

## Indigenous Protagonism in Tourism Operations and Management in Australia, Brazil, and New Zealand

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### ABSTRACT

**W**orldwide, Indigenous tourism has grown in importance over the last few decades, thus placing peoples, their territory, culture, customs, views of the world, and natural environments at the center of attention of an array of Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and governments. Australia, Brazil, and New Zealand are home to many Indigenous communities, and this paper aims to identify the key elements related to the contemporary role of indigenous groups and communities in tourism operations and management in the context of these countries. Desktop research for this study included a review of academic and grey literature, secondary data, and the authors' collective experience in the field. Current approaches to indigenous tourism suggest that engagement of ethnic indigenous minorities in a leadership, and even a protagonist role, is good for sustainable tourism operations and management, particularly if they incorporate self-determination, control, and empowerment.

**Keywords:** Indigenous tourism operations, Indigenous protagonism, Cultural strengthening, Destination enhancement, Indigenous entrepreneurship

## INTRODUCTION

The history of Indigenous peoples in Australia, Brazil, and New Zealand is one permeated by Western colonization and interference, a colonial system that began with the expansion of European empires at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century and which undermined ethnicities in the southern hemisphere, disrupting traditional societies (Metcalf, 2005; Wolfe, 2006 and Abbattista, 2011). According to Horvath (1972, p.46), colonialism can be universally understood as a form of group domination over territory and/or behaviour, resulting in forms of exploitation and power enforcement, leading to culture-change processes. Australia, Brazil, and New Zealand share some common ground in such colonization processes and struggles for self-determination by Indigenous groups. Notwithstanding such history, Indigenous peoples in these countries are slowly recovering from the impacts of their colonizers, and taking ownership of their futures, particularly in the last four decades, with a significant repositioning of power relations assisted by “a rising Indigenous activism” (McCarty and Nicholas, 2012, p.150). This has included acknowledgement of indigeneity as “a significant political strategy in the counter-hegemonic Indigenous social movements against exploitative, oppressive and repressive regimes” (Gomes, 2013), and points to a ‘protagonist role’ as critical for achieving self-determination and recognition (Castellino and Gilbert, 2003), and the best way to realize a

fair and shared future.

This paper looks at the relevance and evidence of this shift in Indigenous issues and approaches in the tourism sector. Policies and practices have been implemented [by institutionalized powers] as part of the ‘politics of inclusion’ seeking participation, recognition, and representation (Idrus, 2008), and the paper examines if and how tourism has played and can play a critical role and be a beneficiary of these policies and practices.

The timeliness of the paper lies in part in the undeniable global demand for Indigenous tourism experiences, with an increasing interest in the values and traditions of Indigenous cultures and lifestyles, both by the general travelling public and specialist market segments (Peeler, 2004; Whitford, 2009). By taking into account these trends, one of the key contributions of the paper is to identify key aspects of indigenous operations in Australia, Brazil, and New Zealand that have helped foster Indigenous protagonism in tourism operations. In reviewing the literature, it became apparent that Indigenous protagonism in tourism operations has had limited consideration, particularly within the context of Brazil, although more so in Australia and New Zealand.

Colonialism has been largely presented in the history of capitalism as an economic world-system based on “forms of intergroup domination, subjugation, oppression” (Horvath, 1972), to exploit peoples politically and economically, creating a core-periphery system (Sanderson, 2005),

that is, a world system conspicuously and overwhelmingly embedded in the distinction between ‘colonizers’ and ‘colonized’ from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when a decolonization process (Page, 2003, p.325-328) started with Asian, African, and South American nations gaining their independence. Against this backdrop, Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil have emerged as postcolonial nations facing a myriad of challenges in order to promote and safeguard the well-being, equity, and self-determination of their indigenous peoples.

Self-determination is directly linked to the notions of freedom and independence, positioned as a right, as stated in the Declaration of Principles of Indigenous Rights of 1984, “all Indigenous nations and peoples have the right to self-determination, by virtue of which they have the right to whatever degree of autonomy or self-government they choose”. This implies the rights of Indigenous groups and communities to *control* their own destiny (Hurst, 1990, p. 95).

Self-determination also implies participatory *engagement* for *empowering* native ethnic groups as explained by Hunt (2013, p. 2),

*Engagement involves Indigenous agency and decision making, a deliberative and negotiated process, not just information giving or consultation, and it starts early in the program or project development. Engagement is based on Indigenous aspirations and priorities, within*

*an Indigenous framework, process, context and time frame; that is, it is an Indigenous-driven process with government as facilitator/enabler within a framework of Indigenous self-determination. Engagement builds on existing community governance structures and Indigenous strengths and assets, rather than on deficits and gaps, in an empowering process, with small achievements along the way to mutually agreed longer term goals.*

The term *protagonist* refers to role-taking by an individual/organization or by a group of individuals/organizations that is linked to a social, cultural, or political movement or cause. By taking a protagonist role, Indigenous group(s) and Indigenous-related institutions/organizations are expected to advocate – as stakeholders of cooperative endeavors – for their better future. It implies involvement in initiatives for addressing common concerns as a way of transforming social relations, culture, linguistics, education, land rights, conflict resolution, and representation. These transformations can affect greatly and favourably on the lives of individuals (Rockwell and Gomes 2009). In effect, ‘Indigenous protagonism’ connotes in various ways ‘Indigenous empowerment’.

The premise of this paper is that tourism can serve as the means to empower ethnic-related groups, if indigenous peoples take on a protagonist role, maintain control of their destiny (self-determination), and

engage in or control decision-making and management processes (Lima, 2014).

### **Concepts and histories of Indigeneity and indigenous tourism in Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand**

Who can be regarded as Indigenous? Corntassel (2003, p.75) states that “the question of ‘who is indigenous’ is best answered by Indigenous communities themselves”. The Second World Council for Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in 1977 defined a series of criteria for considering certain individuals or groups as ‘Indigenous’: first, individuals who have a feeling of belonging to ancestral homelands and to original inhabitants based on the oral and/or written histories, that is, a link with his/her group past can be regarded as being ‘indigenous; second, individuals who can be differentiated as a specific group because of its own institutionalized communal-based elements, kinship networks, and developing culture; third, the command of a specific language or dialect that is flagrantly distinct from dominant languages in the society, which sets it apart as an Indigenous language; four, individuals who consider themselves different from a dominant society or from other groups because of their connections to sacred sites, motherlands, places where they have suffered violations of their rights, or they have been threatened with violations, disrespect, or any military, economic, or political infringement, including group displacement. Physical similarities or ethnic patterns were not

regarded as criteria for setting individuals as ‘indigenous’, rather it is taken into account in its ‘relational’, ‘cultural’, ‘linguistic’, ‘belief’, and territorial/land aspects (Corntassel, 2003).

