
Cultural Identity and Tourism

Author(s): Alison J. McIntosh, Tom Hinch and Takiora Ingram

Source: *International Journal of Arts Management*, WINTER 2002, Vol. 4, No. 2 (WINTER 2002), pp. 39-49

Published by: HEC - Montréal - Chair of Arts Management

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41064754>

REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/41064754?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *International Journal of Arts Management*

JSTOR

Cultural Identity and Tourism

Alison J. McIntosh, Tom Hinch, Takiora Ingram

Introduction

Although the opportunity to experience different cultures remains one of the main benefits of international travel, culture and tourism are seen to have a potentially destructive relationship (Hughes, 1989). Tourism is argued to be the prime threat to indigenous homelands and cultures, through its exploitation, dislocation and desecration (Johnston, 2000). Despite such concerns, an increasing number of countries are looking to use tourism as a vehicle for indigenous economic development. For indigenous communities, tourism is seen as a step towards building new meanings for traditional practices and reaffirming values, and ultimately as a means of economic empowerment and cultural independence.

If the relationship between tourism and culture is to be sustainable, however, tourism will have to be developed in harmony with community interests. It will have to protect and preserve traditional cultures, fostering sensitivity to and appreciation for cultural practices (Moscardo, 1999; Sofield, 1991). It is therefore essential that indigenous peoples maintain ownership and control over product development and cultural experiences. Whether presented in a museum, as a tourist site or through the manufacture of arts and crafts, indigenous tourism, if it is to achieve sustainability, must be managed sensitively.

The management of cultural attractions and products is fraught with difficulties for indigenous communities. These include: lack of access to appropriate management skills; issues pertaining to authenticity, commercialization, intellectual property rights and collective ownership; and disregard, on the part of tourism policy-makers, for indigenous concerns. Furthermore, given the global trend towards “placelessness” (Relph, 1976) – whereby the authenticity of cultures is becoming increasingly blurred – the preservation and promotion of cultural differences is even more urgent. What is needed is an indigenous tourism that ensures an appropriate level of authenticity and cultural integrity in product development and marketing, and that communicates indigenous uniqueness in an acceptable and sustainable manner. Culturally based attractions have a vital function in this regard.

In striving to provide a meaningful tourist experience, managers of cultural attractions must be careful to present unique aspects of cultural identity and lifestyle while also respectfully preserving them for the benefit of the indigenous communities. Cultural identity is founded on tradition, lifestyle, values and protocol. Without an understanding of cultural identity and meaning, tourists may show insensitivity to or disrespect for cultural values, resulting in offence, conflict, prejudice, cultural degradation or “bastardization” of traditional culture (Sofield, 1991). Yet

Alison J. McIntosh is Senior Lecturer in Tourism at Lincoln University in Canterbury, New Zealand. Her current research interests are cultural and indigenous tourism and visitor behaviour.

Tom Hinch is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. His main research interest is tourism and indigenous peoples.

Takiora Ingram is Manager, Economic Development Branch, New Zealand Ministry of Maori Development. Her primary research interest is Maori tourism.

indigenous value and belief systems are often difficult for outsiders to understand, especially given the superficial nature of many tourist experiences (Urry, 1990). In his analysis of sense of place, Relph (1976) notes that Europeans interpret place through material objects and functions, whereas for the Aborigines of Australia the landscape is inhabited by spirit-beings and is structured according to myth, ceremony and ritual. Similarly, the Maori of New Zealand have a spiritual and symbolic bond with the environment. They perceive humankind not as separate from the environment but as part of an indivisible whole. The *mauri* (spiritual life force) is “the life that is shared by all objects, animate and inanimate, the state of being, the interconnection between things that exist” (Ryan, 1997, p. 275). If the relationship between tourism and indigenous culture is to be sustainable, cultural attractions will have to overcome cross-cultural differences and to foster an appreciation for cultural identity.

The research presented here examines the relationship between tourism and cultural identity by focusing on the management of three Maori attractions in New Zealand. The paper has two aims: to identify the dimensions of Maori identity presented to tourists at the three attractions, and to explore the extent to which authenticity is maintained at the three attractions.

