

Tourism Growth Poles Revisited: A Strategy for Regional Economic Development in the Dominican Republic

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ABSTRACT Antecedents of resort tourism in the Dominican Republic are traced to the late 1940s, during the regime of Rafael Trujillo. Feasibility studies conducted during the late 1960s defined alpine and coastal regions with high potential for both domestic and international tourism development. Tourist capacity growth, unprecedented in the Caribbean, took place between 1970 and 1992 due to favorable interest rates on loans and government supported investment incentives. By the early 1990s the Dominican Republic achieves the highest physical carrying capacity in the Caribbean. Presently, the tourism service sector is recognized as the nation's third largest employer, after agriculture and manufacturing in industrial free zones.

INTRODUCTION

International tourist arrivals rose from 69 million in 1960 to 160 million in 1970, and to an estimated 475.6 million in 1992. Within this time frame, international tourist arrivals grew by 14.8 percent during the period 1980-85, compared with a growth of about 37.6 percent from 1985 to 1990. The World Travel and Tourism Council reports that the travel and tourism industry is the world's largest, generating a gross output of some (US) \$2,900 billion in 1992, equivalent to 12.3 percent of consumer spending, and employing more than 112 million people worldwide, or 6.5 percent of the total workforce (Caribbean Tourism Organization 1993, 7).

The Caribbean region's participation in the industry's growth has been noteworthy. Since 1985, tourist arrivals in the region increased by 52.1 percent or an annual average growth of 6.2 percent. In 1992 alone, the region recorded 12.1 million tourist arrivals and 8.78 million cruiseship passenger visits. Tourist arrivals rose by 2.9 percent between 1991-92, while cruise passengers to the region grew by 7.7 percent for the same time period (CTO 1993, 11). Although the entire region has benefited from this growth, much of the increase has taken place in a relatively small number of locations. Of the approximate 62,000 hotel rooms added to the region's accommodations since 1980, nearly 77 percent were built in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Aruba, and Martinique. In 1992, there were approximately 145,800 hotel rooms in the 32 Caribbean countries. The Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic were the only destinations with more than 10,000 hotel rooms, and among them accounted for 49 percent of the total. [end p. 87]

The Dominican Republic alone had 24,410 rooms in tourist accommodations in 1992, making it the region's largest destination in terms of room capacity. It is within the context of the dynamic increase of the tourism industry in the Caribbean area that this paper examines the role of the Dominican government in its attempt to capture its share of the tourist dollar (CTO 1993, 79).

EARLY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Resort tourism in the Dominican Republic began during the late 1940s, at the height of Rafael Trujillo's political career. The caudillo promoted ambitious public-works projects and initiated a large scale resort hotel-building program in landscapes ranging from the coniferous Cordillera Central to palm-lined beaches. In all, eight government-owned and operated hotels were built throughout the country, situated largely in the provincial capitals (Aquino 1991). The most famous hotel of this era, the Jaragua, was in the capital, Santo Domingo (formerly Ciudad Trujillo).

The original Jaragua, located on the newly-constructed George Washington Avenue facing the Caribbean, generated both local controversy and international notoriety. Construction of the *malecón* (seaside boulevard) required the demolition of residential housing and the forfeiture of valuable private property. The Jaragua boasted world-class luxury, including formal dining with elaborate and provocative floor shows, and casino gambling. The onset of the Cuban Revolution during the late 1950s, generated an increasing awareness in the United States of Ciudad Trujillo as an intriguing Latin American alternative to Havana. A "big-band" version of a Dominican folk *merengue* tune entitled "Moonlight over the Jaragua" was popularized. An improved harbor and the construction of the new Las Américas International Airport with a connecting modern highway east of the city made possible an increasing numbers of tourists to the Dominican Republic. Preparations were made to hold a large fair (Feria de la Paz y Confraternidad del Mundo Libre) in celebration of Trujillo's 25th year as "ruler." Unfortunately, the attempt to further increase foreign tourism came to an abrupt end as Trujillo's attention increasingly was drawn to the defense of his regime from growing opposition at home and abroad.