In Australia, ‘Aboriginal Australians’ is a term used to denote more than 200 Australian Aboriginal tribes and Torres Strait Islanders (Zubaran, 2013). In Brazil, the 2010 IBGE Census found that 817,963 people regarded themselves as Indigenous, of which 61.46 percent live in rural areas, representing 305 different ethnicities, spread over 545 recognized Indigenous Lands, speaking 274 different languages, with 17.5 percent not speaking Portuguese. In New Zealand, the Māori prevail solely as an ethnic group, being commonly urban-based, representing 14.9 percent of the national population according to the 2013 Census as informed by Statistics NZ.

In the literature, the conceptual definition of ‘Indigenous tourism’ has remained vague and “polysemous”, with multiple meanings, and “it is closely related to the concepts of ethnic tourism, ethnotourism, ethno-ecotourism and Aboriginal tourism” (Pereiro, 2015, p.60) with social, economic, and cultural implications, critically lying within the scope of anthropological approaches and concerns. The comprehensive book ‘Indigenous Ecotourism and Sustainable Development and Management’ by Heather Zeppel (2006) significantly contributed to the literature using global and regional approaches and

case studies. The National Centre for Tourism (1999) defined indigenous tourism as a type of “tourism which provides visitors with an opportunity to appreciate Indigenous cultures and places of significance or which is either Indigenous owned or part-Indigenous owned or employs Indigenous people...” (p.59). It is taken as an increasingly important sector in order to enhance Indigenous groups, that is, empowering, promoting, and encouraging native peoples and their cultures, and while most definitions of ‘Indigenous tourism’ deal with cultural products and experiences, others focus on Indigenous engagement and control (Peters and Higgins-Desbiolles, 2012).

Australia, Brazil, and New Zealand are ‘home’ to multiple ethnic groups. In the case of indigenous peoples, they have distinct levels of social status, land status, and ethnic rights; that is, they live in different sociopolitical and geographical contexts that are not necessarily sociocultural units; notwithstanding, some intersectional characteristics [social and cultural patterns] are shared among these groups and their role in tourism operations. Given the heterogeneity and contextual realities of the respective countries, Indigenous tourism, including Indigenous tourism entrepreneurship and Indigenous guiding, has distinct levels of development and achievements in each of the three countries. Finally, Indigenous tourism is still an evolving, developing phenomenon that is the focus of specific policies and institutionalized coordination

and support.

### **History of Indigeneity in Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand**

**Brazil.** The Portuguese colonized Brazil as Cabral reached the new land of Americas in 1500 (Levine, 2003; Metcalf, 2005). Brazil is a cultural “kaleidoscope”, a mixture of cultures, a plurality of ethnicities (Silveira and Crubelatte, 2007); historically, the country has a legacy of African and Indigenous influences, not to mention European and Middle Eastern ones, because of immigrants from those regions, and even Japanese ones, as immigrants moved to Brazil earlier in the twentieth century (Winant, 1992; Perz et. al, 2008).

Despite not having a dominant Indigenous ethnic group (as the case of the Māori in New Zealand), the Indigenous communities living in non-urban areas, mainly in the Legal Amazonia, can be regarded as being relatively homogenous, even though interracial communities are conspicuous in the country (Winant, 1992), referred to as “*brasilindios*” or “*mamelucos*”, Portuguese-native Brazilian descendants (Ribeiro, 1995). With 180 Indigenous peoples in Amazonia (Heck et. al, 2005), they comprise less than one percent of the estimated 203.6 million people living in Brazil in 2015 according to the World Population Review, with about 274 living languages and dialects (Vitorelli, 2014, p. 164); the Indigenous peoples constitute a distinguishing feature of the Brazilian national identity (Ramos, 1998; Perz et. al, 2008).

In Brazil, most Indigenous communities are grouped in Indigenous Lands (see Fig.1), which have a special status aimed at safeguarding Indigenous groups, their identities, culture, and lifestyle, while holding a protected area status, intended to keep them free of large-scale corporate farming, ranching, and deforestation. Indigenous peoples in their protected land are expected to play a stewardship role, even if this does not usually occur. The point is that Indigenous communities as a unit are located in rural and remote regions, most of them in the Legal Amazonia, spread over nine states; and these communities have a strong land connection, land is part of their life, identity, beliefs, spiritual significance, traditional knowledge, and natural resources and

landscapes. Urban Indigenous communities and groupings as observed, for example, with the Māori in New Zealand, are a rare event in Brazil. Urban Indigenous people are more fragmented and dispersed.

**Australia.** According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics - ABS (2013), 669,900 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders represented 3 percent of Australia's total population of 24 million people in July 2015; they mainly live in the most populous urban areas, 60 percent in major cities and inner areas, and 20 percent in rural, remote regions. When Cook made first contact with Australian natives in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, it is estimated there were about 250 languages (Walsh, 2007), but by some recent estimates, 160 of



**Figure 1.** Brazilian Indigenous Community in the *Uiramutã* region, *Raposa Serra do Sol* Indigenous Land, in Roraima State, Amazonia. Picture was taken with a visitor (the crouched girl) soon after they finished their traditional dance, the *Parixara*, as part of a welcoming ceremony for outsiders. The group dressed up their traditional costumes to welcoming the visitors and for dancing.

**Source:** Ismar Lima. Fieldwork in Roraima, Brazil, in 2012.

these are already extinct and 70 are at risk of disappearing (Walsh and Yallop, 2007, p. 2).

The notions of ‘Dreaming’, or ‘Tjukurrpa’, which, as a concept, is an understanding ‘law’ and ‘life; it is all about the “dreaming stories [which] pass on important knowledge, cultural values and belief systems to later generations” (Australia Government, 2015).

Australian Indigenous cultural heritage with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are “complex and diverse”, according to the Australian Government, and this diversity is present in the ways of living, arts (see Fig. 2), knowledge, rituals, and beliefs.

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are complex and diverse. The Indigenous cultures of Australia are the oldest living cultural history in the world – they go back at least 50,000 years and some argue closer to 65,000 years. One of the reasons Aboriginal cultures have survived for so long is their ability to adapt and change over time [...]. Australia, Indigenous communities keep their cultural heritage alive by passing their knowledge, arts, rituals and performances from one generation to another, speaking and teaching languages, protecting cultural materials, sacred and significant sites, and objects [...]. Land is fundamental to the wellbeing of*



**Figure 2.** Aboriginal performers at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary on Gold Coast, Queensland, minutes before starting a performance of music, dance, traditional fire making techniques, boomerang use, and storytelling for visitors. The didgeridoo can be observed in the picture.

