

ABSTRACT

The urbanization process that shapes the present Mediterranean coast started with the mass tourism that encouraged the Centres and Areas of National Tourist Interest law in 1962, as a strategic national investment. 50 years after its implementation, it is necessary to conduct a retrospective analysis of their results, assessing to what extent have met the stated goals in the 60's. The evolution of the macroeconomic, political and legal parameters show certainly deviations from initial forecasts of many large urban plans carried out in coastal places created from scratch.

The case of La Manga del Mar Menor in the Murcia coast, a target of 250,000 holidaymakers which comes from a desert dune in the 60's, is certainly an example, poorly documented while enlightening, of the results that have been achieved. The study of real social and economic performance as a tourism product against territorial and landscape impacts, the problem of governance in the context of urban planning and the ability of private property to develop its own sustainable projects in the long run has been approached with the detail and objectivity that allows a comprehensive case study contrasted by the facts. All these elements will be distributed to either side of the balance, in order to evaluate the validity of a coastal development model, that after five decades we can now begin to prosecute with enough research perspective.

***Keywords:** urban development Mediterranean coast, La Manga, retrospective urban analysis, mass tourism product, urbanism Mar Menor, Ley de Centros de 1962.*