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Tourism: Difficulties, costs and integration in the 21st century

Stella Arnaiz Burne^{1}, Aledo A César Dáchary¹, Fernanda César Arnaiz²*

¹ Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara 999085, Mexico. E-mail: stellaarnaiz@yahoo.com.mx

² Universidad Anáhuac-Puebl, Puebl 72000, Mexico.

ABSTRACT

Tourism, a successful development model in the world, today faces serious challenges from the massification of large European destinations, which has generated tourism phobia, to global climate change, which has identified it as one of the activities with the highest CO₂ generation. In the Americas, tourism has grown at an accelerated pace, but the major Latin American and Caribbean destinations are strongly threatened by the insecurity derived from violence, drug trafficking and the impacts of climate and its threats in the region. However, the Caribbean and Mexico are pursuing one of the largest cooperation and integration projects with the creation of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC) at the beginning of the century.

Keywords: tourism; sustainability; integration; cooperation; climate change

1. Tourism: The decade of growth

The World Tourism Organization had forecast that in 2020 foreign tourists would reach 1.4 billion. However, that figure was achieved two years earlier. So it was that in 2018 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals arrived, which is 6% more than in 2017.

The Middle East and Africa lead the growth of international tourism with 10% and 7% respectively, followed by China and Europe with 6% and at the final America, which despite receiving 217 million international tourists, had a growth of 3%^[1]. This is expressed in a greater participation of tourism in the world economy, since in 2017 this reached 10.4% of global GDP, adding direct, indirect and induced effects, as reported by the business association World Travel & Tourism Council^[2].

China, the first issuer of the planet in tourism, is growing and has generated one of the most ambitious projects at a global level “The Silk Road”, which for the tourism sector is led by the UNWTO and to which 34 countries have been integrated, which met in Berlin in 2018, under the slogan “Silk Road Tourism Agenda for 2025”, which is destined to be the most important international route of the 21st century.

Tourism plays an important role in the world geopolitics. Jointly with the World Tourism Organization, it will promote this project. For some people, the project will be based on the so-called “heart zone theory”, which believes that historically, people who control Central Asia-Central Russia and Siberia are likely to control other regions in Asia and other regions in Europe, thus gaining a privileged

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position in terms of global dominance^[3].

Zurab Polikashvili, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization, said at the 2018 Berlin Conference that their joint work to make the Silk Road a world recognized cultural road has proved to be very positive. In countries along the Belt and Road, people are increasingly aware of the contribution of tourism to cultural protection, regional cohesion and intercultural understanding^[4].

It is no coincidence that the two major integration projects in which tourism plays an important role, outside the countries of the former First World, are in China and Asia with the Silk Road, and in the Caribbean, Central America and the three major countries of the region: Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela with the ZTSC.

But in the second decade of the 21st century, tourism, in addition to growing, has to face serious challenges, derived from its boom. In the first place, mystification clashes with the quality of life of local populations and this generates a negative reaction, such as tourism phobia, which is dominant in First World countries.

Climate change has begun to generate serious alterations in ecosystems and tourism; according to studies conducted between 2009 and 2013, it has increased the carbon footprint, which has increased from 3.9 to GtCO₂, four times more than previously estimated, representing about 8% of greenhouse gas emissions.

Research has determined that tourism is responsible for nearly a tenth of global greenhouse gas emissions and that flights are a major component of this pollution, something the researchers say was bypassed by the Paris Agreement to curb global warming^[5].

In this period, which covers part of the first and second decade of the 21st century, for our study area, Latin America and the Caribbean, the major problems are even greater. Since in addition to the environmental problems, there are those of security

and violence against people as a result of the boom in the criminal economy, a combination that is seriously affecting this entire macro region.

2. Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America, from the perspective of tourism development, overcomes the geographical divisions: North America, Mexico, Central America, the insular Caribbean and South America, but when it comes to tourism alliances and regions, we have two large units. The first, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) made up of the insular Caribbean, Central America, Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico. The second, South America, in the first decade of the century, generated a project that came a decade earlier, the Common Market of the South (CMS), and its regional tourism policy, which later generated the Union of South American Republics (USAR) as a common strategy of policy and territorial defense, but both projects are now in limbo.