Maori Tourist Attractions

Maori are a tribal people representing approximately 13% of the New Zealand population (Hall, 1996). Many of the social

and economic problems evidenced in other indigenous communities around the world have been experienced by Maori. Maori people have been described as “economically marginalized in their own land” (Mitchell, Hall and Keelan, 1992). They are increasingly investing in tourism as a means of economic development and cultural independence. Developments in Maori tourism are described fully elsewhere (e.g., Hall, 1996; Ryan, 1997). Currently, Maori culture is an important component of New Zealand tourism. Nearly half of all international tourists to New Zealand in 1995/96 visited a museum or art gallery interpreting Maori culture, 36% attended a Maori performance and 18% attended an alternative Maori experience (New Zealand Tourism Board, 1996). In light of the large number of tourists who visit Maori attractions, three such attractions were selected as case studies for this research: Whale Watch in Kaikoura, Tamaki Tours in Rotorua and Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington. They were chosen on the basis of their national and international reputations as successful Maori attractions, their touristic diversity and their management frameworks. Although the three attractions provide different visitor experiences – for example, Whale Watch does not offer an explicit experience of Maori culture – they all represent Maori involvement in tourism and are committed to upholding the integrity of Maori culture.

Whale Watch, owned and operated by Ngai Tahu (the major tribal group of South Island Maori), is an ecotourism venture with a focus on marine life. Since 1997, Whale Watch has carried over 400,000 passengers on more than 15,000 sailing excursions along the Kaikoura coast. It has won numerous national and international ecotourism awards,

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the management and staff at the three Maori attractions for their kind support. They would also like to thank Anna Carr for her help with data collection and interpretation. The study was funded by a University of Otago Research Grant received whilst the first author was employed as Lecturer in Tourism at the Centre for Tourism, University of Otago, New Zealand.

ABSTRACT

Individual attractions have a key role to play in the pursuit of sustainable indigenous tourism, by preserving cultural identity and by fostering a culturally appreciative tourist experience. This paper presents the findings of qualitative study into: (1) the dimensions of cultural identity that managers and staff at three Maori attractions in New Zealand have sought to share with visitors, and (2) the extent to which, in this process, authenticity has been maintained. The findings support the notion of “attraction-based identity” – the process by which Maori identity is purposefully constructed or “adapted” to a cultural tourist experience in order to achieve sustainable Maori tourism.

KEYWORDS

Cultural identity, Maori attractions, indigenous tourism

including the prestigious Gold Award conferred by the Pacific Asia Tourism Association (1997).

Tamaki Tours, owned and operated by a Maori family, offers a diversified Maori cultural tourism product. Its central offering is a *hangi* (meal) and concert that allows visitors to “journey back in time” to participate in a host of traditional activities performed in a recreated pre-European Maori village. This experience is supplemented by a range of workshops and other activities, as well as a tribal arts and crafts marketplace. The company has a staff of 110 in the high season, operating a dozen 45-seat coaches and entertaining more than 118,000 customers annually. It has won the Supreme Award as New Zealand’s best all-round attraction (1998) and the Maori Tourism Award (1998 and 1999).

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is the country’s national museum, funded predominantly by the New Zealand government. This biculturally managed attraction is intended to represent the bicultural nature of New Zealand in a “culturally immersive” fashion. Te Papa preserves and displays – making wide use of interactive technologies – a vast collection of Maori *taonga* (artefacts), but the attraction with the highest profile is perhaps Te Marae o Te Papa Tongarewa, which, with its modern design and protocol, functions as a contemporary national *Marae* (traditional Maori meeting place). Since opening in 1998, Te Papa has received more than 4.3 million visitors. It has won the New Zealand Tourism Heritage and Culture Award (1999), the New Zealand Attractions Award (2000), the Tourism Innovation Award for Research Information (2000) and the People’s Choice Award for Most Popular Attraction (2000).

Presenting Cultural Identity in a Tourist Setting

To understand the presentation of cultural identity as a tourist attraction, one must first understand the dimensions of identity that are shared and valued by an indigenous culture, and also the means by which these are portrayed to tourists. The concept of “place-identity” introduced by the geographer Proshansky in 1978 may provide a framework for investigating those aspects of cultural identity that are valued by an indigenous community. Place-identity refers to “those dimensions of the self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment,” characterized by individually or collectively constructed attitudes, values, thoughts, beliefs, meanings and behaviour (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983, p. 62). It is the sense of cultural identity and belonging that one seeks to pass on to succeeding generations. Proshansky’s theory was founded on the work of, for example, Relph (1976), who conceptualized three main components of identity: *static physical setting* (physical features or appearance), *activities* (observable activities and functions) and *meanings* (or symbols). A sense of place or of identity is expressed and endures in the fusion of these interrelated elements, which are, in effect, the raw materials of place identity. We believe that these three elements constitute an appropriate framework for analysing the dimensions of place-identity as identified by members of an indigenous community.

