the form and scale of the tourism industry in Mexico. Evidence of the former can be found in the discussions related to the case of Acapulco and the appearance of multiple networks of cooperation between the public and the private sector in the US and Mexico in chapter four. The former was important for this study to better understand how particular agendas flourished surrounding the tourism industry, blurring the landscape of state and private interests. Above all, the identification of these characteristics in the Mexican tourism industry was crucial to identifying the main motivations of different actors behind the construction of common projects during this period.

Likewise, this research identified several episodes of confrontation within this arena due to the divergent nature of the political projects of some actors that contributed to the expansion of the participation of the state in tourism development tasks through the CIPs policy. The lobbying activities of some groups such as the MTA and the AMA (just to mention some examples) showed the degree of organisation of some actors in this incipient arena to bring their interests to the table of negotiations and decision-making (e.g. the expansion of the road network and the increase in public expenditure for tourism promotional purposes). What is more, the discussion of the clash of political projects between the 'technocrats' and 'politicos' revealed the existence of an ongoing ideological battle within the government to control policy-making activities during the 1950s and 1960s. The appropriation of the tourism agenda by the 'technocrats' faction, discussed in chapter five, illustrated the influence of these actors on preparing the political ground for the expansion of state powers in tourism development. This control, however, was progressively diminished as the presence of other actors increased in the tourism arena, derived from the implementation of CIPs policy as discussed in chapter six. Thus, the formation of new coalitions of actors was identified in this study as a crucial factor that ensured the continuity of the CIPs project in the long term. The discussion surrounding policy implementation in Cancun illustrated how the appearance of new actors at regional and local levels also contributed to shaping the policy process according to their particular interests and agendas. This study found that the participation of these actors helped to create new structures of control in the local policy process parallel to the policy mechanisms dominated by the central



government. Chapter seven describes how this process of transformation continued once the expansion of tourism activities became a reality in Cancun. The explosive growth of Cancun over the years provoked the appearance of more actors -mainly from the private sector- onto the local scene, profoundly transforming the original actors' landscape in Cancun. Thus, it was explained how these new actors were able to define a new direction for the local policy process privileging private interests over public ones. By analysing the configuration of actors related to the CIPs policy process over an 80 year period, this study has illustrated how they organised and reacted according to the multiple social scenarios generated by this process.

This study also found the development of a dominant political ideology that was crucial to determine the main features of the CIPs policy process. Chapters four, five and six illustrate how this ideology largely influenced the actions and decisions of the actors responsible for the design of development policies such as the CIPs. Also, it was found that despite the constant changes of presidential administrations (six-year period), the objectives of economic growth and modernisation remained intact in the national agenda over time. Not surprisingly, the adoption, creation and reproduction of discourses related to these objectives became a special component of the CIPs policy process. It was interesting to see how discourses of progress and modernisation fabricated abroad during the 1940s and 1950s were adopted in Mexico and subsequently linked to the tourism discourse as discussed in chapter four. It was argued that these discourses were purposively linked to the agenda of tourism development in order to create an aura of legitimacy behind the actions of the state in this sector. Likewise, it was interesting to see how the discursive creation of developed and developing worlds during the 1960s were largely reflected in the design and objectives of the CIPs policy process. There is no doubt that the discursive construction of tourism as a vehicle of development helped to expand the room for manoeuvre of policy-makers and implementers to materialise the intentions of the CIPs policy in the case of Cancun, as discussed in chapters five and six. The discussion of chapter seven regarding the adoption and reproduction of discourses related to the notions of sustainable development in the tourism sector over the last two decades did nothing but confirm the crucial role that discourses play within the evolution of a policy process such as the CIPs.

