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CULTURAL HERITAGE AND LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHEAST OF MEXICO

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INTRODUCTION

In the richness and diversity of cultural heritage available to Mexico, one of the most important in the world according to different international organizations, manifested in the dynamic economic sector of tourism and notably the southeastern region of significant social and natural resources; as shown by the numerous archaeological and historical sites and enclosures from different periods of the Olmec and Mayan civilizations with UNESCO recognition. National cultural legacy of regional contrasts and especially in the southeast with the convergence of civilizations in the context of the definition of the regional development project required by the local needs of its communities and native and indigenous peoples in the face of the modernization process with urbanization, based on profitability and that does not translate into improvement in the social and environmental conditions of the majority of the population that is located in the lowest quality of life indices in the country (Coneval, 2022).

This heritage faces the dichotomy of having wealth in natural and cultural resources with a population in a precarious situation, which puts into perspective the question of the meaning of cultural heritage for regional development in the specificity of the contradictions between various social actors with the model of prevailing development, between the use of resources with social or commercial value and the high social and environmental costs. Situation that has reconsidered the promotion of projects and works of infrastructure, equipment and public services, with the purpose of promoting the region as a territorial policy strategy to reduce social inequalities; and which in turn accelerate urbanization and modernization. Process that opens new scenarios for the network of population centers at different scales and profiles, rural and urban. Especially

for the municipal scale as an appropriate social and territorial entity to demand the preservation of customs and cultural values of identity cohesion; and appropriate to the particular conditions of the indigenous peoples and communities, the most numerous in the country in the face of modernization.

In this context, the regional cultural heritage of the southeast has special significance, manifested by the approach to its extensive civilizational legacy with the system of sites and enclosures, one of the largest in the country (Conaculta, 2010), in the field of project undertakings and infrastructure works in progress, aimed at diversifying the productive plant and the most dynamic economic sectors, and notably the cultural industry with tourist services. Infrastructure that articulates the necessary integration of dispersed cultural spaces. Constructive processes that imply social and environmental consequences, but also the definition of the orientation and development alternatives, especially for the community population centers of the dispersed and rural municipal localities with marked contrasts with the urban and metropolitan agglomerations, in a framework disarticulated urban rural (Sedatu, 2022).

Context that leads to the question of what conceptual approach to cultural heritage preservation and regional development is appropriate to implement in the specific conditions of the southeast? What causal factors hinder this southeastern region from improving its range in conditions of social and environmental well-being in the national regional context, when it has a wealth of social, natural resources and, in general, the extensive cultural heritage? What model of cultural heritage and regional development policy is appropriate to the social and environmental needs of the population of the southeastern region?

Therefore, we proceed to examine the prevailing conditions of the cultural heritage infrastructure of the southeastern region of Mexico to identify its singularities of potentialities and contradictions, advancing to reveal the causality that hinders advancing a development project from subalternity, which is translate into improving the living conditions of the local population, especially indigenous communities and peoples in precarious situations.

An approach is attempted to the prevailing postulates in cultural studies in the emergence of new fields of research and its necessary transdisciplinary advance towards the environmental humanities around the problem of the culture/nature dichotomy, constitutive of the social and environmental crisis with the depredation of natural resources and the consequences on indigenous communities and peoples and their cultures.

Contrast the prevailing regional development model that has deepened inequality with high social and environmental costs; and, the possibilities of reformulation from subalternity, as a means of vindicating culture to revitalize community life and mitigating the social and territorial contradictions produced by developmentalism.

In this perspective, the work is deployed in two parts: the first is conceptual in the framework of the conjunction of cultural heritage infrastructure from the prevailing regional strategic developmental approach, promoter of the modernization process; and, in the second, of an empirical nature with the contrast of its tasks to the prevailing conditions of scope, limitations and challenges of the budding development project of the Southeast region of Mexico, from the integration of the infrastructural conditions of a cultural heritage system.