**Source:** Ismar Lima. Fieldwork, Australia, in 2015.

*Aboriginal people. The land is not just soil or rocks or minerals, but a whole environment that sustains and is sustained by people and culture. For Indigenous Australians, the land is the core of all spirituality and this relationship and the spirit of 'country' is central to the issues that are important to Indigenous people today. [Over their existence,] they understood and cared for their different environments, and adapted to them (Australia.gov.au).*

**New Zealand.** Similar to Indigenous peoples in Australia, the Māori in New Zealand were subjected to the British colonialization process, which started with James Cook first making landfall in 1769; within several decades, this resulted in disenfranchised lands and rights with interventions in the Māori *Tikanga*<sup>1</sup>, and an undermining of their social system (values and protocols), which led them into a political, economic, social, and even spiritual disintegration (Lai, 2010). With the arrival of the Europeans in New Zealand, their land was involved in a process whereby it slowly became bicultural with colonized and colonizers inhabiting the same places.

This bicultural dichotomy has been the object of many disputes (Goldsmith, 2009), mostly related to

Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, as “an instrument to construct an orderly relationship between British Crown and Māori leaders, guaranteeing...the status...and the continued possession of their property...is most contentious” (Goldsmith, 2009, p.329).

New Zealand, also called ‘Aotearoa’ in the Māori language (Māori Te Reo), an official language of the country, together with English, is estimated to have a population of 4.6 million people (May 2015 estimate), with about 600,000 Māori, representing 14.9 percent of the national population in the 2013 Census as informed by Statistics NZ.

The *Marae(s)* is a central aspect of Māori culture, because it is a meeting ground belonging to a specific tribe, *iwi*, or family, *whanau*. The *Marae* is a fenced complex of carved wooden buildings that has its own rules, norms (the *tikanga*), and protocols (the *kawa*). One of the protocols in the *Marae* is the traditional *hongi* greetings, in which the Māori hosting individuals line up to greet visitors by pressing their nose on the visitors’ nose as a way to express to outsiders that they are in safe and welcoming place. The *kapa haka* is a kind of war dance related to battlefield events or sealing the peace between two dueling parties, and its choreography includes loud chants, followed by violently

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<sup>1</sup>The Maori names in italics refer to concepts, etc. Maori geographical locations are written with regular fonts.

stamping the feet on the ground, with tongue protrusions and threatening gestures.

The New Zealand National rugby team, the All Blacks, performs the *kapa haka* before its matches, displaying this unique dance to the world. Another distinctive cultural Māori element is their densely tattooed face and body. The Māori fabulous greenstone (called *Pounamu*) and jade, wood, and bone carved handicrafts are other cultural elements of interest.

Key Māori intangible cultural elements can be grouped, but not limited to, the *Wairuatanga* (state of being spiritual), *Whanaungatanga* (relationship or kinship), *Nga matatini Māori* (Māori diversity), *Kaitiakitanga* (guardianship), *Manaakitanga* (warm hospitality), *Tino rangatiran-*

*ga* (self-determination), *Kotahitanga* (unity or solidarity), *Tuhuno* (principle of alignment), *Purotu* (principle of transparency), and *Puawaitanga* (principle of best outcomes) (McIntosh et al., 2004, p.331).

The *Kaitiakitanga* holds a Māori traditional conceptual view for socio-environmental ethics of resource management (Kawharu, 2000); thus, it explains the Māori's special interaction and relationship with elements of its land, such as fauna and flora, but that also includes rivers, lakes, hills, mountains, etc.; *Kaitiakitanga* has a comprehensive meaning by incorporating the notions of 'nature guardianship', protection, preservation, or sheltering (Tomlins-Jahnke and Gillies, 2012), "the guardianship and sustainable management of



**Figure 3.** Maori performing the Kapa Haka warrior dance for visitors in New Zealand. The performance is permeated by very emotive and expressive song, dance, and chanting. It is a showcase of the Maori cultural heritage. Tattooed faces and bodies are a common cultural and aesthetic element of the Maori people.

natural, built and cultural resources for the collective benefit of current and future generations” (NZ Tourism Strategy, 2015, p.1). These concepts are revisited in a later section in this paper to illustrate how the themes of self-determination, empowerment, engagement, and control are played out in Māori tourism.

### Contemporary approaches to indigenous tourism in Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand

In a historical examination of the relationship between tourism and indigenous people, Weaver (2010) outlined six distinct evolutionary indigenous tourism stages for Australia and New Zealand: (1) pre-European in situ control, characterized by high local control of indigenous

themes; (2) in-situ exposure in the early stages of colonialism; (3) *ex-situ* exhibitionism and exploitation as native artefacts are displayed in museums and exhibitions; (4) *in-situ* exhibitionism and exploitation, which foster strategies of resistance and re-assertions of indigenous control and give rise to (5) *in-situ* quasi-empowerment, with extension of this control to previously occupied territory; and (6) *ex-situ* quasi-empowerment and the presence of “shadow indigenous tourism” (p.43). This suggests that in stages 5 and 6 indigenous people start regaining control, self-determination, and empowerment, suggesting a protagonist role in tourism development.

This then raises the question: control and empowerment over what? Figure 4 illustrates the environmental

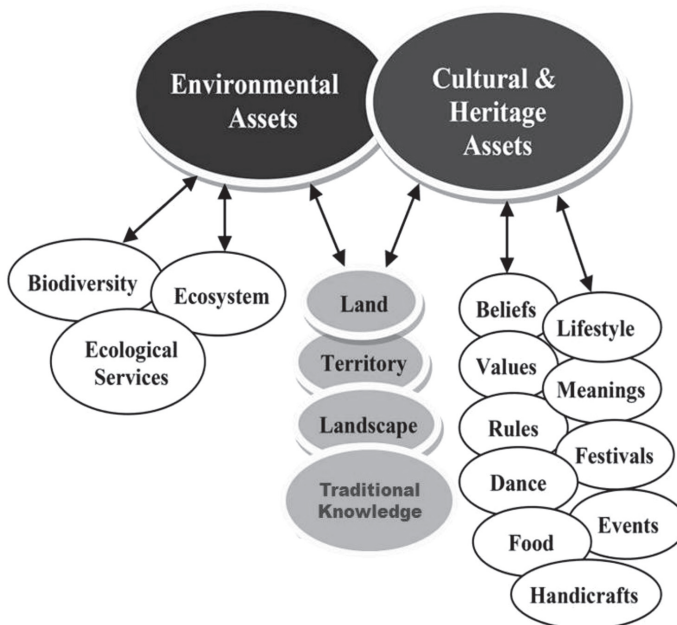


Figure 4. Environmental & Cultural Assets in Indigenous Tourism.

and cultural assets that provide the foundation for, and over which an indigenous group may well seek control when managing tourism operations. This is important because issues of ownership, control, and representation are highly relevant in Indigenous tourism. The environmental assets refer to the biodiversity, ecosystem, and ecological services. The cultural/heritage assets refer to tangible and intangible elements, such as beliefs, values, lifestyle, festivals, dances, food (Indigenous gastronomy), events, handicrafts, festivals, and (customary) rules. The level of Indigenous control influences the extent to which the culture is controlled or dispossessed (Hinch & Buttler, 1996).