Of specific concern to sustainable tourism management is the means by which indigenous groups construct their (place-) identity in the setting of a tourist attraction. The cultural experience offered in a commodified

RÉSUMÉ

Les attractions individuelles ont un rôle clé à jouer pour assurer la durabilité du « tourisme indigène » en préservant l’identité culturelle et en amenant le visiteur à apprécier la culture autochtone. L’article présente les résultats d’une étude qualitative 1) des dimensions de l’identité culturelle que les gestionnaires et le personnel de trois attractions maories (Nouvelle-Zélande) ont cherché à partager avec les touristes, et 2) de la mesure dans laquelle l’authenticité a été préservée dans le processus. Les résultats soutiennent la notion « d’identité basée sur l’attraction » — processus par lequel l’identité maorie est volontairement adaptée à l’expérience culturelle du visiteur pour assurer l’avenir du tourisme maori.

MOTS CLÉS

Identité culturelle, attractions maories, tourisme indigène

tourist setting may be authentic or a careful representation of certain aspects of a group's identity. Tourism in indigenous communities involves assorted issues around the sustainability of the visitor experience (Butler and Hinch, 1996). Critics of cultural tourism argue that commodification destroys culture (Greenwood, 1989; Turner and Ash, 1975), that the very essence of indigenous culture will be eroded once its key manifestations become the subject of economic activity devoid of deeper meaning. But whatever the essence of a dynamic culture might be, a shared sense of identity among its members is almost certainly one of its critical dimensions. The extension and presentation of cultural identity in the setting of a tourist attraction, whether authentic or not, may be termed "attraction-based identity" (the introduction of a purpose-derived term here is meant to convey the potential for manipulation, on the part of indigenous groups, of the presentation of cultural identity or place-identity in a tourist setting). Attraction-based identity, derived from Proshansky's place-identity, is an attempt by members of a culture to portray their identity and values in a tourist recreation. Sustainable indigenous tourism requires that tourists be sensitized and motivated, during their (often) brief visit, to understand and appreciate the meaning and significance of the attraction for the host culture.

The relationship between cultural identity and its presentation in a culturally based tourist attraction can therefore be grounded in three main arguments. The first relates to the premise that place-identity is a means for articulating cultural authenticity and identity. The second argument is that cultural identity can be consciously reproduced (commodified) within the purpose-built setting of an attrac-

tion; in attraction-based identity, cultural identity is consciously constructed by proponents of the culture as a tourist experience. The experience may not be totally authentic, or may be modified in some way to ensure cultural sustainability, such as streamlining or staging to meet tourist demands or itineraries. In the extreme sense, the cultural encounter may be packaged as a pseudo event (Boorstin, 1964). The third argument is that tourists will seek to understand and appreciate the significance of cultural values and identity, thereby fostering sustainability. Of course, cultural sustainability also requires that the host's sense of place be compatible with (although not necessarily identical to) the visitor's sense of that place.

While the research presented here is part of a comprehensive study into the presentation and reception of cultural identity at three Maori tourist attractions, this paper focuses on an investigation of the second argument, that based on attraction-based identity. Furthermore, while the purposeful reproduction of cultural identity in the setting of a tourist attraction may help to support sustainable indigenous tourism, it also supports objectives related to indigenous employment, cultural growth and education. Cultural attractions seek to fulfil wider social and cultural objectives by presenting and preserving culture for the benefit of other groups such as domestic visitors, staff and community members. The concept of attraction-based identity can, then, have relevance beyond tourism.

Research and Findings

In order to identify the dimensions of cultural identity offered to tourists at the three

RESUMEN

En la búsqueda de un turismo indígena sustentable están llamados a desempeñar un papel clave los sitios de atracción turística que propician la preservación de la identidad cultural y ofrecen una experiencia cultural apreciada por los turistas. En este artículo se presentan los resultados de un análisis cualitativo que aborda tanto los aspectos de su identidad cultural que administradores y personal de las tres atracciones maorí en Nueva Zelanda han querido compartir con los visitantes y como la autenticidad que se ha logrado conservar a lo largo de este proceso. Los resultados sustentan el concepto de "attraction-based identity" (identidad basada en la atracción) según el cual la identidad maorí se construiría o se "adaptaría" deliberadamente en torno a una experiencia turística cultural, teniendo como objetivo final el crear un turismo maorí sustentable.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Identidad cultural, atracciones maorí, turismo indígena

Maori attractions, and to explore the extent to which Maori identity may have been streamlined for tourist purposes, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers and frontline staff in August and September 1998. Thirteen members of management and staff were interviewed at the three locations. The staff members were chosen on the basis of their daily contact with tourists, direct involvement in the tourist experience and willingness to participate in the study. They were predominantly tour guides, demonstrators, and training or service personnel. In contrast, the managers were chosen on the basis of their insight into management strategy and the objectives of the visitor experience.