The method used is comparative in nature between demographic dynamics in rural and urban locations of cultural spaces and venues. With the weighting of population centers and the availability of cultural services. The articulation between these various places and sites of culture constituted as a system through mobility, productive and cultural infrastructure; weighing distances and times for local and regional visitors. As well as the requirements for public services and collective equipment of population centers located in the coverage and radius of influence of the deployment of new projects and recently built works.

CONCEPTUAL REFERENCES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the practical theoretical process, the conceptual formation and its expression that have guided the prevailing project of the southern regional modernization process and the unequal and contradictory development model are inferred, between positivist developmental approaches and critical and alternative analyzes that have expanded the field of cultural studies. Debate that puts the cultural question of the instrumental sign into perspective by inscribing the conceptualization in a utilitarian and reified way, which moves away from its essential condition of condensation of singular forms of the various social formations in time and space and that has given rise to expressions would contest. Culture separated from the daily life of the original peoples and communities from which it emerged, and now enclosed and housed in sites and museums.

From this notion, the regional developmental model with a competitive base and inequality has prevailed, based on the comparative advantages of having cultural resources susceptible to being commercialized, through

cultural policies of centralist strategic planning and fragmented by insufficiencies in integration infrastructures. Prevailing perspective that shows limitations and that demands rethinking in an alternative way, based on local social needs and in a decentralized manner with the municipal organization. But, what conceptual elements outline the interpretation of the prevailing facts in the cultural heritage condition of the southeastern region? What role does culture play in the face of the regional modernizing developmentalist attack?

The question of the relationship between cultural heritage and regional development implies putting into perspective the dichotomy between the prevailing social and territorial conditions of precariousness and the availability of important social, natural and cultural resources. Or, perhaps for that very reason seen in the prevailing dialectic of the southeast region, the most backward in the country and in the process of modernization with urbanization and productive diversification incorporated into the mercantile logic of national and foreign markets of greater dynamism that reduces its culture for the sake of consumption and leisure, as the main asset to the infrastructure of the cultural industry in regional redevelopment away from the collective work project. Process determined by the appropriation and separation of the population of its natural and heritage resources; and in general their living conditions. Process of accumulation through dispossession, Harvey (2006) calls it, and following the perspective of Polanyi (2009), which separated people from their common social and cultural ways of life; and which led to the instrumentalization of culture with cultural heritage promoted by policies to be valued in tourism markets, with the designation and promotion of international organizations, via UNESCO,

and institutionalization in cultural plans and programs. Process that together results in the most important pole of regional cultural and tourist development in the country.

Cultural heritage inherent to the constitution of the theoretical body of culture of this region, understood as a legacy of the people that represent the collective memory expressed in material and symbolic diversity, translated into cultural spaces and venues that guarantee its care and conservation for access. to knowledge and the right to cultural services by the State. Heritage Culture representative of the civilizational manifestations of the historical process of the various social formations in transformation and conflict. Theoretical, methodological and instrumental body to elucidate the dilemmas of the southern regional cultural issue between the social use of identity strengthening or fragmented by commercial valorization. Controversial positions and approaches in the interpretation of developmental continuity or change in the implementation of instrumental cultural policies and programs by alternative ones.

Regional development driven by modernization with the dynamism of the tourism services sector based on cultural heritage, in the context of commercializing the diversity of the set of natural and cultural resources as a product of a reified sign: nature, landscape, archaeological sites and enclosures. Reification of culture through the separation and museification of public spaces and places, derived from the civilizational matrix of the towns and communities of the southern region. Common cultural identity trunk that articulates the various population centers dispersed in rural and urban environments of the region, but urbanization with the deployment of projects and infrastructure works drives new competitive systemic scenarios to the tourism services sector imposed by the needs of the World Market.

The notion of culture is understood in the context of a certain social formation, as the condensation of the social way of being, in an ontological sense, associated with the modes of production and social relations, and which condition its multidimensionality (Zapata, 2000).

Furthermore, this culture is conceived as a totality of knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, rights, customs and habits acquired as members of a society (Lévi-Strauss, 1992; Bordieu, 2012). It is also worth keeping in mind the deployment of this culture as a process and in specific social realities, and especially in unique sectors of the population, such as indigenous communities and peoples, in relation to the case study of this region.

