


**URBANIZATION AND LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF
SOUTHEASTERN MEXICO** <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2024.029-023>**Javier Pérez Corona¹****ABSTRACT**

In the multi-scale national urban scenario, the urbanization of the southeast region stands out due to the accelerated dynamics in a rural/dispersed and contrasting environment between metropolization and numerous ethnic localities and indigenous communities in precarious social and environmental conditions, but which have socio-territorial resources, attractive to investment in strategic sectors: oil, agribusiness and tourism services; along with infrastructure projects of mobility and transportation. Urbanization that rethinks development between forms of dispossession of common goods and the resistance of native peoples in their ways of life and territorial habitation. Local and regional development that puts in perspective to face the contradictions of developmentalism and alternatives from the subalternity. What characteristics redefine singular urbanization from rural/dispersed population centers and the forms of municipal development of indigenous communities of regional scope? To this end, the determinants of urbanization are examined with demographic dynamics and the structure of human settlements in agglomeration/dispersal areas and the social/ethnic profile, to identify development trends. A statistical review of the population and localities and conditions of access to common goods is carried out; together with planning/public works in community municipalities. Some results highlight trends of extended urbanization and persistence of concentration/dispersion, but with intermunicipal articulation due to infrastructural undertakings and some progress in local development, due to social/community cohesion.

Keywords: Urbanization. Local development. Municipality.

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INTRODUCTION

In the national metropolitan urban condition, the singular urbanization of the southeast region is manifested by the accelerated dynamics, in a predominant structure of rural and dispersed locations, but with a contrasting composition between metropolization centers and numerous localities of ethnic population and indigenous communities scattered in a territory of low population density. This large indigenous population represents the largest percentage of the national total (INEGI, 2020), and is a significant social component of the regional profile, characterized by precarious social and environmental conditions, with the lowest welfare indices, according to the indicators of the agencies in charge of evaluating Mexico's social policy (Coneval, 2022), but which have valuable natural and cultural resources attractive to economic investment in sectors strategic: oil, mining, soil, water, forests, heritage and archaeological zones. A propitious context for the implementation of State interventions in the definition of the modernization project and rural/urban social transformation, with territorial policies and the undertaking of infrastructure works for regional development and to promote urbanization, as ways of alleviating the lack of basic public services, collective facilities and infrastructure of the localities.

In a general approach to the problems of the southeast region and specifically to the object of study of urbanization in ethnic localities, it can be broken down into three levels: (i) at the general level, the modernization process implemented by developmentalist policies to promote urbanization and urban rural transformation with differentiated social and environmental consequences in the national unequal regional structure, which inscribes the southern region as the one with the greatest backwardness, manifested in the localities of indigenous communities. (ii) the regional dichotomy of the rapid advance of urbanization in the conditions of rurality and dispersion, in the particularities of the social and territorial profile of precarious localities, which put into perspective the question of the dilemma of development, between design for social change, or, to reproduce inequality, which has prevailed for decades. And, (iii) the social and territorial implications of the infrastructural undertakings of the regional development policy, with the acceleration of urbanization, in the adjacent ethnic localities, manifested in the dialectic of dispossession and resistance, which opens new scenarios and challenges in the structure, condition and organization of the territorial habitation of the dispersed indigenous peoples.

What characteristics redefine urbanization and regional development that is configured in the environment of contrasts of dispersed rural localities and in the sphere of influence of dynamic urban/metropolitan centers, which in its advance and deepening



transforms the common goods of the native peoples, and which is manifested in the dialectic of dispossession and resistance; and the alternatives of reformulating a development project for social change from the subordination and autonomy of the native peoples?

For this reason, it is argued that the prevailing conditions of the southeast redefine regional urbanization based on the contradictions manifested to a greater extent between the precariousness in the levels of well-being of the localities and native peoples, compared to the hegemonic urban centers, in the dialectic of dispossession and resistance for the use and appropriation of social and natural resources. In the rural, urban and metropolitan dispersion/concentration relationship, in the face of the definition of the social and territorial development project in the making. In short, the trend of a singular extended urbanization of multi-scale articulation is contemplated, with a strong presence of dispersed and rural localities within the framework of rururbanization in the ethnoregional context.