Among the specific objectives of USAR are energy integration and the development of an infrastructure for the interconnection of the region, among the peoples, with criteria of sustainable social and economic development^[6]. The return of neoliberalism and the new strategy of judicial coups consolidates it within the framework of a situation that is diametrically opposed to the previous decade, given that the United States is in a moment of defense of its world hegemony and more so the regional one, with its great resources.

2.1. The Caribbean and mass tourism

A blue sea, white sands, palm trees and lots of sun is what some consider, together with the tropical climate, the constituent elements of “paradise”, but something else is missing, a mostly black dominated and controlled population, which is considered by the metropolitan countries as inferior, a remnant of the plantations.

This paradisiacal scenery was the place where slavery achieved the greatest development in the

plantation and this changed the color of their skin in the islands and in most of the continental area, since the extermination of the native peoples was replaced by Africans.

The atomization of this region is based on historical and political assumptions expressed in the unity of colonization. Thus, it is possible to speak of the English Caribbean, the Dutch, the French, the French, the Hispanic and today, the North American, and these definitions have been maintained based on the cultural and linguistic unity, which is fully valid in this multicultural region, which today is defined as neocolonialism.

In the second part of the 20th century, three fundamental changes took place in the region: at the political level, the independence and birth of the colonized territories of new countries, which were expressed for the first time since the post-war period at the Bandung Conference in 1955. The second great change is at the economic level, the end of the plantation of primary products and the emergence of a modernization in fishing that implies diversification and, together with it, the beginning of tourism, which will have a fundamental turn at the end of that decade with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. The third element is international: the hegemony of the United States is consolidated, which exercises its military power in the Caribbean with invasions and the imposition of rulers.

It was there that the first regional organizations emerged, initially by idiomatic-colonial affiliation and then expanding further until the end of the century with the Association of Caribbean States, which integrates the Caribbean basin. The independence of the new states and the Cuban revolution in the Caribbean is the scenario for the development of massive sun and beach tourism, which had to coexist with a region in which there were several bloody invasions and three fratricidal wars with large numbers of casualties in Guatemala. El Salvador and Nicaragua, which did not alter

tourism although several of them occurred in tourist areas such as Dominican Republic, Granada, and Panama, in addition to the fact that in Cuba there has been an intermittent aggression.

Drug production in South America, whether in the area east of the Amazon, an area controlled by Peru and Bolivia, or in the area controlled by Colombia, has its main corridors in the Caribbean Sea. This has had a profound impact on the economy of this region of small states with very fragile economies that have been flooded with investments that could not be justified, so the region has been transformed for drug traffickers into a transit zone and an area for investments and money laundering.

The latter is the most important function that occurs in the Caribbean, where there is the largest number of “fiscal paradises” in the Americas and possibly the world, with a system that is very difficult to control. Of the 16 fiscal paradises in the Caribbean, the Cayman Islands, the largest fiscal paradise in the world and the fifth largest financial center on the planet, with a population of only 40,000 inhabitants and being a neocolonial territory, not autonomous from England, stands out for its importance^[7].

More than 70% of the small Caribbean states are also criminal paradises, and “not by chance” they are geographically on the drug trafficking route to the two major centers of consumption: the United States and Europe; the route to the United States goes through Central America and ends in Belize or Quintana Roo; the route to Europe arrives in Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic to reembark in Europe^[8].

But at the same time, the funds generated are oriented towards tourism, an activity that is difficult to control, which makes this money, between electronic and real, a fundamental element for the development of this dominant activity in the region and in most of the world (**Table 1**).

Table 1. International tourism in the Caribbean (2010–2015)