In Echeverría's (2001) proposal, the definition of culture stands out as the expression of the process of social reproduction and significance of political society that distinguishes culture from civilization. Culture as the ethos of the social way of life that determines its habits, customs, dwellings and refuges; and where the meaning of social and political reality is expressed. In this perspective, culture in political society is related as resistance to the reification imposed by modernization with utilitarianism and the commercialization of forms of existence and community identities by reducing them to the mode of existence as an object of salaried labor. But also, in the cultural resistance that vindicates culture as the dimension of the whole that reflects social existence in all its aspects and functions, of the collective needs and aspirations that identify or individualize it. But he also refers to culture as a process in constant and profound transformation, as a cultural revolution.

In the context of the specific conditions of the deployment of regional development with culture, it is also understood instrumentally more as economic units than as regions

endowed with history, culture and political expression, in competitiveness through multi-scalar markets, where cultural aspects and identity are subsumed into the mercantile economy. With modernization, a process of redefining the region with capitalist restructuring unfolds. Coraggio (1994) constructs the conception of region from considering the relationship between society and nature in a complex and constitutive articulation of the conditions of existence of the social whole; He refers to the region as segments of the territory articulated in a specific locus in the dialectic of human settlements within the framework of the social and territorial division of labor that configures regionalization regulated by profitability criteria.

From a perspective of greater breadth and scope, De Oliveira (1980) proposes understanding the idea of region in the specificity of reproduction and the forms assumed by the process of accumulation and appropriation, the structure of social classes in arrangements and negotiations. to resolve conflicts in the political arena and with the mediation of the State.

In turn, Boisier (1994) highlights the redefinition of the region in the regionalization process and the reorganization required by the conditions imposed by the current phase of capital accumulation, identifying decentralization as a key factor for insertion into emerging markets with competitiveness, in a new twist of modernization in the opening of markets based on the distinctive regional potential and attributes that marketing identifies as a "brand region", or "product region" to attract investments and energize labor markets. For his part, Fernández (2008) refers to the emergence of a new regionalism in the face of the scenarios of strong competition that regionalization in Latin America faces with the restructuring of productive and

market relocation, policies of deregulation of the use of resources and Labor conditions; but also, of new forms of social resistance.

With these categorical references, the relationship between the cultural heritage legacy and the regional development of the southeast, it is feasible to advance in the interpretation of the deployment of the current phase of the modernization process, with culture at the center as a potential for collective memory and distinction as «cultural capital» (Bourdieu, 2000) susceptible to commercialization. The richness of the heritage of the cultural heritage of the Mayan civilization formed by the conjunction of community participation, living traditions and natural landscapes, constituted as regional income in dispute due to the expropriation, extraction and appropriation of the assets of the native peoples, by the interests of national and foreign capital, in the context of what Harvey (2001) calls the appropriation of the material and symbolic potential of places as monopoly rent. Process that has had the important contribution of official promotion policies in the formation of the cultural heritage framework aimed at attracting investments and competitive tourism.

THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE SOUTHEAST REGION

In the context of the potentialities and contradictions prevailing in the southeastern region of Mexico around the relationship between cultural heritage and regional development, it is noteworthy that in this conjunction the dynamics of urbanization and modernization have occurred in the national regional framework. unequal, which inscribes the southern region as the one with the greatest social backwardness and inequality (Inegi, 2020), despite its rich cultural heritage and social and natural resources, in the

context of the dialectic of appropriation and resistance of collective goods. Around culture, the regional singularities deployed in the entire environment of the social formations of these native peoples are condensed, who paradoxically find themselves in conditions of precariousness and poverty as documented by official indicators (Coneval, 2022). How does this process of transformation of the festival from the culture of identity and integration of the social fabric to the commodification of culture and social and territorial fragmentation and, in turn, resistance occur? With what means and instruments was this modernization process carried out? What stages, plans, programs and approaches have guided cultural heritage policy for regional development?