To this end, the purpose is to identify the trends that shape the singularity of urbanization in the environments of dispersed localities of ethnic population of indigenous communities in the southeast region, particularly in the sphere of influence of the deployment of infrastructural undertakings and the social and territorial consequences in adjacent municipalities, and the scenarios of alternative development from the subalternity.

This field of knowledge of urbanization studies represents an inexhaustible source of contributions for the understanding, discussion, intervention and analysis of the processes of socio-territorial transformation in different scenarios and realities. So useful that they allow us to elucidate the specificities of the study that concerns us due to the singularity of the rural/urban dynamism in ethnic localities, representative of the cultural wealth of the country, among the most important in the world, which must be preserved as heritage. A process that has led to theories of urbanization to constitute a scientific discipline, with the early contributions of Ildefonso Cerdá in elucidating the determining elements of the social need for the multi-scale construction of the habitable social space, based on the components of collective life of provision of services and mutual aid, with the house/shelter, neighborhood and land uses between dispersion and concentration (García Bellino, 2000). As well as the territorial transformation and social relations and contradictions in the socially and politically produced space by planning and urbanism, between rurality and urbanity at various scales of the space lived, perceived and conceived as a determinant of daily and cultural life, according to Lefebvre (2016). Also, in the perspective of the transformation with urbanization from the local to the regional, in the use of resources of social and mercantile value, Harvey (2007) refers to the spaces of accumulation by dispossession of common



goods, but that in its mission lies the dialectic of social resistance, derived from the contradictions of the process of production and distribution in capitalist urbanization. and that in the dimension of social reproduction this resistance is gestationed, as part of the formative process of political consciousness.

Broadening the view of the general aspect of urbanization from critical studies in the complexity of its scope of interpretation of the transformations of the space of the different social formations as productive potential and social reproduction, the elementary notion of urbanization is assumed as a process of change from dispersed to concentrated forms of inhabiting and vice versa. with implications in the set of dimensions of social and spatial life. In this perspective and condensation of the long theoretical and empirical scope of the urbanization process, Brenner & Schmid (2015) refer to urbanization as a multi-scalar process and global deployment as the totality of space that provides the basis for the thesis of planetary urbanization, characterized through the new expressions, broken down into seven theses. A position that questions the reductionistically established approaches of the so-called "urban era", used uncritically in the face of a complex reality in rapid and constant transformation in a differential way by the various actors, which makes it essential to reformulate its obsolete categories in order to understand the changes in the built environment and the epistemological foundations of critical theory and praxis. It identifies new forms of the urbanization process, manifested in concentrated, extended and differentiated, with the conviction of understanding urbanization as a collective project between appropriation and protest; or, between dispossession and resistance, which has been reiterated.

Also, within the framework of critical studies of urbanization and with greater emphasis on the organization and ordering of sites, specifically urban planning, García-Buitrago (2023), rethinks the process from the perspective of subalternity, in the reorganization of collectively built space, as opposed to the onslaught of urban policies to annul the liberating subaltern potential. In this sense, he inscribes capitalist urbanization as a mode of spatialization, in accordance with the imperatives of accumulation and the reproduction of consistent social formations of modern development.

Finally, assuming that this process of urbanization implies territorial organization, it is inscribed in the modernization project and in which the accumulation by dispossession of common goods underlies, but with the social resistance of the subordinate or subaltern population, in Gramsci's perspective, and which has promoted a strand dedicated to the studies of subalternity (Thomas, 2018), which refers to the heterogeneous set of dispossessed popular social classes, but with transformative potential. Foundations of the



strengthening of the current urbanization of a contradictory nature in the dialectic of dispossession/resistance; of change and transformation in the forms of appropriation of the social and of mercantile valorization in accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2007); but, in the process itself, there is an underlying opposition on the part of the subalterns, which in specific conditions of the localities of the southeast region emerges as "critical regionalism" opposed to the onslaught of urbanization modernization, with the vindication of the singular social meaning of the collectively built environment with the resistance to individualistic utilitarianism (Frampton, 1988).

