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INDIANS CULTURE IN THE TOURISM OF ONTARIO

Snežana Besermenji¹, Nataša Milić*, Ivo Mulec**

* Faculty of Sciences, Novi Sad

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Abstract: The first association to potential tourists, when they mention Ontario or Canada, is endless and untouched natural area. Numerous forest areas and beautiful lakes, wild animals moving freely in these expanses of the famous Niagara Falls are important part of Ontario tourism offer. Regarding cultural assets of Ontario and of the entire Canada, it may not have old city quarters as Europe, but it certainly has a long history. This history includes Indians whose customs and culture are very interesting for tourists.

Key words: Ontario, Indian, Aboriginal, Tourism.

Introduction

Ontario is the second largest province in Canada, whose area is 1,076,395km². It covers the area which is 12 times bigger than Serbia, and its territory has a population of 12.929 million according to Census 2008. Compared to other provinces and territories of Canada, Ontario is the most populous one. Geographically, Ontario represents a part of the eastern Canada, together with Quebec and Atlantic provinces (www.statcan.gc.ca). The name Ontario is of Indian origin and is translated as a beautiful lake or beautiful water.

The province can be considered as an entity consisting of two big parts: the northern and southern Ontario. Southern Ontario represents a southern part of Canadian Shield and is suitable for agriculture, which is why most of the population inhabits the southern part. The northern part of the province covers 90% of the total area and is inhabited by only 10% of the total Ontario population. Relief, climate, vegetation and a combination of other elements are different in these two parts of Ontario (Bothwell & Hillmer, 2009). Indians have been inhabiting the shores of Great Lakes since ancient times, long before the arrival of the Europeans. Their way of life was adjusted to and at the same time dependent from the natural area they inhabited. Two large language groups,

¹ Correspondence to: atena21000@yahoo.com

Algonquin and Iroquoian, were hunting and fishing along the Canadian Shield, but their agriculture was limited to the more arable areas of southern Ontario.

Indians through history

Indians, also known as indigenous people or aboriginals, used to play the central role in the Canadian Society, but, as the time passed by, have given way to the Europeans, since the late 18th century. Today, the aboriginal people of the American Continent have been called Indians since the day Columbus arrived on the Continent in 1492, who, having thought he reached India, called the aboriginal people Indians. At the time of Columbus' arrival, it is believed that there were between two or three million Indians in North America. At the same time, it is believed that the areas of South and Central America comprised between 35 and 45 million people. Comparing this ratio, it is obvious that Indians in North America were a small minority (Lips, 1959).

Aboriginal peoples of North America are extremely culturally diverse. There are hundreds of peoples who lived in different regions and completely different conditions. Physical characteristics of Indians are also very different - the size, shape, colour and features of the face emphasized different origins, from different races, dominated by the Mongoloid race. It is the fact that the Indians were the first to arrive on North America mainland, and not Columbus or anyone else and that the country was inhabited even 1,000 years before the arrival of Europeans (Kubiak, 1970).

Scientists have established that Indians inhabited the territory of North American Continent about 10,000 years ago. It is supposed that they crossed over the Bering Strait to the American Continent at the time of Ice Age, when Alaska was connected to the furthest north-eastern part of Asia. Scientists have reached this conclusion for two reasons: because there were not found bone remains of Neanderthals on the North American Continent and because of the physical characteristics of some Indians which show similarities to the Mongoloid race, such as 'Indian line' which is similar to 'Mongol line' (Lips, 1959).

It is believed that there are 58 different language groups of Indians, to the north from the Mexican border, who speak an original language or a dialect, derived from it. Ontario is inhabited by two big language groups, which, later on, were subdivided into different tribes, which are Algonquin and Iroquois. These two different language groups were in constant fight throughout history (Kubiak, 1970). The tribes which belong to the Algonquin language group and whose descendants still live in Ontario are: Ottawa, Ojibwa and Cree Indian (Figure 1).

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In addition to the three mentioned tribes, the area of Ontario is also inhabited by other, smaller tribes, but these three are among the most famous and the most numerous.