Contemporary tourism operations and management in Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand are presented in the following subsections to illustrate the extent to which they have, in fact, reached the latter stages of empowerment and protagonism, as identified by Weaver (2010).

**Brazil.** In Brazil, the National Indian Foundation, FUNAI, in 2012, released a document, the 'National Policy for Environmental and Territorial Management of Indigenous Land', PNGATI, Law 7747, a sort of policy and guideline – in which, for the first time, ethnotourism and ecotourism in Indigenous land is mentioned, “to support Indigenous sustainable initiatives of ethnotourism and of ecotourism, by taking into account the community’s decision-making and the diversity of Indigenous peoples, promoting, where is applicable, pre-

vious studies, diagnosis of socio-environmental impacts, and the capacity building of Indigenous communities for managing these [tourism] activities”. On 11 June 2015, FUNAI finalized the regulations for tourism operations in Indigenous Lands in Brazil with a series of obligations for visitors, operators, Indigenous hosting communities, and other stakeholders. The obligations included a previous visiting planning, a signed agreement in regard to a code of conduct, and comprehensive tourism activity monitoring (FUNAI, 2015).

Any visitor presence or tour operations in their Lands, even with the permission of the communities, without previous approval by FUNAI, is now regarded as an infringement, illegal, and subject to legal charges. Indigenous Lands in Brazil are regarded as culturally and environmentally protected areas with special protective and stewardship status of ethnic relevance; they restrict land use and visitors and operators’ presence/stay. As observed, Brazil seems to be a step behind New Zealand and Australia concerning Indigenous tourism regulation and institutionalized support, a situation which may change considerably in the next years with the approval of the PNGATI, a national policy which aims to address the main indigenous issues.

FUNAI has given technical and financial support to ethnic tourism experiences in Brazil. For example, *Pataxó* in Bahia State, *Guarani-Mbya* in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, *Tenharim* in Amazonas State, and

*Kaxinawá* in Acre State have been financially supported by state government and through private partnerships. Other cases of ethnic tourism (or Indigenous tourism/eco-tourism) are spread widely over Brazil, but they amount to only a few cases, and most of them do not rely on financial or technical support, except for a Handbook on Indigenous Tourism, prepared in consultation with Indigenous people, anthropologists, and indigeneity experts of the GCT Working Group; they produced guidelines for a Pilot Program on Ecotourism in Indigenous Land, published in 2007, with the support of FUNAI and the Brazilian Tourism Agency, Embratur.

In addition, other prominent self-created and self-managed Indigenous tourism initiatives in Brazil are related to *Nova Esperança*, *Boca da Mata*, *Bananal* (Assis and Lima, 2014), and *Ingarikó* communities (Falcao, Nogueira, and Santos, 2014) in Roraima State, in the northernmost part of the country. These communities mostly offer Indigenous guiding in the forest, rivers, and waterfalls, which can include the sharing of traditional knowledge on nature, ecosystems, medicinal plants, fauna, bush tucker, and forest survival hints, as well as cultural, dance, and musical performances, production and selling of handicrafts, and the preparation of traditional food and drinks for visitors. Other cases of Indigenous tourism in Brazil can be found in the *São Gabriel da Cachoeira* in Amazonas State (Faria, 2005); *Karajá* community in *Aruanã*, Goiás State

(Chaveiro, 2014), and *Tremembé* and *Jenipapo-Kanindé* communities in Ceará State.

Despite the Indigenous tourism initiatives, this tourism segment has been largely neglected in the country at an institutional and government level as compared to neighboring countries in South America, such as Venezuela, Guyana, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. To note, not all Indigenous communities want visitors in their lands; in fact, some communities in the Legal Amazonia have strongly opposed tourism activities, regarding them as invasive and/or harmful to their traditional lifestyle, views, and beliefs (Faria, 2005; Assis and Lima, 2014). Of particular relevance to this paper, contemporary indigenous tourism in Brazil shows little evidence of delivering empowerment, control, and self-determination and could not yet be described as indigenous protagonism, despite some indigenous initiatives in tourism operations and management.

**Australia.** Conversely, Indigenous tourism is highly embedded in the Australian tourism product, led by Tourism Australia, an Australian Government agency charged with marketing the country to international visitors. Traditionally, the indigenous product was limited to highly commoditized stereotypes, usually linked to face-painted tribal dances and the traditional didgeridoo, a wooden wind instrument, as well as boomerang shows and fire-making performances by grass-and-stick friction methods.

Some time ago, Howard (2001) severely criticized the state of Aboriginal tourism, pointing to a lack of engagement with Aboriginal people and issues: "Aboriginal tourism has until recently been promoted with little consideration of the concerns for Aboriginal people. It is often conducted in a way that ignores the diversity of Aboriginal culture and the contemporary nature of Aboriginality" (p.38). Even before that, Altman (1993) and Finlayson (1991) pointed to other issues regarding Indigenous tourism operations in Australia, noted ethical and institutional concerns: "a number of complex issues are associated with this growing Aboriginal-tourist relationship such as the sanitization of the information presented, the homogenization of diverse Aboriginal cultures, the authenticity of the product, and the lack of reference to contemporary Aboriginal culture". However, the situation seems to be changing in a positive direction.

Tourism Australia works with local and regional stakeholders to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' tourism experiences, based on consultation with the Indigenous Tourism Group (ITG). This working group, which includes government and industry representatives, aims to expand the Indigenous tourism product offering, while looking for ways of increasing Indigenous participation in this tourism sector. As mentioned by Geoff Dixon, the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2014-2016 seeks "to identify, discuss and collaborate on projects which improve awareness,

demand and perceptions of Indigenous tourism experiences, whilst also supporting the development and growth of sustainable Indigenous tourism businesses" as a means of reconciliation of a variety of business, marketing, development, and ethnic interests.