While Relph (1976) defines the three main components of place-identity as static physical setting, activities and meanings, a review of the place-identity literature did not reveal a standard measure of these components. In order to identify the physical and intangible dimensions of Maori identity, therefore, we adapted questions from other studies that have sought to capture the salient dimensions of the tourist experience (see Beeho and Prentice, 1996). The questions included: *What makes this attraction a significant or meaningful Maori place? Why are those attributes important? What types of insights about this place do you want visitors to gain? Why do you think it is important for visitors to gain these insights? What strategies are you using to try and create a "sense of sharing" and appreciation of Maori culture among visitors? How successful do you think those strategies have been in fostering cultural appreciation among visitors?* The in-depth interviews employed a "laddering technique" (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988), whereby follow-up probing questions – for example, *Can you please explain why...?* or *Why is that important to you?* – are posed to elicit expressions of cultural identity and meaning in the interviewee's own words. Such probing encourages the respondent to think on an emotional level and thus to reveal the personal significance of cultural and spiritual issues.

The researchers also observed the tourist experience at each attraction, the objective being to directly participate in it and to gain insight from the visitor's viewpoint. A team approach to participant observation (Jorgensen,

1989) was taken by three primary researchers and one research assistant, so that different participant and observer roles could be fulfilled simultaneously whilst also exploiting the researchers' own experiences, knowledge and cultural identities. Each interview was attended by two non-Maori and at least one Maori researcher. This combination allowed for outsider and insider perspectives. The Maori researchers were able to interpret Maori words and phrases used by the interviewees and to highlight the subtle cultural meanings of responses that would be missed by the non-Maori researchers. They also advised the team on cultural protocol.

The qualitative methods employed in the study are consistent with those used in other studies exploring sense of place (Daniels, 1992), issues of indigenous tourism (Berno, 1996) and experience-based management at heritage attractions (Beeho and Prentice, 1996, 1997). In addition, management reports and promotional materials were analysed for the ways in which Maori identity was conveyed at each attraction.

In analysing the data, Relph's (1976) three components of sense of place were applied retrospectively to form an overall framework for the salient physical, operational and value dimensions of Maori identity revealed in the research. The various Maori dimensions were elicited using "thick" description (Howe, 1991) and manual categorization of key terms and concepts revealed in the in-depth interviews (see Table 1). Findings of the observations were also used in the analysis. The dimensions of Maori (attraction-based) identity are discussed in more detail below, in relation to *physical*, *activity* and *meaning* dimensions. Excerpts from the in-depth interviews are used to further illustrate the findings, although, to respect anonymity, the speakers are not identified. The issue of authenticity was found to be central to the tourist experience at each attraction. Also important was the desire to foster respect and appreciation for traditional and contemporary Maori ways of life. However, the findings also revealed instances, at all three attractions, of Maori culture being streamlined or altered for tourist consumption, providing support for the purpose-derived concept of attraction-based identity.

Maori Culture as Attraction-Based Identity

Dimensions of Maori identity represented at each attraction are listed in Table 1. These represent fundamental aspects of the culture that make the three attractions uniquely Maori. While the physical and activity dimensions of attraction-based identity can best be described by the differences in the offerings at each attraction, such as exhibit content and participation in Maori cultural activities, the dimensions of meaning represented at each attraction are founded more on similarities than on differences. The *meaning* dimensions represent what is perhaps the essence of Maori cultural identity and significance conveyed to visitors. This will be demonstrated in the following discussion of the findings.

Physical Dimensions

The physical elements of Maori identity were evident in the settings, presentation and promotional images at each attraction. The unique physical setting or appearance of each was manifest in its ownership and focus as well as in its facilities and environments. Whale Watch is a Maori-controlled company with a non-Maori product focus: ecotourism. Tamaki Tours is also a Maori-controlled company but with a direct Maori product focus: it is a recreated village offering re-enactments of traditional Maori activities. Te Papa is not solely Maori-controlled but has a direct Maori product focus in terms of its exhibits; its essentially urban product contrasts with the marine or rural focus of the other two attractions.