It is important to note that this study considered the creation and reproduction of these discourses the main resource employed by actors to impose a system of domination within the CIPs policy process. As Mowforth and Munt (1998), I am also convinced that dominant actors utilise particular discursive constructions to persuade and subsequently shape the interests of other actors so as to create a base of social support for their projects. The former does not mean that the reproduction of discourses *per se* ensures an unconditional support from other actors as I recognised that these representations are constantly contested within a political arena. However, the different discourses presented in this study illustrate their ideological potential to create a national tourism agenda, to bring the CIPs policy to life and to maintain a vision of tourism development in Mexico to date. Other resources employed by actors identified in this research included the control over the flow of information in the negotiations (chapter five and six), the creation of epistemic communities to restrict access to the table of decision-making (chapter six) and the creation and transformation of power structures at different levels to secure compliance and reduce the levels of contestation (chapter six and seven). The main finding of this research in terms of power exercise was that it can both challenge and maintain the power structures within a policy process. Chapter five and six described the configuration of new power structures derived from the formulation and implementation of the CIPs policy in Cancun. Although these structures experienced relatively minor changes during the policy implementation phase, chapter seven illustrates a profound transformation in these structures, mainly at the regional and local levels. By discussing these changes over time, this study hopes to have illustrated the dynamic nature of power relations within this policy process.

### *8.2.2 Structural influence in the CIPs policy process*

There is no doubt that the main structural reference found in this study that influenced the actions and decisions of different actors related to the CIPs policy process was the political system in Mexico. The creation of a political system based on a hegemonic political party (PRI) during the 1930s, enabled the centralisation of important decisions around the figure of the president in the following decades as illustrated in chapter four. The high level of representation of the members of this political party in the congress (above 90%, see Lehoucq *et al* 2005) as well as the corporatist organisation of this political party during its heyday (1938-1982), ensured

a government organisation and policy-making environment free of any potential interference due to the effective control over the majority of the pillars of Mexican society (industrial workers, peasant organisations, bureaucrats and some actors in the private sector). Considering the former, this study found that policy agendas and policy-making practices, not only in the tourism arena but also in other sectors, were highly sensitive to the hegemony of this system. It can be said that during the periods of agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation, the actions and decisions related to the CIPs policy were dominated by the governmental structure as chapter five and six illustrate. The former was also true at regional and local levels where the main practices of this political structure were systematically reproduced (chapter seven). However, when this structure entered into a transitional period (1982-2000) driven by important social, political and economic transformations (such as the greater representation of opposition parties in the national, regional and local congresses, just to mention one example), the CIPs policy process was largely affected by this sudden change in the 'rules of the game' as discussed in chapter seven. Through the analysis of the different development plans (national, regional and local), this study attempted to illustrate how these transformations influenced the way in which the CIPs policy process evolved during this period. This study also found that the loss of the presidential power and representation in the congress at the national level and of municipal power at the local level by PRI in 2000 marked a new direction for policy-making practices in Mexico, at least discursively. It has to be said, however, that a major political competition in this structure had not been synonymous of a successful transition to a more democratic system since the main features of the government organisation and corporatist practices inherited from the PRI's system persist to date.

With regards to the structures related to the tourism sector, this study found a dynamic process of institutionalisation close to the government's decisions during the period analysed. Chapter four illustrated how the emergence of state and private organisations contributed to give direction to the tourism industry prior to the appearance of the CIPs policy process (e.g. CNT, CMPT, MTA, MRA and *Sociedad de Crédito Hotelero*). Likewise, this chapter stressed the importance of the role played by the 'technocrats' faction in the tourism arena during the 1950s and 1960s to promote the participation of the economic structure of the government through

institutions such as the Banco de Mexico, the SHCP and NAFINSA. This study found that the economic vision of these institutions became the main point of reference for the design of the CIPs policy process as well as the establishment of a long-term vision of tourism development based on the construction of coastal destinations throughout the country (see chapter five). Derived from the great involvement of these institutions in the genesis of the CIPs policy process, other complementary structural filters were created (e.g. FOGATUR, INFRATUR and FONATUR) to control the processes surrounding policy implementation according to the objectives set in the CIPs policy as discussed in chapter six. This study also found that the appearance of specialised institutions in tourism affairs (e.g. DT, CNT, and SECTUR) during the phase of policy formulation and implementation was not decisive to influence the actions and decisions related to the policy process neither at the national nor at the local level in the case of Cancun. However, as the years passed, the presence of these institutions became more visible once they were able to define the objectives of the tourism agenda, at least at the national level. Chapter seven also discussed how the appearance of more organisations related to the government structures at the regional and local levels (e.g. COPLADEMUN, CPLTD, IMPLAN, SEDETUR and so on) largely contributed to modifying the original objectives of the CIPs policy according to the different agendas followed by these organisations. Finally, this study found that the presence of institutions from the private sector (e.g. CNET, Hotel Associations, Transport Associations, Restaurant Associations and so on) and civil organisations (e.g. *Asociación de vecinos de Pok-ta-Pok*, *Grupo CEMDA*, *MARTI*, and so on) became more decisive over the years, influencing the establishment of new agendas and new forms of social operation within the policy process at national, regional and local levels.