In this urbanization, interventions of the planning of the development project are articulated, which systematizes territorial planning based on political power based on hegemony and consensus for transformation for reasons of public utility, following Gramsci (Modonessi, 2010). Political power for utilitarian transformation in areas of widening inequality, with the formation of political subjectivities of the insubordinate and the potential of emancipation for the self-determination of the right to social organization and the use of common resources, from autonomy, in accordance with the proposal of Modonessi (2010), referring to the conjunction of subalternity with autonomy to reformulate an alternative development project, from the deepening of social contradictions. This emancipation is condensed into two aspects, as organizational and ideological independence, in the prevailing social framework, or as a formative process of the emancipated society. This dilemma is central to the cultural and territorial problems of local and municipal autonomies in the exercise of the independence of peoples and the State. Scenario of the perspective of the studies of community localities that highlights their potential of regional scope with the articulation and coordination between autonomous and democratic municipalities in the face of modernity as a radical position (Bookchin, 2012), contributing to the discussion of alternatives to free development. The idea of autonomy as an emancipatory project is increasingly present in the current phase of modernization in organized protest convergence of indigenous peoples and communities of the south, in the agenda of social, territorial and cultural self-determination; in addition to the necessary anti-hegemonic epistemological reformulation (De Sousa Santos, 2023). This condition opens a broad debate on the scope of autonomy as an alternative project of transcendence, beyond the scope of community localities, in the regional and national scenario of urban and metropolitan predominance.



METHODOLOGY

The development of the work is based on a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative order, by the collection of information through the review and comparison of population statistics from the last censuses, which allows the identification of the average annual growth rates at the local, regional and national scale; along with the territorial contrast, the deployment of population centers and the type of rural, urban or metropolitan profile, with the ranges of the number of inhabitants and the average density. And, qualitatively, by the review and documentary analysis of urbanization and territorial policies and agrarian, urban and regional development.

The study population that is considered representative of the region, in number of localities and municipalities with a rural and ethnic profile, which allows the identification of the singularities of the dynamics of urbanization in the dispersed localities and around the radius of influence of the main infrastructural undertakings of articulation with urban centers of greater regional hierarchy, through the availability of and access to basic public goods and services, to weigh the levels of social welfare against the ranges established by development measurement agencies in Mexico.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The singularities that define urbanization in conjunction with the local and regional development of southeastern Mexico are manifested in the condition of the population and deployment in the structure of human settlements in the process of social and territorial formation, with the vicissitudes in the definition of a joint project, between the conflicting interests of the various social actors and the State. And, that in this approach to a distinctive regional urbanization implies elucidating some social and spatial aspects of special relevance, between the dispersed localities and the agglomerations of metropolitan scale in a disjointed rural urban system, which has implied interventions of regional development policies in the use of strategic natural resources with ambivalent results. A basic aspect for implementing development programs in the region is regionalization, which presents differences in delimitation. The current regional development program for the southeast refers to five entities: Campeche, Chiapas, Tabasco, Quintana Roo, and Yucatán, where the most important undertakings of the current territorial policy are deployed (Sedatu, 2022), among which two are noteworthy: The Mayan Train as an articulator of various complementary programs; and the project of the Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, which are carried out in the southern part of the entities of Oaxaca and Veracruz, which are not included in the previous regional delimitation, despite their insertion



in the infrastructural framework as a system of the southeast that implies other criteria when regionalizing.

The importance of this region stands out for its natural, social, cultural and heritage diversity. It is made up of the entities already mentioned, but for the purposes of this work, the part of the aforementioned entities of Oaxaca and Veracruz is included, due to their integration into the dynamics of regional development, which were contemplated in previous programs (Sedatu, 2014). This region is one of the five most important nature reserves in the world for its richness and biological diversity. As well as the cultural relevance and ethnic population, the largest in the country; and of heritage wealth, due to the significant archaeological sites and zones of the civilizational legacy of the Maya and Olmec peoples (INAH, 2020). The relevance of Mexico's natural and cultural wealth is considered among the main in the world, both for the significant biosphere reserve located in the southeast, and for cultural and linguistic diversity. However, the part that draws attention is the contradictory condition of the region, due to the dialectic between the population with the lowest indices of social well-being and the wealth of natural, cultural and heritage resources.