Regarding these issues, it is argued that culture is a key element that allows progress in elucidating the process of accumulation through dispossession that the modernization and urbanization project has been deployed under various regional development strategies, with advances and setbacks, by inscribing the “brand region” in the competitive world market, but with resistance from the subaltern classes. Culture transformed from social to commercial value as cultural heritage with the State and instrumental cultural policies of valorization for the promotion of investments in the territory. This link implies locating heritage as a cultural system in its territorial context of varied expressions (Olmos, 2004).

The singularities of the cultural heritage and the orientation of regional development are determined by the social and natural conditions of social formation in the specificity of the richness of the environment, underlying the Olmec and Mayan cultural matrix, in the biosphere reserve with the natural resources of forests and the basins of the Grijalva and Usumacinta rivers, for the deployment of large modernization projects

and infrastructure works, predecessors of the current works in progress with strong social and territorial impact in the dynamic productive industrial and service sectors tourism with strong demand and competition in the world market.

Elucidating the predecessor process of the current scenario around culture as the main active resource that triggers the “cultural industry” (Canclini, Piedras, 2006), necessarily passes through the moments of rediscovery of the world and the Mayan civilization of the region. Elucidate the varied cultural expressions of the singularities of the sites and places of the establishment of the cultural system of the main museums and archaeological zones of Palenque and Chichén-Itzá; along with the landscapes of the Riviera Maya and the Cancun tourism development pole; as well as the towns and cities of historical heritage, in the context of the great regional development plans of Chontalpa and the Grijalva and Usumacinta River Basin (Barkin, 1982). Process initiated with decentralization and modernization within the framework of the contradictory agrarian distribution of communal resources. That is, he politically promoted the social demands of agrarian reform for the communal dispossession of natural resources and ways of life of social and productive community organization, but with manifestations of resistance. And with this, the resignification of one’s own culture, oriented between utilitarianism or cultural heritage identity.

Facts that promote urbanization and regional development by accelerating demographic and migratory dynamics from rural to urban and metropolitan, restructuring the framework of all human settlements in the region, manifest in changes in land use and the promotion of real estate market, with accentuated contrasts in the system of cities and towns, between dispersion and

concentration of population at various scales and within itself, in a fragmented social and spatial fabric and loss of identity.

The urbanization and explosive population growth of the municipality of Benito Juárez, in Quintana Roo, where the Cancún tourism development hub was deployed, is especially relevant, registering the highest national population growth rate, with high costs and social and environmental consequences serious (Espinosa.Coria, 2013).

In this process of modernization and regional urbanization, material and symbolic culture manifests itself in a broader sense and in the transformation of the set of distinctive, spiritual and material, intellectual and affective features that characterize a society, or a social group. In addition to arts and letters, it encompasses ways of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs, according to the position assumed by the country, in Mexico’s declaration on cultural policies (UNESCO, 1982). However, faced with the interests of the social agents and actors involved, the orientation of these cultural policies has been redefined with the valorization of identity assets as products of the cultural industry.

The process of consolidating cultural policies goes through the creation of institutional organizations in its conduct on a long path that goes from the National Council for Culture and the Arts, Conaculta, to the current Ministry of Culture and its main organizations, the National Institute of Anthropology and History, INAH, and the National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature, INBAL. Given the relevance of the original pre-Columbian cultural diversity and of various ethnicities that still exist, and the colonialist heritage with miscegenation and popular cultures and traditions with a strong identity presence with international recognition, they justify the international promotion of cultural

rights since the creation of UNESCO, in 1946. However, important political initiatives and actions were taken before to promote culture with the “Cultural Missions” of the 1920s, with the idea of its dissemination through the educational sector and the creation of the Economic Culture Fund and the National Indigenous Institute. But, it is with the advance of modernization and urbanization starting in the 1950s that popular cultures expand with rural-urban migration (Crespo, 2002).

In this deployment of cultural policies, the State redefines its profile with the orientation of the modernization project with the promotion of cultural heritage and its implementation. Specifically, with the neoliberal turn, cultural policy for market-based development is reformulated, in accordance with trade agreements with North America (see the National Culture Program, 2001-2006).