### *8.2.3 Contextual influence in the CIPs policy process*

Based on the evidence collected in this study, it can be said that policy-making activities surrounding the CIPs policy were highly influenced by the contextual changes in the different historical periods analysed in this study. It was found that the prevailing economic environment had a special relevance in the decisions related to the definition of national objectives and, more particularly, the definition of an agenda of tourism development fully supported by the state. Chapter four explored the possible links between the effects of the Great Depression, WWII, the 1950s

currency devaluation and the ISI economic model and the construction of a tourism agenda in Mexico. Likewise, chapter five illustrated how the social construction of an economic decline during the 1960s was a decisive factor for the appearance of the CIPs policy. This study also considers the volatile economic landscape during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s produced by the successive currency devaluations and the profound economic crisis during the 1980s a great source of influence for the adoption of particular decisions (e.g. implementation of the SWAPs scheme) that had a profound effect, not only on the local policy process but also on the configuration of the national tourism industry. Considering the former, this study recognised the economic environment as an important driver in the evolutionary pattern followed by the CIPs policy process during the period analysed.

With regards to the social environment surrounding the CIPs policy process, this study found that the levels of organisation in Mexican society progressively increased as tourism activities spread throughout the country and destinations such as Cancun became a reality. Chapters four and five included some examples of national movements of social resistance (e.g. Cristero rebellion, workers and students demonstrations, and so on) to illustrate how these actions were unable to directly influence policy agendas during this period due to the absolute control of policy-making channels and the implementation of repressive measures to prevent any form of opposition to the state. However, the process of policy implementation in Cancun showed a greater participation of different social segments in decision-making tasks, at least at the local level, as chapter six discusses. This is not to say that all sectors of the local society were able to influence the policy process as the evidence of this study suggests that policy implementers rewarded only those social segments who shared the vision encapsulated in the CIPs policy and excluded those who disagreed with it. Thus, the analysis of the social landscape in the policy implementation stage was crucial for this study to better understand the clash of world views produced by the introduction of this policy and the configuration that the local society would adopt in the years to come. It is important to note that, as the policy process progressed, the social conditions in Mexico and, more particularly in Cancun, experienced a number of transformations, becoming more decisive in policy-making activities as discussed in chapter seven. The former signified that given the increase in the levels of organisation and participation of different sectors of Mexican society

in policy-making activities in the last few decades, the social environment acquired a new dimension to influence not only the CIPs policy process but also the way in which policy-making activities are carried out at present.

With regards to the political environment, this study has provided a detailed account of the great influence of the political system on the CIPs policy process during the period analysed. As already discussed in a previous section of these conclusions, policy-making activities were totally controlled by the structure devised by the political party in power (PRI) during the period where the policy process emerged. Thus, this study found that the CIPs policy process could only be understood in reference to the political structure in which it operated. By understanding the bureaucratic style of the Mexican government, this study was able to identify the main mechanisms through which traditional policy-making practices were perpetuated. Furthermore, the analysis of the political landscape over time helped this study to learn more about the capacity of different government institutions to operate within the CIPs policy process as well as the main transformations they experienced over time. Thus, chapter seven discusses some key events that contributed to creating a turbulent political environment in the 1980s and early 1990s (e.g. fraudulent elections, the assassination of a presidential candidate, the Zapatista uprising, and so on) and that were considered in this study as important agents of change. Although the political transition in recent years, mainly driven by the change of political party holding the presidency (PRI to PAN) and the increase in the participation from other political actors, seemed to be leading towards a more open policy process, this study found that PRI's political legacy still has a strong influence on policy-making activities in Mexico, including those related to the tourism sector. In summary, it can be said that the political environment played a central role in the evolution of the CIPs policy process.