The assassination of Trujillo in 1961 launched the nation into a period of social unrest and political turmoil that lasted until 1968. Consequently, few international tourists visited the Dominican Republic in the immediate post-Trujillo period. During this turbulent time, a natural resource inventory of the Republic conducted by Organization of American States (OAS) research teams, underscored the potential for the development of both domestic and international tourism (OAS1967). In addition to its numerous historic sites associated with the earliest years of the Columbian encounter, the wide diversity of its topography and tropical climates, the Dominican Republic has over 400 kilometers of shoreline with quality beaches ideally suited for sunbathing and water sports. However, despite the earlier hotel building phase, the infrastructure to support tourism remained poorly articulated. As recently as 1970, there were only 1,134 hotel rooms in the country, including 639 rooms in Santo Domingo, 358 rooms in the interior of the country, and a paltry 137 rooms at beach locations (ONE 1985). Since 1970, actions taken by the government, combined with domestic and foreign investment, brought about an unprecedented boom in hotel construction, dramatically increasing the carrying-capacity of guest accommodations (Pearce 1991).

This paper employs a functional approach (Lea 1988) to present the processes which led to the phenomenal growth of tourism in the Dominican Republic. A new law that created government agencies which are responsible for the planning and development of tourist infrastructure is discussed, followed by a

description of two distinctive building booms. In keeping with economic theory of the late 1960s (Boudeville 1966; Perroux 1955), decentralized "growth pole" regions were defined as special economic zones for tourism development. Key characteristics of six identified tourism regions are described, including an assessment of the growth in guest accommodations, and an evaluation of social costs associated with this spatial process.

INCREASES IN PHYSICAL CARRYING CAPACITY

On 16 September 1971, the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic passed a resolution creating the Department for the Development of Tourism Infrastructure (INFRATUR). In general terms, the objectives of [end p. 88] the government's new tourism department were as follows:

- a) Promotion and realization of infrastructure projects for the development of tourism
- b) Inducing private investment as a necessary complement to the above investments in infrastructure, and
- c) Cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism to foster development of the entire tourism industry (IPCDR 1986,91).

Action by the Dominican government in conjunction with the Tourism Incentives Law 153, encouraged local private capital investment and long-term low interest loans. By 1974, the number of hotel rooms in service reached 3,259, almost three times the number in 1970, and which included a near ten-fold increase in the number of rooms near beaches. Less dramatic but still substantial increases in the number of hotel rooms took place during the next decade. From 1985 through 1990 the country experienced a second resort construction boom. During that period, the number of rooms more than tripled from 7,133 to 21,510. This figure also includes nearly a five-fold increase in the number of rooms at seaside locations, from 3,329 to 16,849 (Table 1).

TABLE 1. GROWTH IN HOTEL ROOM CAPACITY,
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, 1970-1990

	1	2	3	4	5
Pre-1970	358	639	137	1,134	—
1970-1974	507	1,577	1,175	3,259	287
1975-1979	812	2,663	1,604	5,079	155
1980-1984	965	2,839	3,329	7,133	140
1985-1990	1,163	3,498	16,849	21,510	302

1) Inland Areas 4) Total No. of Rooms
 2) Santo Domingo 5) % Increase
 3) Beach Areas

Sources: Secretary of Tourism, 19 June 1991; *Santo Domingo News*, 1988.

A partial explanation for the second building boom lies in a decided change in government policy that encouraged greater foreign rather than domestic private investment:

[T]he benefits awarded by Tourism Incentives Law 153 are being phased out in order to slow down the present accelerated rate of local investment in the industry. Foreign investment is seen as more beneficial to the country at this time because of the new market sources and connections these new operators bring. Also, a strong feeling that the international operators introduce new, higher standards for the training of personnel, leading to an improvement in the quality of services (Vicioso 1989, 217).

A distinctive characteristic of the second building boom was the construction of larger hotels, where prior to 1988 there existed a ratio of five small hotels to every large operation with over 100 rooms. Building material shortages, inflation, high financing costs, and limited funds for loans brought about a change in the pattern of building guest accommodations of less than 50 rooms to one of constructing larger hotels. Prior to 1987, of 201 hotel properties in the Dominican Republic (with a total of 12,043 rooms), only 31 had more than 100 rooms (Vicioso 1988, 6). By 1990, this number increased to a total of 80 out of 291 hotels, contributing to a rate of growth in hotel guest capacity that is unprecedented in the Caribbean (Vicioso 1989).