Despite their physical differences, the three attractions are similar in presentation (see Table 1). For instance, each emphasises the Maori *language* in displays and interpretive programs, and each gives prominence to employees of apparent Maori heritage. *Staffing* policies ensure that each employee is competent in Maori language and *tikanga* (customs). Whatever their heritage, frontline staff are *empowered* to make decisions about customer service and thus to “speak with authority” on Maori culture. The managers see this as essential to ensuring that tourists follow cultural protocol and appreciate the Maori significance of their visit. Staff members see it as enabling them to connect personally with visitors. A Te

TABLE 1 DIMENSIONS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY PRESENTED AT 3 MAORI ATTRACTIONS

Dimension of Place-Identity	Elements of Attraction-Based Identity
Physical	Language Staffing <i>Taonga</i> (artefacts) <i>Marae</i> (traditional meeting place) Promotions
Activities	Authenticity Community consultation Accessibility of resources <i>Kaitiakitanga</i> (spiritual guardianship) Focus on quality of life <i>Kawa</i> (protocol) Connection with visitors Focus on dynamism of culture Interactive activities Sensory and emotional experience Cultural sharing <i>Whanau</i> (family) environment <i>Manaakitanga</i> (hospitality)
Meaning	Belongingness and identity <i>Mana</i> (power, authority) Spirituality and mythology <i>Tino Rangatiratanga</i> (sovereignty) <i>Whanau</i> (family) <i>Kaupapa</i> (rules) <i>Matauranga</i> (oral history) and scholarship <i>Whakapapa</i> (genealogy) <i>Manaakitanga</i> (hospitality) <i>Waharoa</i> (gateway) <i>Mauri</i> (spiritual life force)

Papa interviewee said: “I like finding out where people are from, and from there you can make a connection, and what you do is take them up to a certain item or a song that may be playing and point out that it is from their country or their region and they go, okay, how do we find out a bit more?”

At Tamaki Tours and Te Papa, adherence to protocol is seen as vital to ensuring that the integrity of Maori *taonga* and the significance of the *Marae* are preserved and respected. An interviewee described the strictness with which Tamaki Tours observes cultural protocol at its *Marae*. He recounted an instance of

the *wero* (ritual challenge) being performed at the entrance to the *Marae* and visitors seeing it as a joke: “We had one visitor who stood over the peace offering and didn’t pick it up...so the warriors came and put fear into him.” At Te Papa, visitors are instructed to remove their footwear before entering the *Marae* as a mark of respect for the spirituality that surrounds the *Marae* and the *taonga*. The *Marae* is an essential part of each attraction. It is not just a physical structure, but also a symbol of tribal identity and solidarity, for both staff (Maori and non-Maori) and Maori visitors. At Whale Watch the *Marae* is not consciously promoted but plays a central role in the corporate culture of the company. At Te Papa, similarly, the *Marae* is at the heart of the organization, as illustrated by the comment of one interviewee: “All staff of Te Papa are referred to as *iwi kainga* [tribal affiliation articulated through the *Marae*], and as part of that they have a responsibility to ensure that the *Marae* functions as a *Marae*.”

All three attractions use powerful Maori imagery in their *promotions*. Tamaki Tours uses images of traditional Maori warriors along with Maori sayings or proverbs. Tamaki Tours has produced a series of postcards depicting “Sayings of the Maori” such as “*He kapiti hono, he tatai hono* – the living are guided by the sayings and examples of their ancestors.” Te Papa and Whale Watch have adopted symbolic brand logos. Whale Watch uses the image of Paikea (the Whale Rider) to depict the legend of Paikea arriving in New Zealand from Hawaiiiki, the Maori ancestral homeland, on the back of a whale. “The logo is really about who we are,” explained a Whale Watch interviewee. “We are the whale riders, and we are looking to the future riding on the back of the whale...it symbolizes the bond or relationship we have with the whale and [the fact] that we respect that relationship.” The Te Papa logo is a thumb print symbolizing “Our Place” and the unique identity of New Zealand. Thus the physical dimensions of place presented at each attraction convey deeper cultural meanings that form the basis of the message to visitors.

Activities

Table 1 also identifies the activities, functions and programs through which Maori identity

is expressed at each attraction. In their most tangible form, the activities and functions are unique to the product focus of each attraction. However, similarities are also manifest in the three programs. These include the recurring themes of cultural *authenticity*, *community consultation* and *accessibility*, with each attraction being guided by *kaumatua* (elders) and local *iwi* (tribes), and thus the principles of *whakapapa* (genealogy) and ancestral *kaupapa* (rules). This approach is seen as important for instilling cultural pride among Maori and as vital to offering a tourist experience that is based on cultural integrity, honesty and scholarship. Even though Whale Watch chooses not to offer a Maori-themed product, as a Maori-controlled company it is guided by the cultural values that underlie *whakapapa*: “We operate at a level of integrity and cultural acceptability...these are the principles and the way we have operated for hundreds of years...anything else constitutes the watering down of cultural values...the message has substance, and, having substance, it has more credibility and more power...it is the realest thing in terms of who we are, what we do.” Although the three attractions strive to preserve cultural authenticity and integrity, they also assume a *kaitiakitanga* (spiritual guardianship) role in terms of their functioning and their use of cultural resources. All three attractions express a philosophy of stewardship rather than ownership of objects considered essential to Maori identity.