The population that lives in this region represents 10% of the national total, with the highest concentration of indigenous population in the country, estimated at 3.6 million, and of this, 80% still retain the original linguistic diversity (INPI, 2017), but at risk of disappearing. It should be noted that in the interior of the region, in the State of Chiapas, a third of its population speaks an indigenous language, 28%; the same as in Oaxaca. However, despite its importance in ethnic diversity, more than 65% are in conditions of poverty (Coneval, 2022). This region has a population of more than 13 million inhabitants², and of this, 56% are in a situation of poverty, above the national average, estimated at 44%; and 27% of the localities lack public services and basic collective equipment (Coneval, 2018). In addition, with a disjointed rural and urban structure, made up of multiple localities, 271 municipalities and seven metropolitan areas, which give it the typology of dispersed location, where 92% of localities are rural and with 53% of its land socially owned in the ejido and communal mode. For this reason, the urban rural structure is one of disparities, dispersion/concentration and accentuated intraregional variations due to the profound differences between entities, as is the case of Chiapas, with rural population rates of 53%, compared to Yucatán and Quintana Roo, with low average rates of 18% (INEGI, 2020),

² Population referred to the five entities in the established regionalization, which does not include Oaxaca and Veracruz.



which contrast with the national average urban population index. 76%. A situation that in a national perspective reflects regional inequality.

Population by entity of the Southeast Region in 2020

Entity	Population in 2010	Population in 2020	Rural population (%)	Urban population (%)	Densities (h/km ²) (%)	Indigenous population. (%)
Campeche	822,441	928,363	27.5	72.50	16.03	5.68
Chiapas	4,796,580	5,683,657	52.53	31.57	44.07	47.17
Oaxaca	3,801,962	4,132,148	40.27	48.72	64.30	39.10
Quintana Roo	1,325,578	1,857,985	20.27	79.63	41.56	12.62
Tabasco	2,238,603	2,402,598	24.39	76.23	97.12	3.77
Veracruz	7,643,194	8,062,579	22.0	78.02	112.3	12.4
Yucatan	1,955,577	2,320,898	14.3	85.7	58.59	30.77

Source: Authors' elaboration with data from INEGI, 2010; 2020

What the attached population table shows are the accentuated contrasts in the rural and urban profile of the various entities in the region. Highlighting that the entities of Chiapas and Oaxaca maintain a profile of lower urbanization index, below the national average; and in the other entities, urban and metropolitan growth indicators are presented, considering that in the urban-rural system there are not yet significant changes in medium-sized cities, as would be expected in a dynamic of rural-to-urban transition. At the same time, the presence of the indigenous population continues to be significant, especially in states with a large rural population and lower rates of urbanization, and maintaining the highest ethnic profile at the national level.

These changes undoubtedly correspond to two important moments that have given a turn and impetus to the process of urbanization and acceleration in the southeast region in the modernization project. The first, with the reform of the Agrarian Law of 1992 (DOF, 1992), and the changes in the policy of land use from social to mercantile, with the reforms to Article 27 of the Constitution, together with the changes to Article 115, of the Constitution, of attributions to the municipalities to determine the use of the land of their jurisdiction and of rural and urban development policies. Initiatives to modify the regime of ownership of ejido and communal land to private to attract investments, particularly towards strategic sectors, with the promotion of the real estate, mining, oil and tourism services markets. In addition, what would be considered as a second moment and continuation of the previous one and with clear connotations of displacement and concentration of population in certain areas, with the promotion of the Sustainable Rural Cities project (Development Plan, 2010), with the purpose of addressing the dispersion of small rural localities in marginalization, through the concentration of the population in strategic places with public services,



housing, generation of employment, productive capacities and rational use of resources. Program limited to 5 cities and 32 rural villages, with limited results, due to the opposition of the communities to displacement. And, above all, with the action of the State in the creation of institutional normative conditions towards deregulation and competitiveness, within the framework of the framework of the political superstructure of territorial planning and ordering, with the Law of expropriation for reasons of public utility for the deployment of projects and public works, and the Program for the Certification of Urban Properties and Plots (Procede, 1992).