Although the projected growth in the number of hotel rooms had not been reached by mid-year 1990 (Table 2), from the mid-1970s through 1992 guest accommodation capacity increased some 645 percent. The growth reflected an average annual increase of 16.8 percent compared with 4.7 percent for the entire Caribbean region, according to the Caribbean Tourism Statistical Report (CTO 1993, 80). During the same time period, Cuba almost doubled its physical carrying capacity to 14,697 hotel rooms, sustaining an average annual increase of almost six percent. Similarly, Jamaica increased its number of hotel rooms in service over 80 percent to 18,531, reflecting an average annual growth rate of just over five percent. In contrast Puerto Rico experienced a ten percent decline in hotel rooms in service, and neighboring Haiti suffered almost a 50 percent loss in guest capacity. The CTO (1990, 79) claims that "The Dominican Republic had 24,410 rooms in tourist accommodation at the end of 1992, making it the region's single largest destination in terms of room capacity." Actual capacity is higher when considering the many undocumented pensiones and guest houses. According to the American Chamber of Commerce of the Dominican Republic, "an additional 7,500 [hotel rooms] are under construction and 8,000 are in some form of planning" (ACCDR 1992). Recent estimates place the number of hotels at over 350 with an investment value of more than RD \$11 billion. [end p. 89]

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF PROJECTED ACCOMMODATIONS BY MID-1990, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Zones	Total		Properties with ≥ 100 Rooms		Properties with < 100 Rooms	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
Puerto Plata	122	10,515	32	7,804	90	2,711
Santo Domingo	49	5,066	19	3,875	30	1,191
Costa Caribe / La Romana	66	6,771	17	4,828	49	1,943
Punta Cana/Macao	6	2,270	5	2,269	1	10
Other Areas	49	2,969	7	1,624	42	1,345
Totals	292	27,600	80	20,400	212	7,200

A) number of properties B) number of rooms.

Sources: *Santo Domingo News*, 1988; Horwath & Horwath, August 1990; *La Industria Hotelera Dominicana en Cifras*, 1990.

[end p. 90] **TOURISM GROWTH-POLE REGIONS**

In the early 1970s, the Dominican government undertook planning for the development of international tourism. With the assistance of a United Nations Development Program grant, and with the World Bank as the executing agency, a number of technical and feasibility studies were conducted throughout the country (IPCDR 1986, 89). As a result, five principal regions were targeted for tourist development. In order of importance, these included the South Coast, North Coast, East Coast, Southwest Coast, and Central Mountains (Figure 1). On the basis of expressed United States business interests, Symanski and Burley (1975) suggested that the former United Fruit Company holdings near Monte Cristi (Northwest Coast) be included as a sixth node.