States	2010	2013	2014	2015	2010	2013	2014	2015
The Caribbean	19,539	21,111	22,282	24,091	22,809	25,349	26,701	28,451
Anguila	62	69	71	73	99	121	123	128
Antigua and Barbuda	230	243	249	250	298	322	330	323
Aniba	825	979	1,072	1,225	1,251	1,495	1,605	1,650
Bahamas	1,370	1,366	1,427	1,484	2,163	2,285	2,308	2,537
Barbados	532	509	520	588	1,038	964	888	947
Bemnudas	232	236	224	220	442	440	401	386
Cuba	2,507	2,829	2,970	3,491	2,187	2,325	2,367	2,601
Curazao	342	441	455	468	385	583	635	607
Dominica	77	78	82	74	94	103	127	128
Grenada	110	116	134	141	112	119	128	147
Guadalupe	392	487	486	512	510	671	-	614
Haiti	255	420	465	516	383	546	578	617
Cayman	288	345	383	385	485	500	565	680
Turks and Caicos	281	291	357	386	-	-	-	-
British Virgin Islands	330	366	386	393	389	421	459	484
Virgin Islands United States	590	570	602	642	1,013	1,232	-	1,324
Jamaica	1,922	2,008	2,080	2,123	2,001	2,074	2,255	2,401
Martinique	476	490	490	487	472	484	483	340
Montserrat	6	7	9	9	6	6	6	8
Puerto Rico	3,186	3,172	3,246	3,542	3,221	3,311	3,439	3,825
Dominican Republic	4,125	4,690	5,141	5,600	4,163	5,064	5,630	6,116
St. Kitts and Nevis	98	107	113	117	90	100	104	135
St. Martin	443	467	500	505	674	857	906	898
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	72	72	71	75	86	97	101	96
St. Lucia	306	319	338	345	309	347	360	397
Trinidad and Tobago	388	434	413	440	450	-	-	

Source: UNWTO^[9]

The existence of two major drug trafficking routes implies the construction of an entire support infrastructure from navigators to suppliers on both routes, but trafficking is not only maritime. It is also aerial and the problem has been followed since the 1970s, that is, there are almost four decades of experience^[9].

But neither hurricanes nor invasions could stop the expansion of the Caribbean as one of the world's major tourism centers and major cruise destinations.

These rising figures are not an exception, as the Caribbean has grown continuously, we take as an example the year 1995 when 14 million international tourists arrived, by 2000 this figure rose to 17.1 million and by 2005 to 18.8^[1].

2.2. The Caribbean and integration

On July 24, 1994, the Heads of State and representatives of the twenty-five States representing the Greater Caribbean met in Cartagena India, Colombia, reaching an agreement and signing the Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), which was ratified at the 1st Meeting of Heads of State and Government, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. This was ratified at the 1st Meeting of Heads of State and Government, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. It was constituted by 25 states as full members that included the Central American countries and the three large ones: Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela, the French Caribbean Departments, two nations that

are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Aruba and Curaçao Bonaire), both colonial dependencies as full countries in addition to the British and North American territories as associated countries, which brings the number to 36 nations and territories.

International cooperation through the integration of regions for sustainable development began in the 70's in the European Union and in 1975 the Blue Plan for the protection of the Mediterranean was approved in Barcelona and in the 80's and 90's programs adjusted to the demands of tourism in this sea^[10]. The Rio de Janeiro Meeting in 1992 and its Agenda 21 declaration, the Lanzarote Sustainable Tourism Charter in the Canary Islands in 1995, the Manila Declaration and the Tourist Code are part of the international agreements to achieve sustainable development^[11]. These were antecedents for the ACS, which in the mid-1990s proposed a new organization aimed at strengthening cooperation and cultural, economic, political, scientific, social and technological relations in the Greater Caribbean.

With the integration of the ACS, negotiations took more than four years to reach an agreement to create a Committee, on April 17, 1999 in Santo Domingo, to prepare the creation of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC) and on December 12, 2001 on Margarita Island, Republic of Venezuela, the constitutive act was signed.

The ACS member countries, which joined the STZC, had by the time they firm the constitutive act a great representativeness in tourism in Latin America, with 301,300 rooms, something that today has doubled, and received in 2017 about 18 million tourists, not counting cruise ships, which are very significant^[9].

The wisdom of creating this zone lies in the fact that tourism is the economic axis and locomotive of all the countries of the region and of the areas of the most diversified continental countries, such as the Group of 3: Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela. Tourism was taken in the broad sense of being a development model within the system, which is articulated with all activities transversally, from the

economic to the cultural.

The preparatory commission of the STZC identified three major problems in its tourist-dominant economy that are concatenated and are:

- Aging of tourist centers and their devaluation.
- Changes in tourist preference.
- Major impacts on the terrestrial and maritime environment, many of these impacts derive from air and cruise ship tourism.