The Procede is an incisive instrument of social land dispossession to certify and regularize land tenure and the definition of property rights of the ejidos and agrarian communities of millions of peasants, who were allegedly in the irregularity of land tenure, and to provide them with property titles. A situation that calls into question the arduous and complicated process of agrarian distribution of previous governments. That is, the high percentage of the national land distributed under the principles of social use, 52% of the 196 million hectares that make up the national territory (De ita, 2019). The rejection of this program has acquired the greatest resistance in the southeastern region. Resistance in Oaxaca, Chiapas and Campeche, to a greater extent based on the valuation of social property in almost a third of the agrarian nuclei that have opposed participating in the program; except in the State of Quintana Roo, due to the high profitability of the land and the demand for developers of tourism and real estate services (De Ita, 2019).

In this context of changes in the social uses of natural resources to commodification, the vicissitudes of the process of dispossession of common goods are configured by underpinning the dynamism of urbanization towards larger-scale urban concentrations with metropolitan areas, in the unique formation that combines the dichotomy of spatial dispersion/agglomeration and productive activities of the population in the different subregions. between rural, urban and metropolitan localities, in the process of transformation. Specifically, with the intra-regional productive changes that reorganize the subregions into more profitable activities. In rural subsistence farming localities, agribusiness and monoculture are making their way, which increases production to meet the demand of new markets; In turn, the hydrocarbon reserve areas encourage the growth of the oil industry, and with the diversity of nature and culture, tourist services and the cultural industry are encouraged. Strategic sectors for the redefinition of the singularities of regional urbanization in its differentiated forms in the profiles of the largest urban agglomerations in relation to the numerous dispersed rural localities in transformation and with unequal relations and typologies, where formations of the type of rururbanizations in



agro-industrial areas could be conceived with the grouping of localities in their radius of influence; also, in an oil urbanization in correspondence with the dynamics of urban hydrocarbon centers; and, in regional urbanizations dedicated to the provision of tourist and cultural services. Trends in the concentration of the population of localities with rural population centers, but in a differentiated way, especially the indigenous peoples of the States of Chiapas and Yucatán, with a strong ethnic presence. Characteristics that together reconfigure the typology of urbanization. In addition to political intervention with regional planning based on the dichotomy of the rural urban system.

A typology of urbanization that acquires special significance with the State of Chiapas, due to the contrast and articulation of rural localities and metropolitan concentration. Entity characterized by the highest rate of rural population and the lowest degree of urbanization in the southeast region; in addition, with the highest indicators of precariousness and poverty in the country and with the largest national indigenous population (Coneval, 2022). It is made up of 124 municipalities in 20,951 rural and 206 urban localities and one metropolitan area, the state capital, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, although the city of Tapachula is considered to be in the process of metropolization, due to its proximity to another municipality, but, above all, due to its border location with a strong flow of immigrants. Tuxtla Gutiérrez has a population of 848,274 inhabitants, 15.5% of the total state population, and a low density of 82.8 inhabitants per hectare (Sedatu, 2023); and is made up of five conurbated municipalities. Characteristics that inscribe it in the typology of extended urbanization.

In addition, in the process of transformation and accelerated urbanization of the region as a whole, important projects and public works are carried out with infrastructure undertakings with a strong regional impact, within the framework of the current territorial policy, with the Planning Strategy, ENOT (Sedatu, 2022), and the Planning Program of the Southeast Region (Sedatu, 2023). Underlying these programs is the focus of addressing regional social and territorial backwardness with infrastructural undertakings and the restructuring of population centers that have an impact on urban-rural disarticulation. The first, through the corridor projects of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and the Mayan Train; and, the second, with the promotion of urban-rural systems. Both with the task of articulating dispersed localities and municipalities throughout the regional southeast (Sedatu, 2022).