Grounded in their concern for cultural integrity is a commitment to *quality of life* in the pursuit of sustainability. A Whale Watch interviewee said: “[Maori] people have lived here for close to a thousand years and are extremely committed to being here for another thousand years, so we are extremely committed to quality of life. Commercial development is important, but not to the extent that it denies future generations. We cannot seek to have short-term gains for long-term losses; it is unacceptable and does not even enter into our thinking. Succession is extremely important but it has to be balanced by capability and responsibility.” In respecting the *kawa* associated with Maori traditions, values and protocol, the three attractions have also tried to develop a personal *connection* with their visitors, communicating to them the fact

that Maoridom is a *dynamic living culture*. Hence significant Maori objects and places are not just the focus of the visitor experience, but also a means of communicating the dynamic and holistic nature of Maori culture. Staff members are empowered to use the background and interests of each individual visitor to interpret cultural significance in a way that is personally meaningful to that visitor.

Tamaki Tours and Te Papa use an *interactive* approach to the display of cultural values. For example, Te Papa offers a presentation called Blastback, which combines a thrilling ride with vivid imagery of the Maori story of creation. A Te Papa interviewee described the ride as providing “a unique feel about the stories...which appeals to a broad section of the community, especially teenagers...and while it seems like it is solely entertainment you are actually learning through the experience...it has not been based on any less research or *matauranga* [oral history] than our other exhibits...it is just presented in a different format.”

At all three attractions, interaction is also the basis of a conscious effort to ensure that the experience is both *sensory* and *emotional*, so that visitors become sensitized to the significance of Maori identity. Management at Te Papa explained that their aim is to offer an emotional visitor experience through the use of technologies that “make things colourful, [involving] more senses than just your visual senses.”

The attractions foster a sense of pride, or *cultural sharing*, among their staff. A Whale Watch interviewee said: “Success starts with Maori feeling comfortable with ‘who they are’ first and foremost, knowledge of *whakapapa* and putting cultural values first before that culture can be shared with others.” In a similar vein, a Tamaki Tours manager observed: “There is not one member of staff that hasn’t really gone hard out to learn a lot more about themselves, about their culture, since working with us...it doesn’t stop here as a performance thing, it’s not a superficial turn-on turn-off thing...some staff have come in not understanding a word of Maori, and then a month later they are getting books out and trying really hard to understand their culture, their background, and the protocol is now being practised in their homes. So we are really

proud to portray who we are.” The three attractions nurture a *whanau* (family) environment through such events as staff *hangi*. The passion, pride and commitment of staff translates into a sense of true Maori *manaakitanga* (hospitality).

Meanings

The sense of place derived from the presentation of Maori *meanings* was found to constitute a more profound Maori identity than that derived from physical settings and activities. Meanings are the outward expression or interpretation of culture and identity. Cultural meaning comprises the abstract, intangible elements of attraction-based identity. Relph (1976) points out that the dimensions that define sense of place – the physical, activity and meaning dimensions – are interrelated and inseparable. The intangible characteristics convey the essence of Maori identity. They combine with an attraction’s physical settings and activities to make it uniquely Maori.

The data gathered at the three attractions reveal dimensions of Maori cultural meaning expressed as attraction-based identity (Table 1). *Belongingness* and *identity*, for example, were reported as key elements in the Maori sense of place. A Whale Watch interviewee explained that the visitor experience is based on an understanding of “who we are, what we do, what we enjoy, and it is very natural...that we as Ngai Tahu people [a Maori tribe] have to feel proud about the company...that we can talk about our identity, feel proud about what we do, how we do it, and it needs to be a role model for our *rangatahi* [young people] and we have to do things in a way that our old people will be satisfied.” This belief also reflects the closely related theme of *mana*, which symbolizes power, authority, prestige and cultural pride. Staff and managers frequently said that the success of the attraction contributes to the *mana* of those associated with it. For example, a Whale Watch interviewee commented that the fact that the company was operating under *Tino Rangatiratanga* (sovereignty, or supreme *mana*) made the Maori staff identify with and feel pride in their culture. The offerings of the attractions were seen as empowering Maori people and reinforcing their identity. Staff and management have developed a shared vision and sense

of cultural unity. The sense of identity is nurtured through, for example, the fostering of a *whanau* environment, as discussed above.