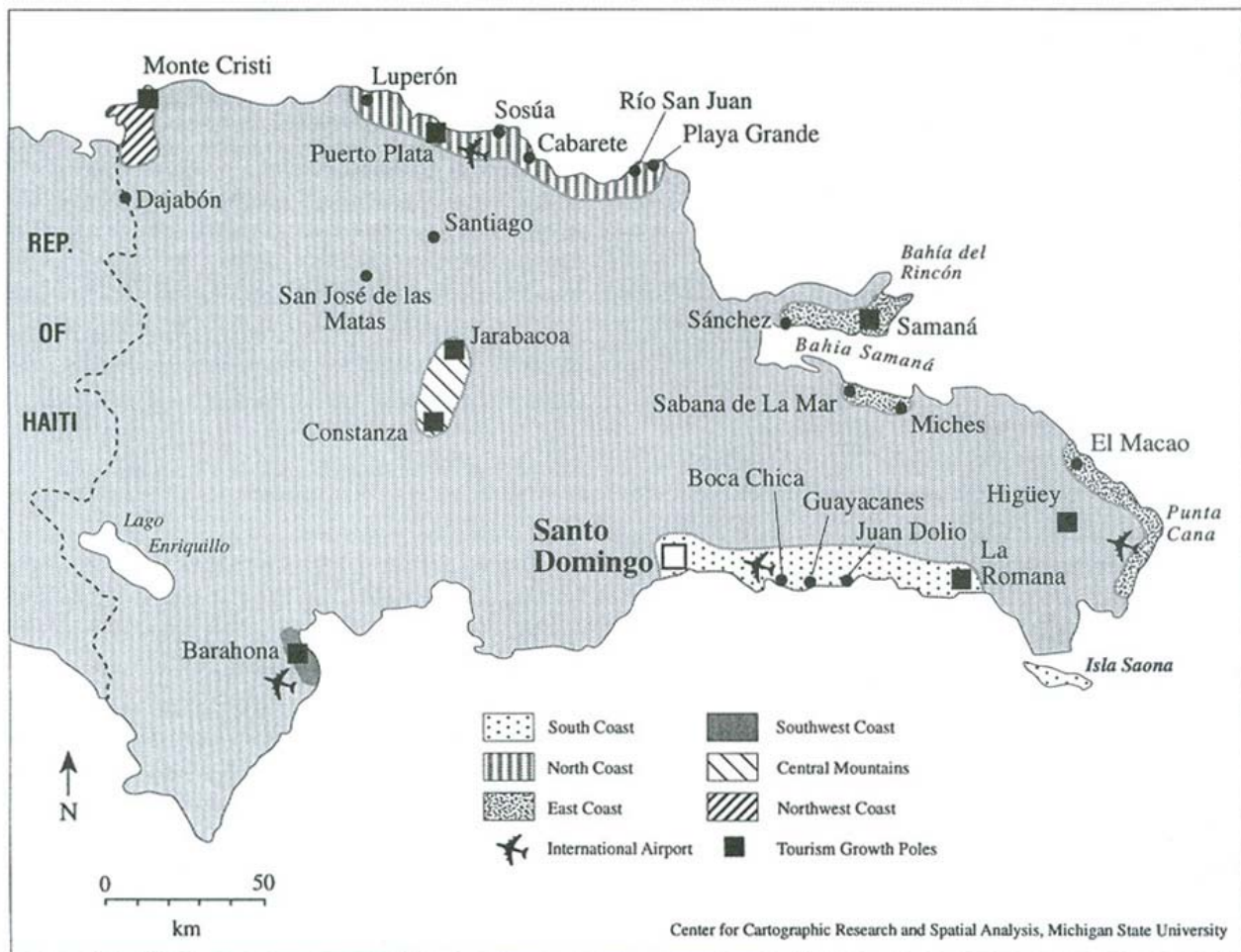


Figure 1. Major Dominican Tourist Areas: Present and Proposed, 1970–1992

The South Coast, also known as "Costa Caribe," extends along the Caribbean coast from Santo Domingo east to the city of La Romana. This tourism region ranks first among the growth pole economic zones primarily because it includes Santo Domingo, the nation's largest urban center, and therefore commands the largest source of local labor, provides support infrastructure for guests, and caters to high popular domestic demand. Moreover, the city's many famous European "firsts," serve as a cultural/ historical attraction (Symanski and Burley 1975).

The historical "firsts" include: the Santo Domingo Cathedral, formerly known as the Catedral de Santa María de la Encarnación (1513); Monasterio de San Francisco, the first permanent church and monastery; and the Hospital de San Nicolás de Bari (1503), among other sites. In addition there are historic buildings associated with Christopher Columbus' family, such as the Casa del Cordon (1503), and the Palacio Alcazar de Colón (1510) built by Columbus'

son Diego during his term of office as Viceroy. A large statue dedicated to Columbus is located in the colonial city's central plaza, Parque de Colón. Nearby, a bronze and marble tomb was sculpted by Spanish artist Carbonell to contain Columbus' final remains within the Catedral Primada de América.

Because of the cultural/historical importance of these buildings, and many others, Santo Domingo was declared a "World Heritage City" by the United Nations. Consequently, throughout the late 1980s, as plans for the year-long commemoration of the Columbian encounter were put in place, international funds for the restoration of key historic buildings and the reconstruction of the colonial city's fortified walls and gates were made available to the government of the Dominican Republic. The "colonial zone" (Figure 2) would function as the nexus for tourists in the city, as well as an important motivation for travel itself to this economic growth region. Outside of the colonial zone, a new monument to Columbus was constructed to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Encounter. Preparation of the Parque del Este site required the dislocation of 50,000 inhabitants living in an invasion *barrio*, many of whom were given no promise of rehousing (Reid 1992). A lifelong obsession of Dominican President Balaguer, the highly controversial Columbus lighthouse (Faro a Colón), built in the Villa Duarte district is presently the city's most visited tourist attraction, according to the president of the national Tourism Promotion Council (Pérez 1994,3). Upon completion in 1992, the lighthouse was estimated to have cost at least \$70 million (US) and provided hundreds of jobs (Anonymous 1994).