The first undertaking is carried out in the relevant subregion of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec that covers the south of the entities of Oaxaca and Veracruz, where the oil ports of Coatzacoalcos and Salina Cruz stand out, characterized by unique geostrategic conditions of alternative interoceanic link to the Panama Canal; and, for its oil and mining



resources. It was preceded by important projects of regional and international scope, such as Plan Mesoamerica and Plan Puebla Panama, but which were not carried out. A sub-region with a population and territory of urban and rural contrasts, of agglomerated and dispersed population centers, where 834,000 people of social and ethnic diversity live, with a significant number of indigenous people, of whom 341,000 speak an indigenous language. A social condition that demands the necessary participation in the definition of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec Corridor project and that has given rise to environmental conflicts in the orientation of development for the improvement of the living conditions of peoples and communities; as well as the preservation of cultural heritage and the environment and natural resources. However, they have had little impact on their formulation based on the right conferred on them to decide the use of their natural and territorial resources.

Main Municipalities and Development Poles of the Trans-Isthmian Corridor of Tehuantepec

State	Municipality	Number of inhabitants (2015)	Number of inhabitants (2020)	Area in km2
Oaxaca	Matías Romero	39 820	39, 820	1,355.9
	Juchitán	98 043	98,043	911.6
	Tehuantepec	64 639	64,639	1,198.6
	Salina Cruz	89 211	89,211	131.9
Veracruz	Coatzacoalcos	319 187	319,187	311.9
	Minatitlán	157 393	157,393	2,117.6
	Cosoloacaque	129 527	129527	276.8
	Acayucán	87 267	87,267	655.9

Source: Authors' elaboration with INEGI census data, 2015 and 2020

The strategic importance of this corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec consists of linking important cities and ports in the southeast with oil potential and reactivating the refinery system of this subregion, with the construction of the Olmeca refinery and the refurbishment of the others, together with the articulation of dispersed rural localities and municipalities. In addition, to deploy along the corridor a set of industrial poles, located in the listed municipalities. And, in the overall perspective, the emphasis of industrialization as a system stands out with the others of a rural nature with agro-industries and the budding tourist poles, Huatulco and Puerto Escondido, which together define the axes of development, underpinned by the communications and transport infrastructure that the region lacks and that is interpreted in the vision of the program as indispensable. With this, the industrialization policy that in the past was limited and resulted in a maquiladora productive plant of precarious low-paid jobs, and the acceleration of urbanization with the proliferation of informal settlements, without basic public services, is resumed. This is the case of the city of Villahermosa, capital of the State of Tabasco, whose accelerated



metropolitan urban growth has been determined by the oil industry with drastic social and environmental consequences. Expansion and conurbation with neighboring rural localities, on ejido and communal social land, and even ecological reserve, with the proliferation of precarious settlements in a polarized population agglomeration and the increase in the price of basic goods and services. A scenario that puts into perspective the challenges for the oil cities of the trans-isthmus corridor, but, above all, for rural localities that cede part of their territory and common goods for their realization, through various mechanisms to resolve controversies of the social condition of ejido to urban land, and in specific cases for the deployment of infrastructure works, the Real Estate Trust has been created. Fibras,³ so that communities participate as partners in the valuation of land for real estate development scenarios.

This situation has given rise to environmental conflicts, in the context of dispossession and resistance, due to the prevailing conditions in rural localities and the 79 municipalities in the sphere of influence of this interoceanic corridor and which constitute the main challenges of facing the demands of the population for food, housing, basic public services of water and drainage networks, education, health and infrastructure. An average of 45.5% of the population is in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty (Coneval, 2022). A context that puts into perspective the redefinition of the strategic focus of the enterprises in the discussion of the development project.