This plan clearly states a commitment to produce strong relationships and connections with Indigenous peoples as the means to "contribute meaningfully to 'Closing the Gap'" in tourism development with dispersed regional economic benefits in the country. The three key reconciliation areas of tourism development and Indigenous interests presented in the 2014-2016 RAP are: 'respect', 'relationships', and 'opportunities'. 'Respect' focuses on increasing awareness of Indigenous tourism experiences and cultures while raising "the profile of Indigenous tourism across government agencies"; 'relationships' seeks to strengthen relationships with Indigenous stakeholders and pertinent communities; and 'opportunities' promotes and encourages capacity building programs for Indigenous tourism operators as well as employs and promotes Indigenous people by identifying opportunities for them in the tourism sector.

Zeppel (2003) has underlined the importance of Aboriginal cooperation and goodwill in the ecotourism sector in Australia. Russell-Mundine (2007) has found in her studies that two main barriers have limited Indigenous tourism enterprise development in Australia: economic and resource

(including issues of land tenure and lack of training, education, and infrastructure). According to her, the success in engaging Indigenous people in tourism entrepreneurship is strongly linked to appropriate forms of governance for encouraging participation and cooperation of community, to “establish appropriate ways to encourage and enable young people and women to take on positions of responsibility”, and finally “to assist the development and empowerment of individual corporation [Indigenous] members” (p. 417-430).

There is evidence of commitment to meaningful levels of protagonism with noteworthy examples of ownership and entrepreneurialism. In the Tourism Australia Corporate Website, the search engine for Aboriginal operators provides information on registered Aboriginal-related tours in Australia. In total, Tourism Australia has 53 Aboriginal-related enterprises across its seven States, including Tasmania. Aboriginal Tour Operators are recognized under the Indigenous Tourism Champions Program, ITCP, an accreditation granted only to companies that are at least 50 percent Indigenous owned and managed. Both a quality control and marketing device, ITCP accredited tour operators are categorized according to ‘product type’ and ‘experience type’. For example, ‘experience type’ relates to: urban culture, active adventures, art and culture, bush and outback, coastal escapes, day tours, extended journeys, festivals and events, and food adventures (bush tucker tours).

All these experiences with Aboriginal operators (enterprises) incorporate guiding and interpretation with a focus on Indigenous culture and heritage, as well as local landscape and natural resources, including activities and experiences in pristine remote beaches, lush rainforests, hidden waterfalls, and the rugged outback and gorges; they include tastes of Australia by way of bush tucker tours, nature healing, visits to ancient rock art galleries, autochthonous arts, tours for catching fish and mud crab, camping, and story-telling with special attention to ‘Dreamtime’, a very important aspect of Aboriginal culture and an imperative for Indigenous tourism operations.

Table 1 shows a selection of Aboriginal ITCP accredited tourism enterprises. The 53 listed operators’ profiles can be accessed online on the Tourism Australia Corporate website. The accreditation program aims to gather authentic Indigenous operators as a critical point of differentiation in a very competitive segmented market, moving away from a highly commoditized Indigenous product. These Aboriginal cultural-artistic elements are of importance, but the Indigenous culture is much more than these stereotypical images and “labels”.

As noted by Weiler and Yu (2007), “guides can provide visitors with opportunities to use all of their senses to appreciate the host culture and share and experience local stories, music and food”. Most visitors are exposed to Aboriginal issues through dreaming stories, tales, and

narratives, making their experience unique (Zeppel, 2003; 2006; 2007). In this regard, Indigenous tour guides can play “a role in mediating access

to information (understanding) not only through their use of interpretive techniques and role-modelling, but also by challenging stereotypes

**Table 1.** Some Aboriginal ITCP-accredited tourism enterprises in Australia.

| Australian aboriginal tourism enterprises                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Action field and operation features                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aboriginal Blue Mountains Walkabout                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Aboriginal owned and guided. Educational bushwalk into the Dreamtime. It provides a deep understanding of the traditional, local Darug culture.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Aboriginal Cultural Tours – South Australia                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Bush and coastal tours to deliver a range of Aboriginal experiences. Views on the land through Aboriginal eyes. It provides Dreaming stories. It is located in the South of Australia with natural attractions and stunning landscapes from rugged earth gorges to pristine untouched beaches.                                                                                                          |
| Adventure North Australia – Bama Way Aboriginal Journeys                                                                                                                                                                                     | Aboriginal guided tour provides learning experiences on how to throw a spear, hunt, and fish. It visits ancestral rock art sites and takes a rainforest bush walk to the stunning Bloomfield Falls in the Daintree. It comprises three diverse Aboriginal journeys linked in one extraordinary experience.                                                                                              |
| Dreamtime Southern X (formerly Rocks Dreaming).                                                                                                                                                                                              | The Rocks Dreaming Aboriginal Heritage Tour is 100 per cent Aboriginal-owned and was developed by Aboriginal Elder, Margaret Campbell, a Dughutti-Jerrinjah woman. With her permission, Aboriginal guides share her cultural knowledge and interpretation of Sydney's Dreamtime –history and heritage. The tour is grounded in Aboriginal culture, connecting tourists to the living Dreamtime wisdoms. |
| Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia (Uluru / Ayers Rock – Northern Territory)                                                                                                                                                               | The Aboriginal tour operations provide visitors with landscape and cultural experiences with 65 tours in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, the site of Ayers Rock.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Aboriginal Tourist Ventures in Cairns                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park in Cairns, Queensland is 50 percent owned by the local Djabugay people. The operators provide full cultural understanding and guided experience for visitors with dance, music, workshops, educational activities, courses, dreamtime stories, etc.                                                                                                                   |
| Source: Examples extracted from the Tourism Australia Corporate Website, available at, <a href="http://www.tourism.australia.com/aboriginal/operator-directory.aspx">http://www.tourism.australia.com/aboriginal/operator-directory.aspx</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

and visitors' misconceptions about Aboriginal culture" (Howard et al., 2001).

Aboriginal people also participate in a variety of ways in managing some national parks (Weiler and Black, 2015), and this reflects the Indigenous role for 'destination/resources management' in tour guiding. Lawrence (1996) adds that,

*For Aboriginal people the environment has an intrinsic value, based not only on its use to humans but also on its social or spiritual role and purpose. For them, the issue is not land use management but recognition of traditional customary rights, including the right to own land, the use of resources and the preservation of subsistence and ceremonial practices [...] For Aboriginal park managers, who view the Aboriginal culture as adaptable and responsive but value conservation as a means for providing a basis for the sustainable use of resources, including both native and introduced plants and animals, traditional European assumptions about protected areas raise complex problems.*

In summary, some evidence of indigenous protagonism exists in Australia's indigenous tourism operations, although not yet fully developed. The government has taken actions to support and mentor Indigenous tourism initiatives. In 2004, Indigenous Tourism Australia was created to advance Indigenous Tourism; it also

created the Business Ready Program for Indigenous Tourism (BRPIT), an AUD 3.83 million mentoring program (Buultjens and Gale, 2013).