Within the framework of the deregulated cultural policy as a product of population centers and the singularities of the ways of life with the tourist policy of the “Magical Towns” program that gives another twist to the accumulation due to dispossession within the towns, particularly places with “charming” attributes, like theme parks, such as historic centers, by displacing the local population, by external population with higher levels of economic income, by changes in land use and real estate for the sake of profitability. Directing these towns towards museification with an artificial and scenic urbanism lacking the vibrant urban life of habitation. Touristification of the built environment and precariousness of service work, stripping the knowledge of artisanal work, widely documented (Hernández, 2022).

The unique forms of the modernization process through southern regional urbanization confront the modalities of transformation of the built environment

between natural and artificial forms and the prevailing developmental planning approach, determined by the correlation of hegemonic social and political forces in the valorization of the regional resources through cultural heritage.

It is worth highlighting this instrumentalization of the constitutive attributes of cultural heritage in the distinction of the “brand region” of competitiveness in the world market, in the postulates of international organizations such as the OECD, and which gave rise to the promotion of the policies of the National Program of Infrastructure, so attractive to the construction industry and related companies, which have influenced the design and implementation of private investment and public financing formulas in public works and their concession to individuals in the neoliberal turn. That is, the strategic planning approach, far from the comprehensive vision.

In this context of promoting the various attributes of social and territorial order and at the same time in the contradictory dialectic with the largest number of native population and indigenous communities in the country, 30% of the total (Inegi, 2020), and cultural heterogeneity due to its traditions and customs, distinctive in the tourist guide almanacs, ignoring the social contradictions due to the control and appropriation of resources from which the social and political effervescence has derived at different times, but the high point is the outbreak of peasant revolts in search for municipal autonomy, with forms of government based on local uses and customs, as resistance to the dispossession of resources is manifested.

The social political context of the southeastern region allows us to interpret the current moment, due to the interest in the undertakings of the main productive infrastructure works registered in the

National Territorial Planning Strategy (ENOT, 2021), based on reorienting development with the stewardship of the State and reestablish regulation in the use of natural and cultural resources. This scenario places in perspective the regional process of southern modernization, manifest in the predecessor projects that defined its social and territorial condition of inequality and social and environmental polarization, which can be synthesized in three moments articulated with the profile of the State and the policies undertaken, in particular the definition of the condition of culture and its patrimony: from the Welfare State to the turn of the Neoliberal State, and the current State in the refoundation of the social character of post-revolutionary inheritance based on hegemony and consensus, but due to social resistance of collective action, in the manner of Gramsci (Montali, 2019), and the redefinition of the ongoing nationalist project. Therefore, action in the region with the greatest needs is significant. However, greater reflection and expanded discussion is required among the various actors, especially the indigenous peoples in defense of their resources, to reformulate the scope and relevance of the strategies undertaken towards the required development.

Furthermore, two important moments define the meaning of the modernization project and the development priorities based on profitable strategic sectors and investment attraction: the Ministry of Tourism and the National Fund for Tourism, Fonatur, in the focus of strategic planning, under the postulates of developmentalism of the influential Economic Commission for Latin America, ECLAC; and, the implementation of the regional development poles approach with the promotion of the tourism development poles of the Riviera Maya and Cancun, the most important in the country. In addition to

the set of cultural infrastructure constituted by the diversity of sites and enclosures of archaeological zones and population centers and cities with historical and heritage value that have a UNESCO designation.