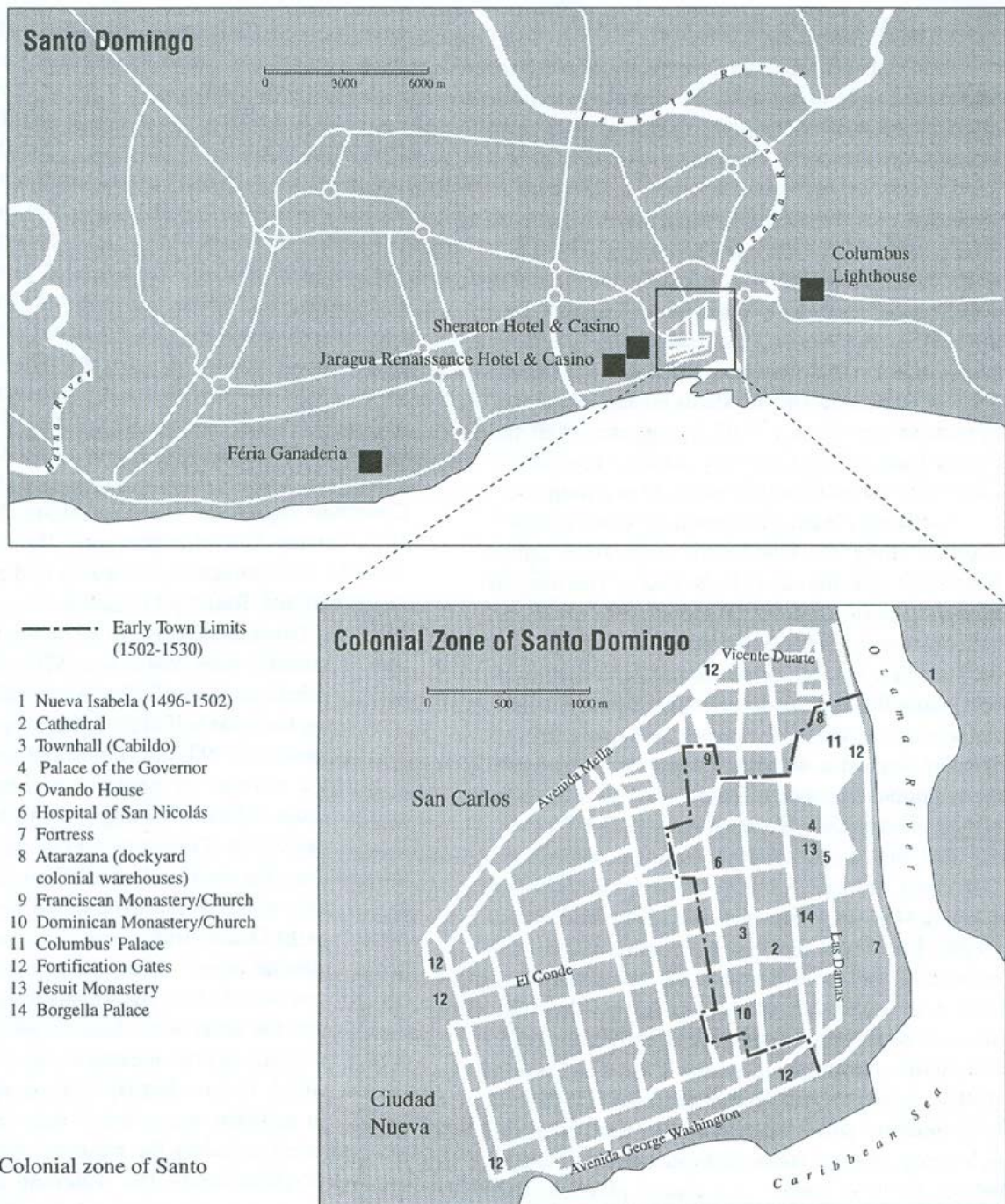


Figure 2. Colonial zone of Santo Domingo

During the latter half of the 1980s, in preparation for the guests of 1992, the Dominican government initiated a number of projects to improve the infrastructure of Santo Domingo. Projects included a major renovation of the cargo port facility formerly located along the west bank of the Ozama river,