**New Zealand.** Tourism has had a key role in the economy of New Zealand. According to the 2015 Report of the World Travel and Tourism Council, the total contribution of the industry to GDP, including investments, the supply chain, and income impacts, was NZD 31.8bn (13.7 percent of GDP) in 2014, generating 100,000 jobs directly related to the sector; it is forecast to rise by 1.6 percent in 2015, and to rise by 2.4 percent per annum to NZD 41bn (13.4 percent of GDP) in 2025 (p. 3-4). New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2015 emphasized the demands for authentic contemporary Māori products embedded in traditional knowledge and values arguing for the enormous potential for Māori participation in the tourism sector as a unique differentiation element in which the challenge is the delivery of "high-quality experiences" for the visitors (p.23).

Tourism New Zealand has been working with Māori tourism organizations and groups with a focus on three main areas for indigenous group development: to build internal organizational capacity and an understanding of Māori culture by the government agencies; to help build the capability of Māori tourism businesses; and to work with international travel agencies to raise awareness of Māori tourism products. In 2010, the NZ government reserved NZD 4.5

million over three years to promote the Māori tourism industry, clearly indicating its economic importance for the country. New Zealand Māori Tourism led to the 'Māori Tourism Action Plan', formed by a group of agencies with tourism interests, to guide investments through consultation.

These actions and strategies also reflect advances in indigenous tourism representation through the active in-

terventions of the New Zealand Māori Tourism Council (NZMTC); eight Māori Regional Tourism Organisations (MRTOs); the Tai Tokerau Tourism, formed by Māori tourism operators, to foster key relationships and networks in the industry; and New Zealand Māori Tourism (NZMT), which encompasses more than 200 Māori tourism businesses and is mainly funded by Te Puni Kokiri. Table 2 presents examples

**Table 2.** Tourism enterprises in New Zealand owned and/or managed by the Māori.

| Māori tourism                                                                                                                                                                          | Action field and operation features                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Place/location                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Murupara Forest Park Māori Tourism                                                                                                                                                     | The enterprises offer visitors insights into the rich history of the indigenous people of New Zealand, which includes Māori culture, traditions, and activities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Bay of Plenty                   |
| Whirinaki and Whakatane Māori Tourism                                                                                                                                                  | Visitors can enjoy the "tranquility of being embraced by tall mountains, the crystal clear Whirinaki river, waterfalls, forest, bush tracks, bird life, nature, people, and relationships in balance." The tours in Whirinaki Forest are managed by the Ngati Whare Iwi, the kaitiaki (guardians). Cultural and environmental experiences and learning are fully delivered with Māori guided tours under the <i>Kaitiakitanga</i> and <i>Manaakitanga</i> Māori tenets and values. | Whirinaki Forest, Bay of Plenty |
| Lake Rotoiti, Lake Rotohu and Lake Rotoma Māori Tourism (Some attractions in Rotorua area: Whakarewareware Thermal Village, Mitai Māori Village, Tamaki Māori Village, Buried Village) | Māori Tourism in Lakes offers visitors experiences that provide insights into the rich history of the indigenous people of New Zealand. This includes Māori culture, traditions, and activities and Māori guided tours.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Rotorua                         |

| Māori tourism                                                                      | Action field and operation features                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Place/location                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Waitangi Treaty Grounds                                                            | This is "New Zealand's most important historic site. The Treaty Grounds features the Treaty House, the carved Meeting House, & the world's largest ceremonial war canoe. Panoramic views over the Bay of Islands. Daily guided tours and cultural performances."                                                                                                                       | Bay of Islands                           |
| Kaikoura Whale Watch                                                               | The Whale Watch Kaikōura has been regarded as "proof of the success of established Māori tourism ventures, employing roughly 75 people and it supports many extended Māori whānau (families)."                                                                                                                                                                                         | Kaikoura town, Canterbury, South Island. |
| Wairākei Terraces                                                                  | Wairākei Terraces is a cultural eco-tourism attraction in New Zealand. It is located seven kilometres north of Taupo in the Wairākei Tourism Park and is owned by Moari Raewyn and Jim Hill of Ngāti Tūwharetoa. Local Māori regard the Waiora Valley as a site of historical and cultural significance. The geothermal area offers heated pools for bathing, healing, and recreation. | Lake Taupo, Taupo, North Island.         |
| <b>Source:</b> Online sources. New Zealand Tourism Guide and Media. Newzealand.com |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                          |

of some of the Māori owned and/or managed enterprises in the country.

Indigenous cultural and heritage elements are critical for enhancing tourism development and visitor experiences. Māori culture and values, along with the land itself, have been essential for New Zealand tourism, particularly for projecting the country overseas in a search for economic rewards and tourism competitiveness. With these premises, the Māori have sought ways to participate more actively in the sector with the support

of the government. The New Zealand Sectors Report (2013, p.29) outlined a series of events that corroborate this:

- Māori have sought to invest and acquire tourism operations, entirely commercial ones, "as a means of leveraging assets and driving economic and social development...indications are Māori tourism products are evolving from performance-based to experiential" also being business, entrepreneurial ones;

- Tourism also provides a vehicle by which tribal stories and history can be kept alive through oral tradition”;
- Storytelling is effectively a fundamental tenet of Māori culture and for owners of tourism assets that are Māori it provides a vehicle by which to deliver some of that content in an appropriate way.

There is a lack of agreement on the definition of ‘Māori tourism’ and similar difficulty in defining a Māori tourism business and product. McIntosh et al. (2004) explain that the concept incorporates distinct elements, such as “Māori culture and identity”, “tourism”, “business”, and “product” (p.333). Ingram (1997) outlined ‘Māori tourism’ as comprising a “tourism product that utilizes cultural, historical, heritage or natural resources that are uniquely Māori with substantial Māori ownership and control of the business” (p.2). Most Māori tourism businesses and activities offer cultural, heritage, and nature interpretation to visitors through interactive encounters by way of guided tours and/or performances.

Māori-centered tourism is formed by a set of cultural values and tenets that translate their beliefs, world vision, and relations to their land. Ryan and Crofts (1997) explain that, in Māori tourism, ‘ownership’ and ‘control’ are considered a way to achieve both ‘legitimacy’ and ‘empowerment’. “Representation and recognition of tribal identity and diversity are considered central to Māori tourism” (Amoamo, 2007; Amoamo & Thomp-

son, 2010; Dwyer, 2013).