These cultural heritage distinctions place Mexico among the most important in the world, in sixth place, only below Italy, Spain, Germany, China and France; but, the most relevant in Latin America, due to the number of sites of historical and cultural value registered by UNESCO (1982). The heritage sites of this southeast region with UNESCO designation: the City of Campeche, Mayan City of Kalakmul, Palenque, Oaxaca, Monte Alban, Sian Ká an Ecological Reserve, Uxmal, Chichén Itzá (Secretary of Culture). Together with 24 archaeological zones (Fonatur, 2022)

The inventory of heritage resources underlies the process of valorization of the achievements in promoting infrastructure. It is with the program to improve archaeological zones, Promeza (see map), with the task of strengthening the infrastructure of the sites that will see an increase in the number of tourist visitors, with the operation of the regional linking infrastructure and integration of cultural spaces and the main tourist destinations as a system (INAH, 2023). The program includes promoting research, conservation and infrastructure and visitor services at 21 archaeological sites in the process of remodeling. The basis of the strategy consists of articulating the main sites that have been declared cultural and historical heritage by UNESCO and radiating its influence to the diverse set of places, susceptible to attractiveness and interest in a cultural corridor of regional scope, within the framework of the strategic planning model.

But what is relevant in the process of accumulation through dispossession of cultural heritage is not in the scenarios of absence or nostalgia for what has been lost, but

in the subaltern resistance of the indigenous peoples and communities that still keep the cultures of the that these cultural industries derive, despite the policies and reforms that normalize dispossession with the opening of markets to the concession and privatization of natural resources, public services, collective facilities and infrastructure.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the argument presented about cultural heritage and regional development in its purposes, it is considered as a synthesis that cultural heritage as the axis of regional development in the southeast of Mexico, expresses the result of the process of current potentialities and contradictions and the challenges imposed by modern urbanization and intense migration from other regions and countries, expanding multiculturalism and reconfiguring the region; at the same time as the increase in violence and the displacement of peoples, the dispossession of community resources and resistance assuming new modalities. What directions is this regional development and its southern cultural heritage taking? It is evident that social resistance has advances and limitations, but significant in vindicating the ongoing social policy with the projects and works of productive infrastructure and the regulation of the use of social, territorial and cultural resources for the improvement of the living conditions of the population. population, as reflected by social well-being indicators.

However, they are still insufficient. These advances for their consolidation require deepening with collective participation as a project from the subalternity, where culture is the axis of reestablishing the social fabric for alternative development.

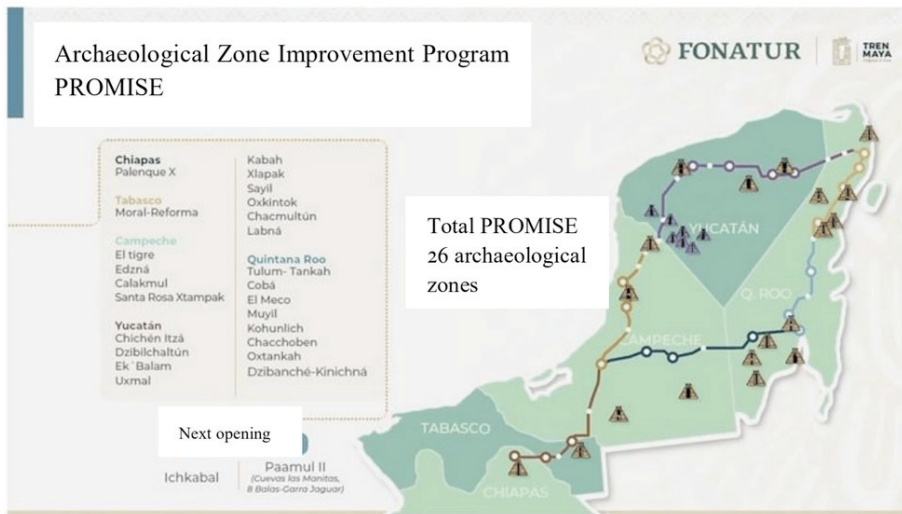
In the conceptualization for the critique of the instrumental notion of cultural heritage and modernist regional development to

interpret the specific conditions of the southeast, based on its own contradictions and that in turn hinder this region from improving its rank in conditions of social well-being and environmental in the national regional context, when it has a wealth of social, natural resources and in general the extensive cultural heritage. The model implemented to promote this process of accumulation by dispossession is developmental and strategic planning in nature. Situation that has led to confrontation and social effervescence of resistance and search for alternatives to unequal development.