Finally, with regards to the influence of the environmental conditions within the CIPs policy process, this study found a strong link between the environment and the decisions adopted at the local level. Firstly, chapter five illustrated how the environmental conditions during the construction phase of Cancun constituted an important point of reference to carry out the activities associated with implementation tasks. Thus, important decisions were made (e.g. the selection of the area for the project) paying special attention to the prevailing conditions of the local

landscape. Secondly, this study found that the incidence of two destructive hurricanes at different historical moments in Cancun (Gilbert, 1988 and Wilma, 2005), largely contributed to modifying the direction of the CIPs policy process at the local level. Chapter seven thus illustrates how these events influenced the decisions to adopt different forms of tourism development as well as to abandon the original objectives conceived by the CIPs policy in Cancun. What is more, the progressive loss of beaches as well as the increase in the levels of pollution in both the urban and touristic areas, were considered significant in this study to reflect on the different actions taken to deal with the environmental challenges faced by Cancun in recent years. Thus, although environmental conditions normally receive relatively less attention than the economic, social and political factors within an analysis of the policy process, this study has shown that they can actually represent potential agents of change and/or drivers within the evolution of a policy process as happened in the case of Cancun. In this sense, more research is needed to explore the role that environmental conditions can play on other policy processes.

#### *8.2.4 The influence of the CIPs policy process over tourism development in Mexico*

There is no doubt that the introduction of the CIPs policy constituted a watershed in terms of tourism development in Mexico. The information provided in chapter four sheds some light on the prevailing conditions of the tourism industry prior to the appearance of the CIPs policy process. It was explained that the development of the tourism sector largely relied on a number of individual projects without the existence of a cohesive element that could coordinate these actions during this period. Thus, the proposal to expand the role of the state in tourism development through the CIPs policy altered these conditions giving this industry a new dimension. This policy process contributed to transforming the traditional relations between the state and the private sector, redistributing the decision-making powers and defining new roles within this industry. By assuming the leading role, the state acquired more control over the growth of this sector and gained the necessary legitimacy to define the 'rules of the game' in the following years.

This policy process also helped to establish a long-term vision that transformed the traditional idea of tourism development that was held until then based on the experiences of *Acapulco*, *Ciudad Juárez*, *Tijuana* and so on. The construction of new

tourism centres following the examples of international destinations such as Spain, France, the Caribbean among many others, through the CIPs policy allowed Mexico to enter the international tourism market specialised in coastal development. The great impact of this policy process on the tourism industry can be best understood by examining the high dependence that Mexico has developed on the ‘sun, sand and sea’ destinations constructed i.e. *Cancun, Ixtapa, Los Cabos, Loreto, and Huatulco*. Given the explosive growth of tourism activities in these destinations over the last four decades, they have become the pillars of the Mexican tourism industry receiving more than the 45% of total international tourist visitors to the country (FONATUR, 2011).

The introduction of this policy also provoked an institutional revolution within the state giving origin to specialised bodies in tourism (e.g. FONATUR and SECTUR). This study has shown the great relevance acquired by these institutions for the organisation of the tourism sector as well as in the definition of a national agenda. In this sense, the appearance of the CIPs policy process contributed to the coordination of state objectives surrounding the ambitious project of turning Mexico into a world-class tourism destination. What is more, this study illustrated the great influence of this policy process on the construction of a multifaceted role for the state, functioning as operator, regulator, promoter, coordinator, and sponsor at national, regional and local levels. Likewise, by examining the case of Cancun, this study showed that this policy process helped to consolidate a planning approach for the construction of destinations in Mexico that would be sustained during the 1970s and 1980s, and taken up again more recently in the 2000s. Despite the expansion of the support to greener forms of tourism development globally, the CIPs policy agenda is still valid in Mexico as the construction of new coastal resorts following the example of Cancun (e.g. *Cabo Pulmo, Litibu-El Capomo, Puerto Peñasco, and so on*) continues.