As noted earlier, the Māori language itself embraces self-determination, control, and empowerment. For example, the principle of ‘*Tino Rangatiratanga*’ implies sovereignty, independence, autonomy, “exclusive and undisturbed possession”, that is ‘self-determination’ for Māori, and this principle applied to tourism issues brings a series of understandings among them, as outlined by McIntosh et al. (2004, p.331): participating in tourism decision-making; controlling commercial/economic independence; controlling the representation of Māori culture in tourism; asserting the Treaty of Waitangi rights for ownership of resources for tourism development; ownership and/or management of the business (or partnerships with non-Māori); protection of cultural integrity of the tourism product; determination of authenticity of the Māori tourism product; and the expression of “constitutional ownership” under the Treaty of Waitangi. The ‘*Tino rangatiratanga*’ tenet, together with the ‘*Manaakitanga*’ and ‘*Kaitiakitanga*’ principles, conceptually intersect with key aspects of tourism operations. The *Manaakitanga* connects to ‘hospitality’, symbolizing the way Māori interact with visitors. It is all about “sharing exceptional and natural hospitality, knowledge and beliefs, on the basis of mutual respect between host and visitor” (NZ Tourism Strategy, 2015, p.1). The *Kaitiakitanga* implies environmentally sustainable tourism development; the development of

products that protect and promote Māori's close relationship with nature.

Such relationships are obvious when visiting the 2000-year-old *Tāne Mahuta*, the largest living kauri tree in the world, nearly 52 meters high; it has been acknowledged, respected, and protected by the Māori, even before the arrival of the Europeans. '*Tāne Mahuta*' means 'God' or 'Lord' of the Forest, and as an impressive, conspicuous tree, it dominates the landscape in the Waipua Forest in the Hokianga region of Tai Tokerau; it is an attraction in itself, a place frequently visited by domestic and international visitors. The *Tāne Mahuta* is just one example illustrating the strong connections between Māori and nature. Dwyer (2013), for example, states that "at Te Puia, narratives of the local tribe are linked to the landscapes which are a key aspect of the visitor experience...[in Museums] tribal narratives may be viewed through a bicultural context of New Zealand within the *Pākehā* (New Zealand European) and Māori perspectives" (p.3-5).

All these aspects permeate the visitors' experience with Indigenous tourism in New Zealand, adding value to their visit with a comprehensive introduction to the culture, views, and lifestyle of a bicultural country. Māori care about the environment, because 'sustainability' is deeply rooted in their existence and links to land. This aspect is also observed and witnessed with Aboriginal people in Australia in their relations with sacred places and 'dreamtime', as well as in Brazil where

'land' and 'landscapes' are meaningful, particularly for those living in the Legal Amazonia, where these connections with the lush rainforest are even more evident. Māori, nature, and tourism are deeply connected in various New Zealand settings. As Figure 1 illustrates, heritage and natural assets are inseparable in indigenous tourism; tangible heritage cannot be presented without incorporating intangible heritage. History and contemporary indigenous culture must be linked, because it is not just about the cultures of 200 or 2000 years ago!

In New Zealand, a key role of Māori guiding within the *Tino Rangatiranga*, *Manaakitanga*, *Kaitiakitanga* viewpoints is to help visitors in their understanding of the values of nature, the ecosystem, and an ethnic Indigenous group. There is continuity in this role as one visits the Rotorua, Kaikoura, and Hokianga regions. Māori guides have played a key role in tourism, dating back to the 1870s, particularly in the Pink Terrace, *Otu-kapuarangi* (fountains of the clouded sky), the White Terrace, and *Te Tarata* (tattooed rock), regarded as wonders of New Zealand, but destroyed by the eruption of Mount Tarawera in 1886. The Whakarewarewa Geothermal Valley, where the Terraces were, is still a key destination with Māori guides (Tourism New Zealand, 2001; McClure, 2004). As Dwyer (2013) proposes, "the Māori involvement in the control and management of tourism is important not only in terms of generating employment and economic benefits, but also for ensur-

ing cultural integrity and control over representation”.

Roughly six percent of international visitors choose to participate in Māori cultural activities and performances, which represent the majority (76%) of Māori cultural visitors (Ministry of Tourism, 2009; Dwyer, 2013). Yet little attention has been paid to the importance of their role in managing visitor experiences and the sharing of a living culture; in “the context of Māori cultural tourism and museums, the last 30 years has seen a shift towards increased ownership, control, and participation by Māori”. Indigenous tourism and control over cultural content and representation have been critical issues, particularly by way of Indigenous guiding, and is key to the future of Māori protagonism in tourism (Dwyer, 2012, p. 3-5).

*Guides provide evidence of a ‘living’ culture, linking traditions of the past to the practices of the present, sharing their own stories and experiences which hold personal meaning and reflect real life experiences; rather than simply mirroring an official script with no personal meaning. The guide’s upbringing, socio-cultural context, and life experience influence the guide’s own understanding of Māori culture. When managing conflicting viewpoints, guides carefully balance their resource management role, to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions and to enhance the understanding of Māori culture, and the visitor*

*management role of facilitating a positive experience. In selecting and mediating information, guides may be required to understand and reconcile competing and conflicting perspectives (Dwyer, 2012).*

The reported Māori participation and leadership in tourism development in New Zealand, as entrepreneurs, performers, and guides, and more recently in terms of policy and governance, reveal historical advances achieved in this country that suggest empowerment, control, and self-determination.

### **Indigenous tourism protagonism and entrepreneurship: patterns and transversal issues for Australia, Brazil, and New Zealand**

While Indigenous protagonism in tourism operations and management are the focus of this study’s analysis and discussion, this analysis is not complete without identifying and bringing together patterns and transversal issues related to indigenous participation in tourism in Australia, Brazil, and New Zealand.

The level of development of Indigenous tourism varies across these three countries, and it is certainly a complex theme due to a variety of cultural, political, and institutional issues. However, some common points and intersectional areas can be presented. First, indigenous tourism operations are about indigenous people and entrepreneurship. This type of enterprise differs significantly from

a conventional Western-conceived business, even though it needs to be properly managed, financially viable, and competitive.