The central question of the relationship between cultural heritage and regional development puts into perspective the dichotomy of the modernization and urbanization process, in the dialectic of the most backward southeastern region of the country and the drive for the dispossession of cultural heritage resources in the reduction of social value of culture to commercial valuation, and resistance by indigenous peoples.

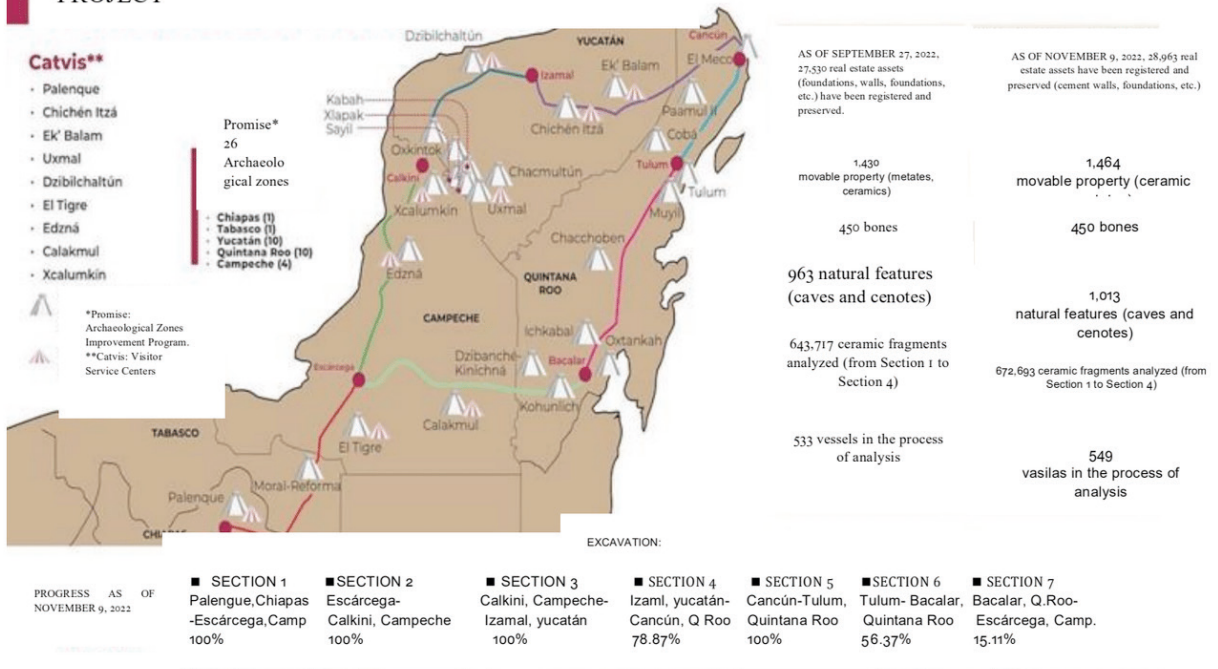
In this process of modernization and urbanization, the development model of accumulation through dispossession is identified, where the environment built collectively as culture by the native peoples and communities and heirs, has been transformed with the commercial instrumentalization of cultural heritage with the dynamic and profitable industry. cultural and tourist, with a developmental and strategic planning approach. Cultural heritage assets promoted by cultural policy and infrastructural undertakings to stimulate capital investments, through the system of sites and enclosures separated and far from population centers.

Dialectical context of dispossession and resistance to the loss of social, natural and cultural resources, the singularities of the modern development of capitalism and the contradictions of the pace of urbanization



Source: Fonatur, INAH, 2022.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SALVAGE IN THE MAYA TRAIN PROJECT



Source: Ministry of Culture, 2022

are expressed in the structure of human settlements dispersed and concentrated in the profiles of the municipalities of the most numerous native population and indigenous communities of the country. Resistance to the disappearance of ways of life and culture. Resistance to the advance of capitalism with social effervescence and the autonomist

movement. Resistance to the loss of natural and social resources of cultural heritage and the unequal regional development model. With the resistance and persistence of customs and forms of identity due to the collective use of heritage assets and natural and cultural resources.

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