Colonization of North America most affected Indians and it is certain that reports of their mass destruction are true. Inhumanity of the colonists and the saying 'the only good Indian is a dead Indian', caused the present situation with some of the tribes being extinct. Tragedies, however, also affected the first missionaries who, sometimes, lost their lives and became martyrs for the cause they believed in with unselfish fanaticism. Unselfish help which missionaries gave to the ill caused further resistance, because the 'evil magic' of the white people was considered to be the cause of epidemics. It was forbidden to contact the white people and during the tribal council meetings, it was decided to massacre them. After the freedom they had, the arrival of Europeans pushed Indians into reserves with scarce food supply and limited freedom of movement (Lips, 1959).

In addition to fighting the white people, Indian tribes fought among each other. Thus the Algonquin 'joined' the French when they first settled in Canada, in order to help them fight the Iroquois. All this additionally weakened Indians, who were becoming more and more resentful to the system imposed by the white people.



Figure 1. Indian tribes in the Great Lakes region. Scale 1:15000000 (Kubiak, 1970)

Then, in 1940, Indians were coming out with better political organisation, and their number was slowly increasing and the land they still owned was economically growing. Their demands for justice were more often, especially during the 1980s and 1990s. This is when their leaders fought legally, through endless debates for their recognition and property restitution, for the changes of the Constitution and the recognition of minority rights (Magocsi, 2002).

Fights for the Indian rights are still present even though most of the requested land was returned and the government does not have any legal authority over the reserves territory. In addition to accommodating Indians into reserves and liberating them from all tax payments, they were given other privileges including governmental institutions helping them realize their rights.

Although Ontario is the most densely populated province in Canada, this is not true for the Indians who live here. In fact, the proportion of Indians in Ontario was less than 2% of the total provincial population according to Census 2001. Indians are a minority in the Province, but their number is slowly increasing not only in Ontario but in the entire Canada (<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca>).

Indians in Ontario live in urban, rural and remote areas of the Province. Most of them live in reserves designed in the way that Indians create their own legislations which are enforced within a reserve and where Canadian government does not have any legal authority. This is the land which belongs exclusively to Indians and where the chief and several Indians make decisions for the entire reserve. A reserve is in fact a land property where there are residential areas and all the institutions required by the Indians within it. The white people can enter reserves, even though they are not very welcomed in some of them, and within some of the reserves Canada established museums and developed some areas for tourism purposes. The original idea of creating reserves was to preserve Indian culture and to return the land to Indians. However, reserves did not prove to be the best solution in each case, because, in some of them, the chiefs collect all the income and allocate it by their own will, and a lot of reserves became unhealthy environments because of the presence of a lot of alcohol, drugs and suicides. A reason for high suicide rate among Indians can be found in the fact that they lost the purpose of their life because they 'live the life of the white people'. Materialism and ownership, which were never important to Indians, became important to them in the current materialistic world. Canadian government provides housing for them (tax free), water and electricity supply, various benefits for grocery shopping and for all other commodities. Primary school is obligatory, and if they would like to continue

education, the government provides free studies. All these privileges cause dissatisfaction of other Canadians who have to pay for everything.

There are reserves in the furthest northern parts of the Province, rarely visited by the white people, where Indians do not speak English and still live by old customs. These reserves can be dangerous because of bad experiences with the white people in the past. Emergency staff is the only ones who go to these remote areas by planes escorted by the police.

Indians found part of their culture and religion in the movements for environmental protection, emerging in the 1970s, so they made alliances with them, because both parties were interested in protecting the land where they lived. This movement often emphasizes that the environment is sacred and they present this as a standard for the development of modern society. The aboriginal philosophy on land preservation is well-known today and more respected than it used to be a few decades ago and many of those who are not of aboriginal origin adopted their attitudes on natural world and ecology.