In response, the following alternatives were proposed:

- Guarantee the generation of foreign exchange employment product (Tourism GDP).
- Community participation in the planning and benefits of tourism. This transforms societies and spaces, therefore the citizen must participate and control through mechanisms of the State and civil society.
- Preserve the environment and culture, which are the fundamental heritage of these countries and play an important role in the development of tourism.
- Guarantee the private and social income of the sector^[12].

To successfully meet the objectives of this zone, 12 priority strategies are set out in the immediate action plan approved at the beginning of the 21st century, which has been applied according to the possibilities of the countries, many of which have a very low GDP.

One of the major advances of the ZTSC is the contracting of a study on the impact of climate change in the basin and the measures to be taken to save cities, infrastructure and tourism, the region's economic engine. The study was completed in 2008,

generating a document entitled “The Caribbean and Climate Change, the Costs of Inaction”. The conclusions of this important study, carried out by a team from the Global Development and Environment Institute of Tufts University and the Stockholm Environment Institute US Center, showed the fragility of the region and the high costs that should be assumed in the medium and long term due to inaction in the face of climate change.

Most of the countries of the insular Caribbean and important parts of the continental Caribbean are islands and isolated areas, with great fragility in the face of the coming changes, many of them very small and without elevations, are subject to disappear.

The projections presented in this report do not exhaustively cover all climate changes, so they are reduced to only three: damage from hurricanes, loss of tourism and damage to infrastructure. These damages are estimated to result in a loss of 5% of regional GDP by 2025, double by 2050 and 15.9% by 2075, reaching 21.7% of regional GDP by 2100^[13].

In September 2017, Hurricane Irma far exceeded the expectation of 2025. In Barbuda, more than 90% of buildings were destroyed, so the Prime Minister declared that the island was almost uninhabitable; Recovery will take several years, with an estimated loss of about \$ 150 million accounting for 10% of the island’s GDP. In Saint Martin, 95 per cent of the French administrative district was destroyed. According to the local authorities, this was a “huge disaster”. In the Dutch area of the island, the hurricane destroyed or damaged as many as 70 per cent of the houses and buildings^[14].

The cyclone in 2017 began to make the threat of climate change and global warming a reality, which was a disastrous event for society and nature. But another equally serious threat is affecting most parts of the Caribbean, Sargasso, which has changed from an exception today to a threat, not only to the Caribbean region of Mexico, but also to the entire region. In the so-called Eastern Caribbean, smaller

islands are seriously affected. Barbados is an example. Since the analysis of satellite images by Iris Monnereau of FAO in 2015, Barbados has changed from a serious threat to today’s reality, where hundreds of square kilometers of Sargasso can be observed floating in the Central Atlantic Ocean^[15].

Since 2011 a new source of sargassum, the northern recirculating region floods this region where evidence suggests there is a combination of excessive nutrients from agricultural fertilizers and pollution, plus increased nutrients from the Congo River and the Amazon, plus dust from the Sahara Desert and rising sea surface temperatures caused by climate change; conditions in which sargassum can double in mass in just 11 days^[15].

The consequences of climate change and the regional problems of a very asymmetric region, from illegal migration to drug trafficking, are seriously affecting countries and tourism. The vulnerability of roads due to climate effects and security problems have generated a pioneering policy of the Central American group of redefinition and adjustments to its international roads^[16].

2.3. Central America: migration, drug trafficking and tourism

These last years in Central America began, with the military coup against President Zelaya in 2009, the process of recovery of neoliberalism that, a few years later in South America, in Brazil, ended with the impeachment of Dilma Rousse and the imprisonment of former President Lula.

But political instability has been a constant in Central America, and to this must be added the rise of criminal gangs that supply the maritime circuit and operate the overland routes that pass through Mexico on their way to the United States.

These events have exploded today with large marches of migrants fleeing violence and have disrupted the region, impacting tourism, which is increasingly concentrated on islands, heavily secured coastal areas in the style of Jamaica several

decades ago, and cruise ship tourism, with a drastic reduction in tourism using highways.

The lags are evident in countries such as Guatemala and El Salvador that report a road density of paved roads of 1.5 kilometers per 1,000 inhabitants, and Panama that has a road network of 4.7 kilometers per the same density of residents, while OECD countries average 13 kilometers per 1,000 inhabitants^[17].

