

**Poole, Megan, "Landscape as Identity: The Physical and Ideological Consequences of Tourism In La Fortuna de San Carlos." Advisor: Marlen López Jenkins. The Colorado College. 2009. 52pp.**

Through observation, interviews, dispersal of questionnaires and extensive background and theoretical research, the investigator explored the many dynamic and interrelated features of the La Fortuna landscape and their connection to cultural identity for the local community. This investigation argues that there is a strong relationship between physical changes to landscape and ideological changes to cultural identity. Interviews were conducted with 22 locals, 6 intermediaries and 7 tourists where participants were asked to discuss the history of the region, the changes that have occurred since the growth of tourism, their impressions of the landscape and the differences between local and foreigner access to all that the land has to offer. In addition, the investigator collected 30 questionnaires from tourists that inquired about their experiences in the tourist landscape and asked specifically about their access to the different features, both natural and human-made.

La Fortuna is a prime example of the impact of the "boom turístico" that permeated many destinations in Costa Rica in the early 1990's. Rapid development and globalization have opened this region to outside influences that have resulted in changes ranging from the loss of cultural customs, to the influx of issues like drug use and theft. Many locals have nostalgia for the simple past of this region but also rejoice in the resulting economic strength of the community. As the physical landscape has changed, it is clear that the ideological and cultural identity of its residents have transformed as well. There are many factors that have acted as a catalyst to these changes, and as a result La Fortuna is a very different community than it was prior to the growth of tourism.