This study also discussed the main effects of the CIPs policy process at the local level, exploring the case of Cancun in greater detail. It was shown how the decision to construct a tourism resort in Cancun profoundly transformed the demographic, economic, cultural and political conditions of this territory. This transition process was central to position tourism as the main economic activity in Quintana Roo to date (it contributes over 80% to regional GDP, Gobierno del Estado de Quintana Roo,



2009). Likewise, this policy process assisted in the creation of an important number of channels of cooperation in the tourism sector between the different branches of the Mexican state (central government, regional government, and municipality) not only in Cancun but also in other similar destinations. Consequently, several complementary programs/plans/policies have flourished in different regions derived from the introduction of the CIPs policy, helping to consolidate tourism as one of the most important economic activities in this country. Thus, it can be said that the CIPs policy process has become a central factor in the development of the tourism industry in Mexico over the last 40 years.

### **8.3 Policy implications and further research**

Although it has never been the purpose of this study to determine what would be the best way to design, implement and monitor the evolution of tourism policies, I believe that some of the findings obtained here can help to reflect on some aspects related to policy-making activities that have received relatively minor attention. Firstly, I argue that there is a need to more widely recognise the influence of the human factor in the construction of policy agendas and the design of policies. The former involves abandoning the idealised social construction of policy-making where decisions are made in a rational fashion and oriented to obtain the maximum benefit for the public. This study has attempted to show that the actors related to policy-making activities (policy-makers, implementers, lobbyists and so on) can in fact construct parallel agendas favouring particular interests and suppressing others. In this sense, a better understanding of the interests of the actors responsible for formulating and implementing of tourism policies might lead to the design of new structures of policy-making that ensure a better -and perhaps fairer- representation of all the interests within a policy process. Secondly, I argue that there is a need to better understand the complexity of the local context where tourism policies are implemented. This study has shown that the disassociation of world views between policy-makers and policy recipients can generate irreconcilable conflicts that considerably reduce the possibilities of the policy to achieve the objectives for which it was created. The lack of sufficient knowledge about the complexity of the social, economic, and cultural dynamics in the local context can lead policy-makers and implementers to misinterpret the real conditions and propose solutions to problems that might not even exist. In this sense, a good understanding of the context is seen as

a necessary prerequisite for the design and implementation of more effective policies, not only in tourism but also in other areas of social life.

Thirdly, I argue that there is a need to pay more attention to the voices of the local communities affected by the introduction of tourism policies. Through the case of Cancun, this study showed that the design and implementation of the CIPs policy proceeded with minor input from the community favouring external interests over local ones. I believe that without the existence of effective consultation processes with the target population, it becomes very difficult for tourism policies to deliver the expected outcomes at the local level. Considering the former, it is indispensable to clearly understand the interests and needs of policy recipients prior to the introduction of any policy so as to ensure that its objectives do not produce and/or aggravate conflicts at the local level. Finally, I argue that there is a need to recognise the importance of the construction of effective monitoring mechanisms in order to assess the outcomes and effects produced by the policy after the implementation process. This study showed that the absence of these mechanisms in the case of Cancun generated different scenarios where the state, through its different administrative branches, was no longer able to control the direction of the policy process. Thus, it can be said that the progressive abandonment of the original objectives of the CIPs policy was a consequence of the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms that largely determined the outcomes experienced in Cancun. I believe that the construction of effective evaluation mechanisms is indispensable for policy-makers to identify the effects and outcomes of the policy on the ground as well as to implement opportunely reformulation measures once they are needed.

It is important to mention that this research identified a number of areas that can be explored in greater detail in similar investigations in the future. Firstly, more research is needed to explore the usefulness of an actor-oriented approach to analyse a policy process in other social areas and economic sectors. The former can help to gain a better understanding of the operation of each policy arena as well as to assess the extent of the influence of related actors in the construction of policy agendas. Secondly, more empirical information is needed about other CIPs implementation experiences in Mexico. The former should include not only the destinations originally considered within the CIPs policy (i.e. *Los Cabos, Ixtapa, Loreto and Huatulco*) but also more contemporary destinations that are currently under