and an extension of the *molecón* along the west bank of the river to the Duarte Bridge, providing easier access to the "colonial zone." New docking facilities for cruise ships would allow passengers to down-ramp directly into the heart of the historic sector and the central shopping district located along Avenida del Conde, which is now largely free of automobile traffic. In addition, major urban renewal projects were initiated including the reconstruction of low-income neighborhoods, the widening of several major streets, expansion of the sewage system and power generating stations, and the improvement of the water supply system. The private sector worked to improve telecommunications, construct new hotels and expand existing guest housing in order to provide world-class services, including facilities to accommodate convention meetings with up to 1,300 people (Pérez 1994). Finally, the nation's largest and recently expanded "Las Américas" international airport serves this high priority region. [end p. 91]

Outside of Santo Domingo, vigorous resort development has centered on the region's fine beaches, including Boca Chica, Guayacanes, Juan Dolio, and Playa Minitas. Beach areas near the ends of the growth pole region evolved first, with Boca Chica traditionally satisfying day-use demand from Santo Domingo (Meyer-Arendt et al. 1992), and Playa Minitas functioning as the nucleus of the Casa de Campo complex in La Romana (Pearce 1987; Sambrook et al. 1992). A major renovation of the Casa de Campo enclave resort will take place during 1994, representing a three million dollar investment (Anonymous 1993). In addition to the recent hotel building and rejuvenation of the Boca Chica beach area, significant spatial infilling occurred during the late 1980s and early 1990s, where beaches at Juan Dolio and Guayacanes experienced intense hotel construction.

The North Coast, known as "Costa Ambar" (Amber Coast), extends approximately 125 kilometers from west of Luperon, eastward to Playa Grande, near the small city of Río San Juan. It is known especially for its shaded beaches and its trade-wind littoral climate. Tourism is focused on the cities of Cabarete, Luperón, Puerto Plata, and Sosúa, the latter established as a Jewish colony during World War II (Eichen 1980; Elkin 1980; Henry 1985; Schoenhals 1985; Symanski and Burley 1973). In addition to the colonial era fortification found in Puerto Plata, perhaps the most important historic site from the earliest years of the Columbian encounter is located at the western end of this growth pole region. This first European settlement in the Americas was attempted at La Isabela. Eventually abandoned for wealth and opportunities elsewhere, no standing structure remains at the site. Despite its great importance, comparatively little historical evidence documented this settlement (Dobal 1988; Dor Ner 1991). However, ongoing archaeological excavation supported by the National Geographic Society has produced over one and a half million artifacts since 1987, greatly contributing to the understanding of early Spanish settlement (Deagan 1992). A replica of a late-fifteenth century church was recently constructed at the village location to commemorate the first Catholic mass celebrated in the Americas. Although roads in this section of the region are in poor condition, the number of tourists visiting the remote area has gradually increased.

Puerto Plata itself is of historic importance, housing the reconstructed Fortaleza San Felipe first built between 1520 and 1585. From this jutting headland a small Spanish garrison monitored the activity of freebooters and pirates along the north Atlantic coast, and saw action against the notorious Sir Francis Drake. Puerto Plata is also known for its Victorian-era "gingerbread" style architecture. It has a well-protected harbor that has received cruise ships sporadically since 1972.

Government tourism planners targeted the North Coast for the construction of resorts designed for budget-conscious North American tourists. Conceptualized as "vacation villages," the complexes were to include "horseback riding, golfing, and sunning ... at moderate costs" (Symanski and Burley 1975,22). Subsequently, in 1979, the Republic's second international airport, La Unión, was constructed 17 kilometers east of Puerto Plata (IPCDR 1986). In contrast to the southeastern coast, tourism development along the north shore littoral initially began near Puerto Plata and in Sosúa (Kermath 1991; Kermath and Thomas 1992), and has subsequently extended toward the peripheries of the growth pole service area. East of Sosúa, a seaside community that specializes in "wind surfing" developed rapidly at Cabarete. Cabarete now contains over 1,200 hotel rooms, stretching along a six kilometer beach zone, making it the sixth largest destination resort area in terms of lodging facilities (Meyer-Arendt 1992). Newer resorts are now in operation near Luperón and active promotion for the development of the Playa Grande beach area, near Río San Juan, is taking place.