The coastal areas and famous islands of Central America from Roatan to the Corn Islands and from there to San Andres and Providencia, coexist with large-scale drug trafficking. The U.S. government claims that up to 80% of the cocaine arriving in Mexico from South America first passes through Honduras.

Since the beginning of this second decade, drug traffickers have changed their routes to introduce drugs into Honduras, and then move them to the

United States, creating what the State Department calls the drug triangle: from Colombia to Honduras and from there to Mexico^[18].

In this five-year period, the rise of Belize and Panama stands out, the former for its cultural and natural wealth and the latter due to its great connectivity. Due to their social, environmental and criminal economy conflicts, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador fell. Costa Rica is affected by drug trafficking, which has had an impact on creating sex tourism, which today overshadows its previous nomination as the green capital of Central America (**Table 2**).

The consolidation of Tucuman International Airport in Panama City has allowed for the development of an air hub oriented to the north, south and the Caribbean, with its flagship airline COPA.

Table 2. Central America: International tourism arrivals (thousands) and its revenues (millions)

Countries	2010	2013	2014	2015	2010	2013	2014	2015
Central America	7,908	8,660	9,087	9,592	6,699	8,700	9,376	10,174
Belize	242	277	294	321	249	298	351	380
Costa Rica	2,100	2,343	2,428	2,527	1,999	2,313	2,665	2,864
El Salvador	1,150	1,255	1,283	1,345	390	558	621	822
Guatemala	1,219	1,305	1,331	1,455	1,378	1,419	1,481	1,564
Honduras	863	895	865	868	625	679	608	630
Nicaragua	1,011	1,180	1,229	1,330	313	421	417	445
Panama	1,324	1,606	1,658	1,745	1,745	3,313	3,233	3,470

Source: UNWTO^[9]

2.4. South America and the challenges of tourism

South America maintains a low but steady growth in its international arrivals, which is correlated with the income generated by these tourists, but given the distance from the major international issuers formerly Europe and the United States and today Asia most tourism is regional, especially that between Brazil and Argentina, Chile and Uruguay and vice versa.

The greatest growth in tourism has been in

Paraguay and Chile, Paraguay based on strong domestic tourism and Chile on international travelers and cruise ships, while Argentina and Brazil are the ones that receive the greatest number of arrivals. Brazil, with its strategy of moving the new beach destinations to the north, two hours less flying time from Europe and the United States, has managed to surpass the number of Argentinean arrivals in the first five years.

An element that has become fundamental in regional tourism is the value of the dollar. At the beginning it favored Chileans and Brazilians, and it

deepened with the devaluation of more than 100% of the Argentine currency, which makes it an attractive market for regional and international neighbors.

Argentina's open skies policy towards the United States, an example of extreme political neoliberalism, will allow connecting many destinations in that country with Argentina potentially at a lower cost, since it will be operated by northern airlines, which will bankrupt Argentina's flagship airlines: Aerolineas Argentinas and Austral.

The political processes of a return to neoliberalism and the policies of unrestricted openness could have an impact in the third decade on a potential boom in international tourism, since

domestic tourism has been reduced by the inflation and employment crisis in Argentina, which was a regional center for tourism and cruise tourism.

In the second five years of this decade, the rise of Airbnb and other platforms has had an impact on regional tourism, especially youth and nature tourism.

The international airports that tend to be the hub for South America at present are El Dorado in Bogota, Colombia, with the country's flag carrier Avianca and El Callao in Lima, Peru, alternate for Latam and most of the airlines flying in the Americas (**Table 3**).

Table 3. South America: International tourism arrivals (thousands) and revenues (millions)

Countries	2010	2013	2014	2015	2010	2013	2014	2015
South America	23,229	29,073	30,791	32,815	20,506	25,716	26,134	27,026
Argentina	5,325	5,931	5,736	5,559	4,942	4,624	4,927	4,687
Bolivia	679	871	882	-	379	662	699	687
Brazil	5,161	6,430	6,306	6,578	5,261	6,843	5,844	6,024
Chile	2,801	3,674	4,478	5,641	1,552	2,259	2,481	2,737
Colombia	2,385	2,565	2,978	3,317	2,797	3,825	4,245	4,773
Ecuador	1,047	1,557	1,544	1,418	781	1,482	1,551	1,444
Guyana	152	206	207	235	80	79	66	-
French Guiana	189	185	199	-	-	-	-	-
Paraguay	465	649	1,215	1,206	217	284	484	481
Peru	2,299	3,215	3,456	3,744	2,008	3,077	3,309	3,501
Suriname	205	252	228	257	61	95	88	64
Uruguay	2,349	2,682	2,773	3,037	1,509	1,757	1,776	1,835
Venezuela	526	857	789	-	831	643	575	-

