

# Remapping the Americas: Globalization, Regionalization and the FTAA

*Title: Caribbean Tourism and the FTAA: A Socio-Cultural Response*

## **ABSTRACT**

Economic integration in the Americas is now in its second generation. None of the first-generation, inward-looking schemes succeeded for very long; however, several promising outward-looking pacts have achieved some success and notoriety, such as NAFTA and MERCOSUR. The US-proposed FTAA initiative leads this second generation of outward-looking schemes with a view to establishing rules governing those areas that would be more advantageous than any achievable on the global plane. Much of the discussion and concern among Caribbean leaders has been on the economic survival of the region within this FTAA agreement. With this in mind, the survival of the tourism industry becomes paramount, as travel and tourism is the largest relative contributor to the regional economy, at 31.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The region is engaged simultaneously in several regional, hemispheric and global trade negotiations in which the stakes are high, including Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME), the African Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Union (ACP-EU), CARICOM-CANADA. According to Boxhill *et al* (2004), the FTAA in particular will have significant impacts on the economies of the CARICOM, with specific emphasis on the tourism sector, but many of them will be negative and extensive. This paper focuses primarily on the socio-cultural challenges that will confront the region's tourism industry with the creation of the FTAA. Secondly, it seeks to propose an appropriate response to these challenges to ensure that the industry remains viable and sustainable in this changing global environment.

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