Initially, the third growth pole region focused on the former fishing village of Samana, located on the southeast coast of the Samaná Peninsula. Christopher Columbus experienced his first close encounter with indigenous peoples at Las Flechas, where he was supposedly fired upon by bow and arrows while exploring the shoreline of Samaná Bay. The settlement has a rich linguistic history, attracting both Europeans from the Canary Islands, and "freed slaves" from the Carolinas, who were relocated during the brief Haitian hegemony of the island. The tourist zone now comprises all of the north shore of Samaná Bay east of the city of Sánchez and wraps around the northeastern terraced headlands to encompass Bahía del Rincón (Rincon Bay). Included in this zone is the south shore of Samaná Bay extending from Sabana de la Mar east to Miches and continuing south along the easternmost shore of the Dominican Republic.

As a result of inadequate airport facilities near Sánchez, the generally poor condition and maintenance of the main north coastal highway east of Río San Juan, and distance decay from regional supply centers and the international airport at Puerto Plata, resort development along the north shore of Samaná Bay and Bahía del Rincón has enjoyed limited success. Like other Third World locations which have experienced counter-productive tourist development leading to land use, social and political conflicts, this region has suffered from the consequences of poor planning and disruptive [end p. 93] development of sites, especially the high negative social costs associated with the displacement of local inhabitants (housing) for resort area infrastructure (Symanski and Burley 1975; Pearce 1991; Yunen 1977). Coastal residents have been deprived access to beaches and fishing areas, traditionally held as common-property resources. Additionally, local communities have long languished as a result of "unfulfilled" expectations of employment opportunities and new prosperity that in most cases has yet to be realized (Reid 1992). Nevertheless, new hotel construction continues near the village of Samana. South of Samana Bay, only a few hotels have been built in Sabana de La Mar since the 1970s. Similar to those found along the north shore, spatial and socio-political factors restrict the growth of tourism.

Recent resort development, however, has been concentrated to the southeast of Miches along a 50 kilometer stretch of palm-lined, white sand beaches between Macao and Punta Cana. This "far east coast" section of the region experienced intense hotel/resort complex construction, financed largely by foreign investors, during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Building levels indicate that much higher rates of success are projected here than have historically been experienced in other sections of the region. In contrast to the rugged Samaná Peninsula, low relief generates little orographic uplift thus offering some of the best weather in the country for sunbathing and water sports. A privately-operated international airport for charter flights services Punta Cana and the "Costa Este" (East Coast) region (Vicioso 1989).

The fourth growth pole region centers on the coastal city of Barahona in the arid southwest. Efforts at tourism development in this region, however, have been stalled for some time. Construction of an aqueduct, coastal road improvements with scenic vistas, hotels, and an international airport began only recently (1988). Although international air linkages had not been established by the early 1990s, several new hotels were constructed to receive guests for the year-long (1992) national celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Columbian Encounter. It is hoped that additional investment in infrastructure will provide greater access to saline Lake Enriquillo and Isla Cabritos National Park, a wildlife refuge that is home to xerophilic plants, iguanas, flamingos, and crocodiles (Vicioso 1989).

The fifth region dedicated to the promotion of tourism is located in the Cordillera Central and originally encompassed the highland agricultural valleys of Jarabacoa and Constanza. Alpine resort development, however, has also taken place near the highland city of San José de las Matas during the 1990s. This mountainous zone caters almost exclusively to domestic tourists. A resort complex near Jarabacoa, known as the "Dominican Alps," features hotels, villas, and cabins with panoramic vistas, bathing, hiking, horseback riding, trails, and waterfalls among the pines. Dominicans equally enjoy the more temperate highland environments for children's summer camps, family reunions, national holidays, honeymoons, professional conventions, religious retreats, and social elite functions, especially weddings.