Source: UNWTO^[9]

3. Mexico: Success under threat

In the second decade of the 21st century, Mexico has managed to position itself among the top 10 international destinations in terms of tourist arrivals from abroad, however, it lags behind in terms of spending per tourist or economic spillover (**Table 4**).

This is an atypical case, since the country is engaged in a kind of internal war between drug gangs

and between them and the military and security forces, which has generated during the six-year terms of Calderón and Peña Nieto, more than 174,672 fatalities and more than 30,000 missing persons^[19].

Massification has been a characteristic of Mexican tourism oriented abroad to the North American markets, the United States and Canada, of which are the first destination for Americans and the second for Canadians.

Table 4. Mexico: International tourism arrivals and receipts (2010–2018)

Year	Arrivals (miles)	Position by arrivals. International tourism	Spending millions \$US	Position per spill
2010	23,290		11,992	
2012	23,403		12,739	
2013	24,151		13,949	
2014	29,345.6		16,208.4	
2015	32,093.3		17,733.7	
2016	20,663.9	8	19,649.7	14
2017	39,290.9	6	21,336.2	15
2018	41,446.9	7	22,509.7	15

Source: UNWTO^[9].

Tourism development is led by the construction industry, as new accommodations, residences, apartments and support infrastructure have been essential given the dynamics of the model in Mexico.

But the success of some has turned into a serious problem with different levels, since we have destinations where environmental deterioration is combined with social deterioration and, therefore, violence is the clearest expression of insecurity, as is the case of Acapulco. Violence against women is the most serious in the country, where in 2017 there have been more than 2,000 femicides, of which 144 occurred in Acapulco^[20]. Two destinations have had a sharp drop due to insecurity: Mazatlan, one of the most emblematic resort cities in the country, which was falling at the beginning of this second decade as a result of travel alerts to tourists by the U.S. State Department. From 2013 to 2014, 3.5% of tourists were lost, but compared to 2010 the loss was 25%^[21].

Two very emblematic cases, due to the proximity to the complex Mexico United States border, are the cases of Los Cabos in Baja California Sur and Tijuana in Baja California. According to the report of Mexico's Citizen Council for Public Safety and Criminal Justice A.C., in 2018, the most violent city was Tijuana, with a recorded homicide rate of 13,926 per 100,000 inhabitants.

In this large border city of more than 1,640,000 inhabitants in 2018, not counting its large floating population that can reach more than 50,000 people, today violence occurs in the context of the scenario

of illegal migration and drug war conflicts. In 2017, Acapulco and Los Cabos were, together with Caracas, the first tourist destinations worldwide.

This violence that has homicides as one of the main causes of death has been growing, since between 2000 and 2018 there have been 2.5 million homicides in Latin America and the Caribbean, and about 75% related to firearms, a figure well above the world average^[22]. According to the CCSPJP the Mexican cities, mostly tourist destinations, which are in the same have been changing from 2010 which were 13 to 2015 which were five and increases violence from 2016 to eight, then 12 a year later and by 2018 they reach 15.

Los Cabos, the city built by the Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo (FONATUR) as an Integrally Planned Center (IPC), today has two faces, a first and a fifth world, in the latter in a marginal settlement you can see the dogs among rubble and old abandoned cars, no more than five kilometers from the tourist centers with well-kept gardens where many of the inhabitants of these colonies used to work^[23].

Among the ten most violent cities in the world where there is no war conflict, five are Mexican: Los Cabos, Acapulco, Tijuana, La Paz and Ciudad Victoria, according to the CCSPJP. In the city of Los Cabos, homicides increased sixfold between 2016 and 2017 by going from 61 to 365, which allowed the measure of 111.33 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, and thus the city that for two decades

passed in silence is transformed into the most violent in the world during 2017^[24].