Kaupapa also plays a role in the visitor experience, through attention to *matauranga* and scholarship and through management strategies that ensure authenticity and respect for Maori values and protocol (see Hinch, McIntosh and Ingram, 1999). A Te Papa interviewee stated that through *matauranga* and scholarship “we can ensure [that] everything in the museum is authentic and backed up with research, so if it’s labelled, it’s accurate.” Evident in the interviews also was the importance of *whakapapa*. A Te Papa respondent said: “For many urban Maori that didn’t understand about their *iwi* connections and roots, it makes them proud to see their own *whakapapa* and sends them on a journey of rediscovery of their self-identity.”

Manaakitanga, *waharoa* and *mauri* are also key. Explained a Te Papa interviewee: “*Manaakitanga* is inherent in the way that you come onto the *Marae*. You are welcomed onto the *Marae* and you become part of the whole process...and this comes through in the way that the staff are empowered to make decisions, to put the customer first.” Another Te Papa respondent described the museum as a *waharoa* (gateway to the *Marae*): “People can come in and learn, but it is also a gateway outwards, so that the *iwi* learn about things that they perhaps had lost the skill to do.” In their quest for authenticity, all three attractions stress the importance of offering a spiritual, emotional tourist experience. Indeed, the researchers witnessed Maori visitors grow tearful over the deep spirituality they felt in being with their *taonga*. The interpretation of *mauri* is also seen as important at the three attractions. A Tamaki Tours interviewee described the need “to share the spiritual feelings that we have towards the land, the animals...everything has a *mauri*, it’s got a life force, and so everything is significant to our people.” A Whale Watch respondent stated emphatically: “First of all, we need to recognize that we are linked to creation, so we need to give passengers a perception of who we are as Maori, and they must recognize that we actually live an experience of having a relationship with the whales.” The three attractions believe their visitors will become sensitized to fundamental

Maori beliefs and traditions, and thus will help to keep Maori traditions alive.

Authenticity

The dimensions of Maori identity listed in Table 1 outline the visitor experiences that are important to managers and staff at the three attractions. The findings also provide insight into the perceived limited ability of the attractions to offer an authentic cultural experience.

The decision of Whale Watch not to directly base its product on a Maori theme stemmed from a failure on the part of visitors to respect Maori meanings and values. A Whale Watch guide described the process of connecting with each individual visitor: “You can ‘feel’ the visitors to know whether they are pretty much of the same wave length, because if they are not...[you are not] going to ‘hand out’ your belief system for them to cheapen or bastardize, and by that I mean that quite often people will not accept or even acknowledge your reality in terms of its mythological substance, that myths and legends are part of our history.” Interaction with tourists allows Whale Watch guides to assess each person’s level of receptivity and to choose an appropriate interpretive cultural commentary. Whale Watch managers have suggested, however, that they might develop Maori cultural experiences targeted to specific market segments.

A similar concern was evident at Te Papa: “One of the things we don’t do is talk about Maori myths and legends, because then it says that it’s just a myth or a legend, when in fact it’s ‘our story,’ which has come from Maori oral history; so there needs to be recognition for the fact that the Maori way is an oral history way.”

The short duration of the Tamaki Tours’ visit to the Maori village for the *hangi* and concert necessitated a streamlining of the cultural presentation: “The only opportunity that visitors ever have of getting a glimpse inside Maori culture is in the span of about two and a half to three hours, and even in that time you can sometimes put too much into it, so that is why we offer our workshops...for those that want to know more and be told a bit more in-depth about the spiritual side.” It was recognized that tourist experiences are cumulative, and the village visit is intended as

an introduction to Maori culture. The workshops do, however, offer more depth.

At Te Papa it was also evident that the traditional Maori had reservations about certain aspects of the cultural presentation: “We could have got bogged down on the issues of food around *taonga*, on issues of photography around exhibition items, but the common-sense approach prevailed in how we looked at what Te Papa was for, and the issues went on the table – they weren’t ignored – but with the scholarship and *matauranga* that has gone into it, we can always speak with authority.”

In this respect, the findings confirm the need for a concept specifically addressing the commodification of cultural identity in a tourist setting, such as is inherent in the notion of attraction-based identity. This concept implies that cultural identity may be streamlined for tourists. Conversely, however, the findings also reveal a high level of integrity and cultural authenticity at the three attractions, and thus demonstrate that sustainable indigenous tourism can be achieved by ensuring – and communicating to visitors – cultural integrity, honesty and protocol. It might be argued, therefore, that, in the touristic presentation of cultural identity, authenticity is achieved less through painstaking historical accuracy than through honesty, integrity, accessibility, acceptability and the communication of cultural dynamism. From this perspective, the findings provide evidence that tourist attractions are not necessarily perceived as centres of “placelessness,” as suggested by Relph (1976), and that the relationship between tourism and culture is not necessarily a destructive one (Hughes, 1989). The study therefore contributes valuable knowledge in the quest for a sustainable indigenous tourism.