Today, there are still tensions between the Canadian government and Indian tribes. Apart from fights over fishing, hunting and property rights, there are problems of religious character. These problems are related to the ceremonial venues, sacred objects and beliefs on life and death. People, whose religion implies a quest for vision, have difficulties in finding a place which is natural and isolated enough, a place not flown over by planes, a place without roads, campers or cyclists. Still, appeasing the religious limitations and the renewal of rituals are signs of hope for Indians. A lot of Indian tribes consider the land where their ancestors were buried sacred and for the tribe to be strong, the dead must rest in peace. Numerous archeologists and anthropologists studying ancient cultures need to dig out old villages and cemeteries in order to gain knowledge. The idea that bones of thousands of their ancestors might be found in museum laboratories and be exhibited to museum visitors was the cause of conflict for a long time. Act of Reparation and Protection of Indian Cemeteries in 1990 gave Indian tribes the control over all the objects and human skeletons. This Act ordered all the museums and other institutions which owned such objects in their collections, to return them on request by the tribes on whose land they were found, so they could be reburied. Many tribes won court trials for the retrieval of human remains found on their land in the last one hundred years. The Law does not completely forbid the excavations in the regions of cemeteries, but it decreases the chances of desecrating Indian graves. Today, a lot of Indian tribes managed to retrieve their sacred objects which were taken to museums in 1970 and exhibited for visitors. These objects comprise medical bundles, masks and

fetishes whose exhibition Indians experience as an insult to their faith (Harc, 1997).

Having conducted a questionnaire in the north-eastern part of Ontario, more precisely in the vicinity of the town of Fort Frances, significant data was collected about current aboriginal life and beliefs. Indians are not very talkative by nature, needing considerably more time to gain confidence in someone and many of them were not very willing to cooperate and complete the questionnaire. Indian reserves are rather closed communities where other Canadians do not feel at ease unless they are persistent in getting to know their customs and culture. A period of one month is not enough to gain their affection and trust, so the number of interviewed Indians was 42. In order to overcome this drawback, other Canadians (40 of them) were also interviewed about their opinions and attitudes towards the present life of Indians.

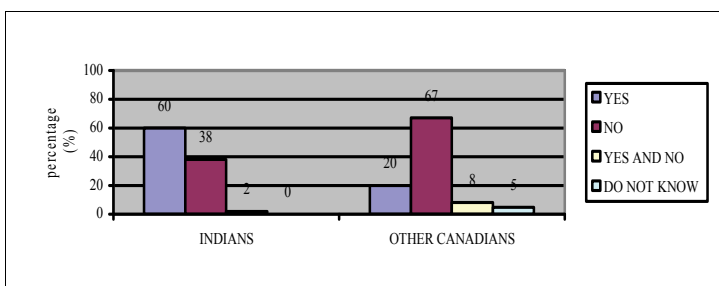


Figure 2. The answers of Indians and other Canadians to the question "Are aboriginal religious ceremonies the same today as they used to be?"

According to data obtained from the questionnaire, it can be observed that the opinions of Indians and other Canadians on the question of the authenticity of aboriginal ceremonies are different (Figure 2). Most of the Indians consider their religious ceremonies to be the same today as they used to be (60%), whereas most of other Canadians (67%) consider them not to be the same. This can be explained by the fact that Indians still perform a lot of their religious ceremonies within their tribes, where visitors are not allowed. In some reserves, however, ceremonies have changed and a lot of them vanished with the arrival of Christianity. Other Canadians, despite their opinion that ceremonies are not the same, believe that their key values remained the same.

Aboriginal culture has been reviving in some ways, since an increasing number of people have been declared Indian, while young people have been trying to learn more about their cultural heritage, actively participating in dances and

events which gather together different tribes. Indian religions have also benefited from this revived interest and more people who are not of Indian origin, study their culture and religion. Considering the aboriginal life today and their relationships to others, there are also different views. Thus, in some reserves, the life of Indians is not at all on a required level, because they record the highest suicide rate in Canada and that many of them are involved in drugs, criminal activities and alcohol, so their average life span is about 40 years of age. The unemployed usually live on social assistance, but still sing and dance to the tunes of traditional instruments to celebrate Mother Earth. In some of the better reserves, the situation is significantly different, thus some of the Indians have large incomes. The Indians living in reserves and working in Canada or within a reserve have rather large incomes, because they do not have any significant expenses and do not have to pay government taxes.

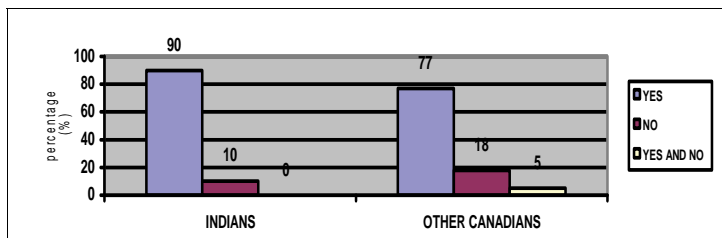


Figure 3. Replies of Indians and other Canadians to the question “Do Indians have a good life in Canada?”