In relation to the second undertaking of the Mayan Train, with unique characteristics in antecedents and the prevailing conditions of regional social backwardness, the orientation of development through modernization with the promotion of urbanization for integration into all the regions of the country, through the promotion of projects and public works, precedents of the current undertakings, stands out. as reflected in the implementation of the Mayan Train, designed on abandoned railway lines and resumed at the scale of the new regionalization of the southeast and in coverage and articulation as an infrastructural system of mobility and transport of passengers and products of strategic sectors; and in tune with its concept of development, based on the needs and expectations of dispersed localities and urban agglomerations of various scales. In a route of 1555 kilometers, the five entities of the southeast are linked: Campeche, Chiapas, Tabasco, Yucatán and Quintana Roo; with a coverage of 42 municipalities and 181 localities adjacent to the corridor and distributed in subregions of the jungle, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico

³ In the case of the infrastructure works of the Mayan Train, this Trust has been implemented as resources to face conflict scenarios with the ejidatarios and the communities of the surrounding towns for the right of way required by the deployment of the works (Fonatur, 2022).



type; serving as a link between the network of cities and population centers in oil, agro-industrial, and tourist areas, and the various ports and airports (Fonatur, 2020).

A distinctive feature in the layout of this regional railway corridor is the link between the main nodes and urban centers that drive urbanization, especially in the influence with adjacent population centers, as nodes of regional development. According to the strategy of Sedatu's Southeast Regional Development Program, it is structured as an urban rural system (SUR) (ENOT, 2022) in three areas that combine the articulation of localities, municipalities, and cities, through the communications and transportation infrastructure network, where the entrepreneurship system is inscribed. Based on the axes and nodes of the highest hierarchy constituted as poles of regional development of the different areas of the oil and tourism industry, following the developmentalist approach of strategic poles that have the conditions to attract investments to form diverse productive nuclei along the corridor, where urban agglomerations stand out, as indicated by the 34 stations and stops (see attached map).

This strategy shows the promotion of urbanization through the centralization of investments in places of greater hierarchy of influence in dispersed localities. However, in carrying out this undertaking, the social and natural resources of the localities in precarious conditions are used, with high rates, of 29.3%, of the population in poverty. However, it is important to specify that there are marked differences within the region in living standards between rural localities and urban centers, but, on the whole, they are on average above the national level (Coneval, 2022). This scenario puts into perspective the scope and limitations of this strategy, despite the fact that public works are carried out to mitigate the shortcomings of the localities within the framework of the Urban Improvement Program (Sedatu, 2022), persisting in sectoral interventions in the evident shortcomings: housing, public services, collective facilities, etc.

In summary, through these infrastructural undertakings, the general conditions for transformation are created by promoting modernization/urbanization in the concentration of investments of influence and use of the territory of rural localities in a changing scenario. But, in the face of dispossession, resistance and alternatives arise from the opportunities that arise for the use of local benefit, counteracting the deficiencies in infrastructure required of the localities, through the potential for the community organization of towns and municipalities, both internally and externally, with networks of mutual support in a system of municipalities that share needs and expectations of common goods.

The Infrastructural Corridor of the Mayan Train



Fuente: Fonatur, 2022

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the approach to the study of urbanization and regional local development in southeastern Mexico, some aspects of special relevance for the reflection and analysis of the field of knowledge stand out in the interpretation of the transformation of the structure of dispersed and agglomerated human settlements, in the context of modernization of a developmental nature and not without contradictions. Modernization process deployed through urbanization in rural, urban and metropolitan transformation with differentiated social and environmental implications in the structure of regional human settlements, and to a greater extent in indigenous community localities. Developmentalism deployed for the profitable use of strategic natural and cultural resources, but, at the same time, resistance for the preservation of resources as the heritage of the localities in the dialectic that defines the singularities of urbanization and the scenarios of development of this region.



A first aspect of special importance is the reconceptualization of social and territorial transformation due to the conditions of rapid urbanization in the structure of rural localities dispersed in relation to the national metropolitan urban context, based on the internal conditions with the structure of community population centers and indigenous municipalities, as opposed to larger-scale urban conglomerates, hierarchy and dynamism. Contrasts that are deepened with territorial diversity and social, natural and cultural resources, and the processes of valorization in the dialectic of social or commercial use that imprint the trends of urbanization as a regional distinctive condition, as an ethnoregion of urbanization extended from and/or rurality or rururbanization; and manifest in places that have both strategic resources and the general conditions for profitability: oil cities, agro-industries, cultural and tourist industries. Therefore, the primary aspect is to question the prevailing urbancentrism that guides the practices of regionalization and the development project through urbanization/modernization of contradictory accentuation.