The potential for tourism in the Northwest Coast zone (Monte Cristi) remains largely unfulfilled. Hotel facilities generally are lacking and recreational facilities limited to serving a small domestic clientele. However, at least one new small hotel was constructed during the early 1990s. Tourist activities in this region include excellent deep sea fishing, boat tours of the extensive coastal mangrove forest near the mouth of the Yaque del Norte River, a hike up a trail to the top of "El Morro," (a landmark feature named by Christopher Columbus), and a comparatively short drive inland to Dajabon for a glimpse of the Haitian border crossing, which is actively guarded by Dominican and Haitian military.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although the impressive growth of tourism in the Dominican Republic may have been inevitable, planners correctly believed that a substantial increase in the availability of reasonably priced (budget) hotel rooms would attract the attention of foreign travel agencies and large group tour operators. The "if you build it, they will come" mentality, combined with flexible laissez-faire government policy and innovative financing, attractive sites, and a gregarious and hospitable people, are all associated with the unprecedented growth in hotel guest carrying-capacity that has taken place since the late 1960s. In 1970, the nation received approximately 90,000 visitors. By 1987, that number had [end p. 94] dramatically increased to over 1 million, representing an average annual compounded growth rate of nearly 18 percent (Vicioso 1989,210). During 1990, tourist arrivals passed the 1.5 million mark, although tourist arrivals declined about ten percent in 1991 in response to the Gulf War and negative publicity associated with the abuse of Haitian laborers employed in sugarcane harvesting (CTO 1993); Perez 1994). Tourist numbers rebounded 7.5 percent, however, the following year. According to the national Tourism Promotion Council, the Dominican Republic drew more than 1.6 million visitors in 1992 and 2 million were expected in 1993. Currently "Dominicana" is the number one Caribbean destination for Europeans, ranking behind only the Bahamas and Puerto Rico as the most-visited destination in the Caribbean (Pérez 1994).

With each hotel room representing two guests and an average stay of five days, the Dominican Republic is now capable of accommodating over three million guests annually. Based on an average occupation rate of 70 percent and assuming an average daily expenditure of US \$80 per person, tourists should generate over US. \$880 million a year (Rainieri 1986, 79). These numbers are realistic. Foreign exchange generated by tourism was estimated to be US. \$587 million in 1987 and US. \$650 million in 1988, approximately half of the total foreign currency receipts (Vicioso 1989, 213). In 1991, it was estimated that US. \$880 million was generated by the tourism industry (ACCCR 1992). Provisional estimates by the Central Bank indicate that tourist expenditures exceeded one billion US dollars during the year-long commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Columbian encounter (CTO 1993).

Tourism is now recognized as the third largest employer in the country, after agriculture and manufacturing, primarily in industrial free zones (EIU). The American Chamber of Commerce notes that "direct employment is estimated to be 50,000; while indirect employment is estimated to be 100,000" (ACCCR, 1992). Finally, what is most surprising about the phenomenal growth of tourism carrying capacity is that it has taken place largely by "word of mouth" with only nominal financial resources, if any, dedicated toward the promotion of tourism overseas by the Dominican government (ACCCR 1992). Consequently, the private sector has responded by creating the national Tourism Promotion Council. Guides advertising tourism in Dominicana now reach travel agents in key North American markets. The impact of overseas promotion on the growth of tourism in the Dominican Republic will be worthy of future investigation.

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RESUMEN

Los antecedentes sobre el desarrollo turístico en la República Dominicana son vestigios del régimen de Rafael Trujillo a fines de los años 40. Los estudios de factibilidad adelantados a fines de los 60, identificaron las regiones montañosas y costeras con un alto potencial de desarrollo turístico, tanto a nivel doméstico como internacional. El mayor aumento de la capacidad turística, sin precedentes en el Caribe, ocurrió durante los años 1970 hasta 1992, debido a las favorables tasas de interés y a los incentivos del gobierno para las inversiones. Para los primeros años de los 90, la República Dominicana alcanzó la más alta capacidad de alojamiento en el Caribe. En el presente, el sector de servicios turísticos es reconocido como la tercera fuente de trabajo más grande del país, después de la agricultura y la industria manufacturera de la zona libre. [end p. 96]