It is about the way Indigenous people can manage their environmental and cultural/heritage assets (refer to Fig. 4) in their territorial context in an entrepreneurial perspective. Indigenous tourism entrepreneurship has typically been small in size – usually individual, family, or community owned or managed. In general, Indigenous tourism enterprises provide certain types of products and services, such as guided tours, community visits, lifestyle and cultural-artistic performances, festivals and indigenous exhibits, and handicraft production and commercialization; some Indigenous business deal with transport, accommodation, and restaurants. No large Indigenous tourism enterprises or corporations were identified in the three countries. A possible exception is the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC), located in Maningrida, Australia, that operates a couple of businesses comprising 20 different types of operations, including an eco-tourism venture, the Arnhem Land Eco-Cultural Tours, and the BAC Accommodation. Other BAC's businesses include the Djelk Rangers, the Djelk Wild Life Services, housing, passenger air services, car hire, supermarket, and nursery. In New Zealand, relevant Maori tourism enterprises can be found in Rotorua, and surrounding areas, and in Kaikoura; but they are not limited to these areas. As already mentioned, Indigenous

tourism operations in Brazil are still evolving, and are indeed very embryonic compared to Australia and New Zealand.

In brief, Indigenous tourism operations and management revolve around key areas: entertainment, guiding, accommodation, activities, land visit, food, and selling of indigenous cultural products. The main forms of Indigenous active participation in tourism activities are as: owners, managers, entrepreneurs, partners in joint ventures, investors, business network facilitators, and consultants on indigenous issues. Thus, the most noticeable aspects that set 'indigenous initiatives' apart as a form of indigenous protagonism in the three countries analyzed in this paper are:

- Entrepreneurship initiatives,
- Indigenous ownership and control,
- Autonomy,
- Active decision-making,
- Active participation in all operational and managerial levels,
- Empowerment and representation,
- Indigenous identity and values as a trademark,
- Culturally self-assured as added value and differentiated product,
- Stewardship,
- Self-reliance and confidence,
- High self-esteem with regard to ethnicity and culture,
- Confidence,
- Continual learning and skills improvement, and
- Ethnic and cultural values and

protocols, and customary knowledge.

Notwithstanding, Indigenous protagonism in tourism operations and management are neither an easy achievement nor can it be romanticized. The pertinent literature cites many challenges and barriers that Indigenous individuals, groups, and communities must overcome in order to establish themselves as successful entrepreneurs (Zeppel, 2001; Dyer et al., 2003; Fuller et al., 2005; (Zeppel, 2006; Buultjens and Gale, 2013). Some of the problematic issues are related to cultural understandings, lifestyle, and worldviews, which can lead Indigenous entrepreneurs to similar pitfalls and failures to those non-indigenous entrepreneurs face. According to Zeppel (2001), two thirds of Indigenous tourism businesses fail within the first five years of operation. The problems (or barriers) that recur most often are outlined below:

- Strong feelings of being a victim of colonization, which can result in a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as lead to historical resentments which are difficult overcome, including feelings that may draw Indigenous individuals away from engaging in entrepreneurial projects;

- Lack of an entrepreneurial background and networks;

- The economic and social problems of poverty and discrimination that must be overcome to achieve successful Indigenous entrepreneurial projects;

- Low literacy and lack of skills (educational disadvantage);

- No management, financial and accounting literacy (entrepreneurial disadvantage), demonstrating the need for Indigenous entrepreneurial capacity building;

- Indigenous values and beliefs that largely differ from the Western notion of capital acquisition, accumulation, and investment;

- A lifestyle that contrasts with business routines and operations – for example, in terms of regularity and punctuality;

- Community, family, and kinship obligations can affect the efficacy of business. There is a need for balancing ‘family/group needs’ with ‘business priorities’;

- Strong reliance on the welfare system and Indigenous and social government programs that can in the long term affect the Indigenous interest and capacity in successfully getting involved in self-owned, self-managed tourism businesses;

- Traditional financial institutions rarely approve loans for Indigenous groups or communities, because of their inability in securing (re)payment of borrowed money;

- Bureaucratic licenses and tax demands;

- Lack of business mentoring and assistance;

- Lack of government policies and programs targeting Indigenous tourism entrepreneurship; and

- No proper marketing of Indigenous destination, sites, products, and services. Indigenous assets and values

should be marketed as a differentiation factor for enhancing visitor experiences.

These must be properly addressed by Indigenous individuals and groups, as well as by the pertinent authorities, in order to ensure successful Indigenous tourism operations.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

At the outset of this paper, it was suggested that Australia and New Zealand could play a role in fostering self-determination, empowerment, and regaining of control by indigenous peoples. Some of the evidence presented in this paper supports this, particularly for New Zealand Māori tourism. Allowing and even encouraging indigenous groups to play a protagonist role in their approach to tourism operations is a key strategy.

The Indigenous operations mentioned in this paper provide evidence of Indigenous leadership and, in some cases, empowerment. Individuals have been involved as guides, managers, rangers, educators, and performers, thus playing an important role for culture, wildlife, and nature encounters where the various assets illustrated in Figure 4 – landscapes, ecosystem, traditional knowledge, and worldviews – are mediated for tourists. Visitors are thereby made more aware of Indigenous traditions and identity, and this has served to reduce misconceptions related to ethnicity and Indigenous living places, consequently leading to more accurate understandings concerning these groups, as well as

increased empathy, respect, and recognition of indigenous cultures.

Indigenous groups have also made strong contributions to destination and resource management in the three countries, because of their unique relationships with their living place and perceptions of nature. Most Indigenous tourism operations take place in protected areas and parks or on their own land within regulatory frameworks that support conservation and protection. Indeed, one could argue that ‘sustainability’ is an inherent component of Indigenous culture in relation to Māori, Aboriginal, and Brazilian Indigenous people. They not only care about nature, they view themselves as part of it. Thus, they contribute to sustainable resource management, both directly and indirectly, by way of visitor interpretation.

In addition to sustaining environmental assets and enhancing visitors’ experiences, indigenous protagonism in tourism operations helps to ensure that Indigenous values and tangible and intangible cultural and heritage assets are sustained. As cited by Morley (2014), “at times, commercial objectives may sit uneasily with cultural drivers, but Indigenous groups can come up with ways of starting a business which can be both culturally affirming and commercially viable”. Greater accountability is needed for achieving real outcomes, and in this sense, in Australia, the government created the Business Ready Program for Indigenous Tourism (BRPIT) (Buultjens & Gale, 2013), a type of program that could be reproduced in

other countries.

'Indigenous protagonism' connotes in various ways 'Indigenous empowerment' and 'self-determination', and Indigenous tourism entrepreneurship can serve as the means to empower ethnic-related groups. However, further investigation by way of field-based research, observations, and engagement with indigenous operators is needed to corroborate and extend the findings of this desktop study. Further research also is needed on Indigenous protagonism in other contexts. This extends to Indigenous tourism governance and its relationship to social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Managerial issues of Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs and the ways Indigenous tourism can be strengthened through 'institutionalized actions' should also be a focus for future research.

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