Variability of Tourist Attraction on an International Boundary: Sonora, Mexico Border Towns

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Abstract
This paper explores how and why tourism and tourist districts in border towns vary along a single international boundary. A perception about Mexican border tourism holds that the boundary itself is the primary stimulus to development. While almost every Mexican border town has some tourist function, the nature and extent of that activity will vary with a host of exogenous factors. We argue that Mexican border city tourism is largely a function of these diverse external factors more than simply a presence on the international boundary. Successful tourism in the Mexican border cities is linked to historic advantage and age of settlement, as well as access, degree of promotional effort, and media exposure: To illustrate this assertion, we compare tourist development and the creation and absence of tourist districts at two separate locations along the Sonora-Arizona border: Nogales and San Luis Rio Colorado.

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