At the same time, the discussion is broadened with the questioning of the deep-rooted developmentalist vision of promoting urbanization through public works with infrastructural undertakings for regional development, in the context of the modernizing project of transforming the territory under criteria of use and profitability in an urbanization posture outside the conditions of the profile of strong presence of rurality due to the opposing dynamics of the set of dispersed localities that call into question the orientation of development. At the same time, urbanization is instrumentalized for regional transformation in the dialectic of the dispossession of resources, the common good and resistance from subalternity. In this process of accumulation by dispossession undertaken in a systematic way through a territorial policy of reconfiguring the superstructure of the legislative framework with reforms for the transformation of the social use of resources to commodification; and it is precisely towards the indigenous community localities and municipalities that the enterprises have been oriented and where the resistance to the advance of dispossession is manifested. A situation that puts into perspective the discussion of the action of the State among the hegemony through the policies that conceal with the consensus of the necessary public works of the population.

Also in this region, the internal singularities of the subregions stand out, where the diverse conditions of potentialities and limitations converge between dispersed rural localities in the process of expanded urbanization in the form of Rururbanization, clearly manifested in the State of Chiapas, the most rural in the southeast region in precarious conditions; different from that expressed in the oil areas of urbanization determined by the hydrocarbon industry; and finally, the extended urbanization of regional scope within the



framework of culture and tourism, with the system of archaeological sites and zones and coastal tourism around Cancun, in Quintana Roo, with accelerated urbanization and advance on common goods. A region that in its localities and municipalities presents to a greater extent the resistance to the dispossession of goods of common and social use in the onslaught of modernization and deepening of the developmental model and from which arises the necessary reformulation of its own development from subalternity.

An alternative development project based on subordination to the prevailing model of the commercial use of social and territorial resources, prioritizing local social needs by rethinking the ventures that emerged from collective consensus. In this sense, the conditions of the southeast and its development alternatives open possibilities to redefine a different regionalism, however, advancing to a process of change in the overcoming of the rooted developmentalist model implies facing serious challenges, and one of them is the ideological one of the modernist project underlying the various moments of the impulse to infrastructure works for regional development. but reproducing social inequality. However, the current conditions open the possibility of advancing changes that require social mobilization and organization in the design and implementation of projects and works for their own development.

It is especially important in the redefinition of the development project to reflect on the sense of modernization with urbanization present in the planning process in Mexico and that is expressed in the background of the projects and works of the southeast, in the perspective that has prevailed of profitability, of the maximum use of the potential of its strategic resources and of limited redistribution of benefits. This task is reflected in the low rates of the region, the one with the greatest backwardness in the country's social welfare indicators, a situation that implies taking into account the particularities of regional urbanization with the profile of urban and rural population centers, native peoples, communities and ethnic groups, with their ways of life and social organization. putting into discussion that modernization divided between social conditions with conflicting and different interests, and that is expressed in the background with the controversy around the infrastructure works in progress.

A central aspect of urbanization is the deployment of public works based on the principles of the social need of the localities and the instrumental sense of sectoral undertakings, which is their questioning of the possibilities of strengthening the regional and diverse productive plant with the oil industry and tourism, and that in addition to the deployment of the works of the infrastructural system articulated by the corridors of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and the Mayan Train, they have been expanded to the scope of



enhancing the regional natural and cultural wealth with multiple findings of the rediscovery of the Mayan and Olmec civilization in the implementation of the important program of rescue of archaeological zones and promotion of the strategic tourism sector, but rethinking an alternative social and environmental approach that generates employment and reformulates the organic relationship of rural/urban society with nature.

Bear in mind the challenge of deepening progress by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by infrastructure projects in their social value and assume the works as the heritage of population centers to advance their promotion through the integration of a network of municipalities, which allows sharing resources in the perspective of strengthening the network of human settlements to face adversities and deepening the achievements in a prospective vision. In this perspective, rethink the notion of municipal autonomy, going beyond isolation and building a project extended to the whole region of a diversity of social actors, around the social identity values that strengthen the social fabrics.



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