The case of Cancun is the most serious because it faces two problems that are very difficult, if not impossible, to overcome. On the one hand, the sargasso, whose battle has not yet been won and everything indicates that in this summer season it will increase affecting tourism and, on the other hand, violence. Insecurity, narco-trafficking, sargazo and a society that lives confronted in the midst of the narco-conflict, have seriously affected this destination in 2018, generating the loss of 300,000 tourists. Darío Flota Ocampo, director of the Quintana Roo Tourism Promotion Council points out that the entity is facing a negative juncture in the case of the United States, since for 10 years the State had grown at a rate of 8% in U.S. tourism, but in 2017 for the first time it did not grow. This situation is worsening, as wholesalers are reporting that they have a reduction in their sales forecast during 2018, mainly in Cancun and the Riviera Maya^[25].

This complex situation of an undeclared war and the high costs in lives, plus the missing and kidnapped, make the country a Dantesque scenario, where there is no explanation as to why in this scenario it manages to overcome and maintain a good position in international tourism, although in 2019, it fell from 6th to 7th place.

In addition to international tourist destinations there are other no less important ones that have also fallen victim to violence, such as Colima, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Oaxaca or Puebla, among the main cultural tourist centers in the country and that are still hostage to these fights between criminal gangs^[26]. Today, according to the National Public Security System and civil organizations, the number of homicides and other crimes in these places has increased. Faced with the spike in violence in these regions, the reaction of the authorities is insufficient, security specialist Alejandro Hope tells BBC Mundo.

It is the fact that Mexico is located next to the largest emitter in America and that there are more than 35 million Mexicans and their descendants in

that country, or that the tourist, despite this situation, assumes the risks of lower costs and transforms a situation of chaos into a market opportunity.

As a new strategy to create “safe zones” but under the mantle of sustainability, the Mexican Ministry of Tourism created the Sustainable Tourism Zones of Mexico, which it defines as those that make it possible to establish an orderly tourism model and formulate a new paradigm on the viability of Mexico’s tourism future, harmonizing the need for growth with responsible and sustainable development. The first two zones would be located in Punta de Mita, Bahía de Banderas, Nayarit and in Tulum, Quintana Roo.

4. Conclusions

Tourism in the world continues to grow, despite the rise of violence in several continents, terrorism and the acceleration of natural phenomena in the face of climate change. From tourism-phobia in rich countries we move to insecurity in poor countries which is double, social and environmental, from massification to a very subdivided Market, in several a myriad of new offers and needs that reflect the massification of the consumer society with more and more desires, although fewer economic options, which opens a door to the collaborative economy, a model that alters the foundations of capitalism and accelerates its change^[27].

The integration process based on the development of tourism and identity, is already yielding results in less than two decades. In Cancun, in the month of June 2019, the High Level Meeting for the Attention of Sargasso in the Greater Caribbean was held, which was led by researchers from the University of Southern Mississippi and UNAM, as well as the Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), June Soomer.

Representatives of thirteen countries, including Mexico, proposed to raise the problem of sargassum in the Caribbean before the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This is an example to consider

in the midst of the dismantling of regional organizations such as Mercosur and USAR^[28].

The Merida Initiative signed by the United States and Mexico has been limited to delivering airplanes, helicopters and communication equipment, but drug trafficking on the southern border remains unchanged, as well as in Honduras and Belize. The Central American Caribbean maritime route works despite the agreements and common strategies, because the ACS agreements are more viable than those of the hegemonic country at the global level and even more so in relation to the Americas.

The modern history of the great integration processes is not a success story. The first project built was the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) in February. Mexico and all the countries of South America, Mercosur and NAFTA were part of it, which add up to more than 15 trials, not counting the OAS, the shameful example of the neocolonialism of the United States in America.

The insular and continental Caribbean is a macro region atomized by colonization, but being the last countries to enter the decolonization process, they have forged clear alliances on concrete issues from the Association of Caribbean States to the Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Zone, two examples of integration that are effectively facing the current difficult situation.

These countries have understood that tourism is a double filo weapon, on the one hand it plays into the hands of the metropolises that have achieved sun paradises in their former colonies, imposing language and customs. On the other hand, it is a mechanism to recover identities and traditions, which can make the difference between islands and great destinations, a new dream of the consumer society.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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