construction (e.g. *El Capomo-Litibu* and *Puerto Peñasco*). This work should be oriented to reveal the effects of the CIPs policy in these cases as well as to identify the main differences and similarities between them and the case explored in this research (Cancun). This can contribute to enhancing our understanding of the influence of the CIPs policy on tourism and development in Mexico. Thirdly, further work needs to be done to explore the functioning of the categories proposed in the analytical approach of this research in other policy processes, political organisations and contexts. The main objective of the former should be the identification of additional elements that could broaden the horizons of the analysis of the policy process. It is widely recognised here that the analytical approach developed in this research has several limitations. However, it is believed that it may constitute an important knowledge platform for the construction of a more complete framework and/or model to analyse the policy process. Fourthly, more research is needed to find better ways to investigate subtle manifestations of power in policy-making activities. The former may represent a great advance in our understanding of the policy process and the issues surrounding it. By shedding light on how power structures and practices are organised, the interests behind any policy initiative would emerge more clearly. Fifthly, further research is needed to examine the design of alternative methodological approaches to the one suggested in this research. The combination of and/or implementation of other methods of enquiry (e.g. focus groups, life stories, and so on) can help to consider different angles and construct better explanations. Above all, the information obtained through these strategies should contribute to better understand the role of agency in policy-making. Sixthly, more research can be done to explore the influence of tourism development discourses in the design and implementation of tourism policies globally. Since the construction and reproduction of discourses were identified in this research as crucial for the emergence of policy agendas, it would be interesting to analyse how current tourism discourses (such as pro-poor tourism, sustainable tourism, ethical tourism and so on) are adopted and shape the discursive constructions and tourism development practices in developing and developed countries. The former can help to reveal the main motivations of the promoters of these discourses as well as to understand their role in the different societies. Finally, more research is needed to explore whether the increase in local participation within the policy process leads to the design and implementations of more effective policies. It is recognised here that the inclusion of more voices in the

policy-making process does not necessarily ensure a better representation of all the interests. Therefore, more empirical information is needed to assess how these practices function on the ground as well as to identify the main constraints that prevent the interests of the disadvantaged to be included within the policies.

#### **8.4 Final remarks**

I want to close this thesis by including some final comments. There is no doubt that this study has helped me to recognise the great complexity that the creation and implementation of development policies such as the CIPs involves. I really hope this research contributed to a better understanding of how a policy process happens on the ground as well as to a reflection of how the agendas and interests of related actors can determine its fate. Likewise, I hope this research was able to deliver the message that tourism in Mexico was not the development panacea promised by CIPs policy-makers in the 1960s. Considering the evidence collected in this research, it can be said that tourism in Mexico has developed as a business that is focused on the production of profits for the benefit of private interests at the expense of public ones. Although tourism has always been regarded as a labour intensive activity, the employment generated by this industry in Mexico is relatively low and below its share of GDP. Likewise, despite that, tourism has been commonly referred to as an important generator of foreign currency revenue, the income generated in Mexico for this concept remains behind oil sales, remittances and foreign direct investment. What is more, despite the fact that Mexico is considered one of the main destinations in the world (number 10<sup>th</sup> in flow of international tourists), it ranks 20<sup>th</sup> in foreign revenue generation, 31<sup>st</sup> in tourism disbursements, and 51<sup>st</sup> in competitiveness (BBVA, 2011: 39). Thus, although tourism has been considered a crucial sector for the achievement of development objectives in Mexico historically, it seems that the outcomes generated by this industry have not matched the great investments that have been devoted to its growth.

What can be done to make tourism work for development? I believe that a development policy based on the expansion of tourism activities such as the CIPs can hardly do much to improve the life of local people in any destination unless it is accompanied by an effective system of social representation. The former should include a strong governmental structure, able to more equally distribute the benefits

derived from tourism activities among all stakeholders, as well as to promote more sustainable and ethical forms of tourism development. I hope that those who read this thesis can understand tourism as an activity that touches the lives of thousands people and that it is important for governments to manage it with special care in order to minimise the associated social costs. What does the future hold for Mexican tourism and more particularly for Cancun? It seems that tourism in Mexico will continue growing in the coming years despite the difficult economic conditions globally. The panorama for Cancun, however, looks less favourable since it presents some signs of decline difficult to revert in the short term.

Finally, I hope this study could contribute to effectively illustrating the political dimension of tourism. The former implies to abandon the idea of Mexican tourism composed only by tourists, hotels, beaches, and pyramids and recognise that it is actually a highly contested political arena where an important number of interests and power relations are continuously expressed.

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