According to the results of the conducted questionnaire, it can be concluded (Figure 3) that Indians are satisfied with their life in Canada today (90%). Those who are not satisfied mostly live in the reserves where there is a high rate of drugs, suicides and alcoholism. Other Canadians also think that Indians have a good life in Canada (77%), which they associate with all the privileges the government has provided for them.

The situation is rather different in the reserves in the furthest north of the Province. Indians living in these areas are rather distrustful of other Canadians and they still live in poor conditions, because they do not want to accept any influence or help from the government. Medical and other staffs of emergency services, which come by plane to these remote areas, have to be extremely careful. These Indians have really kept to their traditional way of life, with far less influence by the government and the white people. However, this way of life in the 21st century might not be the best solution for one culture to remain

authentic, because their life is extremely difficult and their life span is very short.

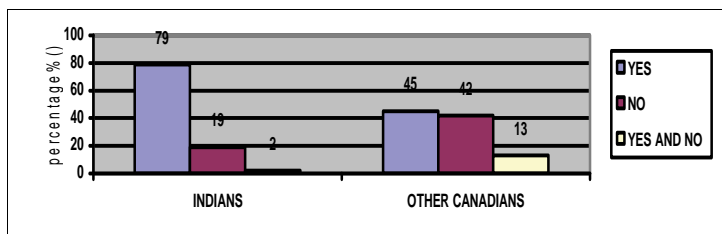


Figure 4. Replies of Indians and other Canadians to the question "Do Indians have good social relationships with other Canadians?"

When discussing social relationships between Indians and other Canadians (Figure 4), most of the Indians (79%) believe that they have good social relationships with other citizens. Other Canadians do not completely agree, probably because of numerous incidents which occur in the reserves, but also because of Indian character. Indians use words scarcely because they consider each spoken word as highly valuable. This is why we cannot say they make easy contact with other people. However, they are extremely hospitable if they understand that others have good intentions and if they are treated with respect and acknowledgement.

Indian participation in the tourism of Ontario

Indians have only recently been involved more actively in the tourism of Canada, but still to a rather small extent. In 2007, a research was conducted for the Canadian Tourism Commission about the opportunities for the development of aboriginal tourism in Canada. The aim of this research was to establish tourism demand for the aboriginal tourism offer in Canada, then to establish key elements needed for the creation of precise and effective business plan. Information on this research is available through the www.canada.travel.

The result of the mentioned research is the first edition of Aboriginal Tourism Guide 2009-2010, in which 28 aboriginal tours are presented. This guide was distributed across Canada to travel agencies and tourism organizations, and can be ordered as electronic edition.

Indians have a lot to offer to tourists, starting from walking and other activities in beautiful untouched nature regions, then events and dances such as Pow Wow, to selling different handmade souvenirs.

Tourism offer of Indians is not the main reason for visiting Canada, although it might be, but it is an added value of the tourism offer of Canada. The competitors in this type of tourism are Australia and the USA. Considering the promotion, experience and interest in aboriginal tourism, Australia is the most competitive one, since it promotes and supports this type of tourism the most. The USA and Canada are less present on the market, but this does not decrease an interest in this type of tourism.

Tourism product which can attract tourist attention should be authentic and to make tourists become active participants. Tourism product of entertaining character, in which a tourist is only an observer, is not so attractive. For this type of tourism offer, it is very important that Indians actively participate in its creation and that they become those who would like to present their culture and customs to tourists. If this should not be the case, tourists will feel unwanted and their experience will not be positive.

Specialist travel agencies, tour operators and tourism organizations support aboriginal tourism offer. Most European travel agencies do not have enough or any knowledge about aboriginal tourism offer in Canada. Some tour operators who are familiar with this type of offer and have included it into their travel packages have good experiences and some have bad ones. Some are extremely satisfied with the quality and authenticity of the product, whereas there are those with bad experiences and find this product still not ready for the tourism market. Tour operators prefer parts of the offer when tourists can participate in traditional aboriginal activities and are thrilled with their traditional costumes, although they do recognize they are worn only for ceremonies and special events, such as Pow Wow. They do not like fake handcrafted souvenirs, which are made in China (www.canadatourism.com).