Conclusion

This paper examined the presentation of cultural identity at three Maori tourist attractions in New Zealand. In-depth interviews with managers and staff reveal that Maori identity is conveyed to visitors through physical settings, activities and intangible dimensions of meaning. Cultural authenticity, achieved through cultural integrity, honesty

and protocol, was found to be central to the visitor experience. The attractions were found to have streamlined the cultural experience for tourists. The findings therefore support the notion of attraction-based identity, whereby cultural identity may be consciously and purposefully commodified through tourism. The three Maori attractions have sought to preserve the integrity of their culture whilst still sharing with tourists important aspects of Maori identity. This foundation may be useful in evaluating the ability of cultural attractions to develop a sustainable Maori tourism that fosters tourist appreciation of Maori culture.

References

- Beeho, A.J., and R.C. Prentice. 1996. “Understanding Visitor Experiences as a Basis for Product Development,” in *Practicing Responsible Tourism: International Case Studies in Tourism Planning, Policy and Development*, L.C. Harrison and W. Husbands, eds. New York: Wiley, p. 472–494.
- Beeho, A.J., and R.C. Prentice. 1997. “Conceptualizing the Experiences of Heritage Tourists: A Case Study of New Lanark World Heritage Village.” *Tourism Management*, Vol. 18, n° 2, p. 75–87.
- Berno, T. 1996. “Maori Tourism.” *Tourism Management*, Vol. 18, n° 7, p. 471–473.
- Boorstin, D. 1964. *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Butler, R.W., and T.D. Hinch, eds. 1996. *Tourism and Indigenous Peoples*. London: International Thomson Business Press.
- Daniels, S. 1992. “Place and the Geographical Imagination.” *Geography*, Vol. 77, n° 4, p. 310–322.
- Greenwood, D.J. 1989. “Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commodification,” in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, V.L. Smith, ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 17–31.
- Hall, C.M. 1996. “Tourism and the Maori of Aotearoa, New Zealand,” in *Tourism and Indigenous Peoples*, R.W. Butler and T.D. Hinch, eds. London: International Thomson Business Press, p. 155–175.
- Hinch, T., A. McIntosh and T. Ingram. 1999. *Maori Attractions in Aotearoa, New Zealand: Setting a Context for Sustainable Tourism*. Research paper #6. Dunedin, NZ: Centre for Tourism, University of Otago.
- Howe, C.Z. 1991. “Considerations When Using Phenomenology in Leisure Inquiry: Beliefs, Methods and Analysis in Naturalistic Research.” *Leisure Studies*, Vol. 10, p. 49–62.

- Hughes, H.L. 1989. "Tourism and the Arts: A Potentially Destructive Relationship?" *Tourism Management*, (June), p. 97-99.
- Johnston, A. 2000. "Indigenous Peoples and Eco-tourism: Bringing Indigenous Knowledge and Rights into the Sustainability Equation." *Tourism Recreation Research*, Vol. 25, n° 2, p. 89-96.
- Jorgensen, D.L. 1989. *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies*. London: Sage.
- Mitchell, I., C.M. Hall and N. Keelan. 1992. "The Cultural Dimensions of Heritage Tourism in New Zealand: Issues in the Development of Maori Culture and Heritage as a Tourist Resource," in *Ecotourism: Incorporating the Global Classroom*, B. Weiler, ed. Canberra: Bureau of Tourism Research, p. 271-280.
- Moscardo, G. 1999. *Making Visitors Mindful: Principles for Creating Quality Sustainable Visitor Experiences Through Effective Communication*. Champaign, IL: Sagamore.
- New Zealand Tourism Board. 1996. *New Zealand International Visitors Survey, 1995/96*. Wellington: Author.
- Proshansky, H.M. 1978. "The City and Self-identity." *Environment and Behavior*, Vol. 10, p. 147-169.
- Proshansky, H.M., A.K. Fabian and R. Kaminoff. 1983. "Place-Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self." *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 3, p. 57-83.
- Relf, E. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion.
- Reynolds, T., and J. Gutman. 1988. "Laddering Theory, Method, Analysis and Interpretation." *Journal of Advertising Research*, (February/March), p. 11-29.
- Ryan, C. 1997. "Maori and Tourism: A Relationship of History, Constitutions and Rites." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 5, n° 4, p. 257-278.
- Sofield, T.H.B. 1991. "Sustainable Ethnic Tourism in the South Pacific: Some Principles." *Journal of Tourism Studies*, Vol. 2, n° 1, p. 56-72.
- Turner, L., and J. Ash. 1975. *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery*. London: Constable.
- Urry, J. 1990. *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage.