Aboriginal Tourism Canada is a small coordinating body which supports the development, growth and marketing of aboriginal tourism offer in Canada. Aboriginal tourism products (28 of them) were assessed as market-ready according to the criteria of Canadian Tourism Commission. Twenty-eight culturally most important aboriginal tourism ideas are considered to be the best tourism products of Canada. These products are available for the Canadians to discover them, for Americans to visit and explore them, but also for international guests to better understand Indians and experience Canada. The mission of ATC is to develop and promote tourism opportunities of aboriginal offer through public and private cooperation, and also to contribute to social, economical and cultural welfare of Indians (www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca).

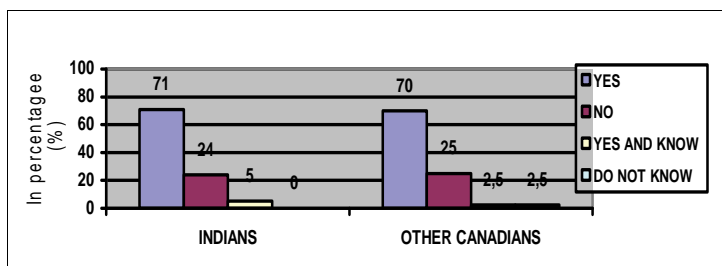


Figure 5. Replies of Indians and other Canadians to the question "Is tourism a good way of preserving Indian customs and cultures?"

It is very important that Indians adopt positive attitude towards the tourism development and to have a desire to work in tourism. According to field research (Figure 5) most of the Indians living in Ontario consider tourism as a good way to preserve their culture (71%). Those who have different opinions (24%) believe that their customs and culture have gradually been adjusted to the expectations and demands of the white people.

Other Canadians have similar opinions as Indians. Most of them (70%) consider tourism to be a good way of preserving their customs and culture, but only if the right people are involved and if tourism does not become a business for some individuals. Tourism can also help in the promotion and presentation of Indian customs and cultures. This is the way to introduce their culture to the world and thus contribute to its preservation.

Most of the Indians (86%) replied positively to the question whether it is good to present aboriginal culture to tourists (Figure 5). This question is related to the previous one, because this is one of the ways to prevent the world from forgetting them. Other Canadians share the same opinion and they believe as well as Indians that this is very important (87%) because it informs tourists about the unknown. Those who think differently, mainly feel that it represents exploitation and selling of something sacred. As an example of these claims, one of the respondents said that it was 'as if the holy water is sold in shops'.

Compared to the replies of previous questions, a slightly smaller percentage of the respondents (67%), think that tourists respect their customs and culture (Figure 6). Indians, however, emphasize that some of the things are not available to tourists and they do not want to share them, because they are holy to them and they should remain that. Slightly more than half of other Canadians (52%) think that tourist has respect for Indians. It is logical that those who are interested in

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their culture and customs usually are the ones who visit their tourist attractions, and therefore have respect for them.

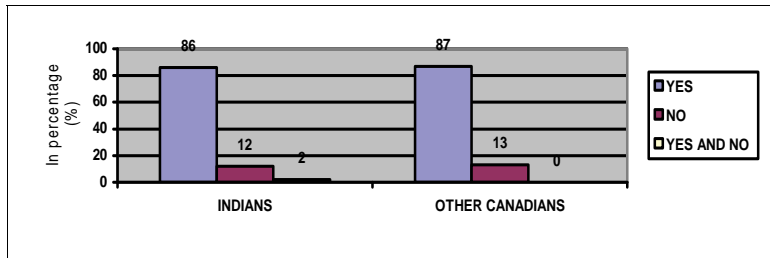


Figure 6. Replies of Indians and other Canadians to the question "Is it good to present indian culture to tourist?"

Most of them think tourists have respect for their culture and that they understand them, but there are those who think that tourists consider them to be savages and feel exploited. On the other hand, there are tourists, who visit holy aboriginal places and treat them with arrogance and who think that all Indians drink and smoke all the time.

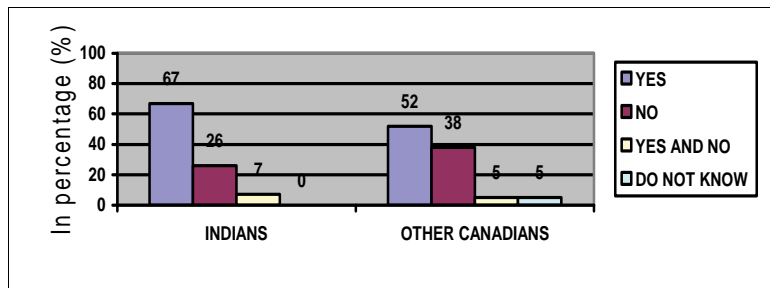


Figure 7. Replies of Indians and other Canadians to the question "Do tourists have respect for indian customs and culture?"

According to research conducted in France, the United Kingdom and Germany, there is a rather large number of prospective tourists who are planning to travel to Canada and who are interested in aboriginal tourism offer. About 1,500 respondents were interviewed in November and December 2007 in the three most important emission countries in Europe (the United Kingdom, France and Germany). Most of them are from France (85% respondents), then Germany (72%) and, finally, the United Kingdom (46%). Mostly married without children and with higher levels of education are demographic characteristics of those interested in this type of tourism offer. They usually do not require this type of

tourism offer before they start the journey, but just when they arrive at the destination. They most often use the Internet, magazines, recommendations by their friends and acquaintances before they decide on visiting some of the aboriginal tourist attractions.

Prospective European tourists are looking for adventure and learning new things about Indians, and what is also important to them is genuine contact with their aboriginal guide who takes them through wonderful pristine nature. Their basic motive is to feel something different and to do some different things, in unique surroundings with getting to know unique culture. Younger tourists look for more physical involvement, such as: riding canoe and kayak, sledge ride, horse riding, white-water rafting and others. Those older than 50 years of age are more interested in walking, hiking, nature watching and indoor activities (www.canadatourism.com).

A basic obstacle for the development of Canadian aboriginal tourism is unawareness about their offer, because potential tourists do not even think of aboriginal tourism when they make plans for their traveling to Canada. Usually, the first images that come to mind about Canadian tourism are vast pristine nature, lakes and waterfalls. The other obstacle for the development of this type of tourism is that tourists feel unwanted among Indians. They have this impression because they rarely see advertisements for this type of tourism offer, and when they see one; they are not certain whether Indians are responsible for it or it was done by the government without consulting them. Another thing that can turn tourists away from aboriginal tourism offer is its inauthenticity. Regarding this, it should be emphasized that there are different understandings of authenticity, because some tourists might expect to see Indians wearing animal fur and riding horses like in the old days, even though it is not the case today. But, what is certainly authentic is their relationship with nature, their culture and beliefs, which tourist would like to learn, hear and see in the interaction with Indians.

Prospective tourists prefer to imagine themselves as explorers, who are in direct contact with the Indians, observing them, living their life and learning from them. What is the most repulsive and frightening thing about aboriginal offer is the fact that aboriginal lifestyle does not exist any more in its original form and that there are a lot of imitations and Indians who are acting. This is one of the reasons why prospective tourists do not book in advance, but wait until they arrive at a destination before they decide to explore aboriginal tourism offer. They believe that, in this way, they can make a better judgment whether it is an authentic tourism offer or not. For them, authentic elements of the offer are

aboriginal way of thinking, their approach to nature and their unique spirituality, whereas inauthentic elements are dances, performances for tourists, lectures and museums without any other offer (www.canadatourism.com).

Some Indian tourism products in Ontario

Aboriginal tourism offer in the province of Ontario is not promoted and developed enough. However, in the same way as in other developed regions where companies create their own web sites because they wish to follow new trends (Stankov, Ćurčić, & Dragičević, 2010), tourists can find aboriginal tourism offer on the Internet, and also in traditional tourism information centres. There have already been created tours, such as 'Moccasin Trail' organized by a receptive tour operator in Thunder Bay or 'The Great Spirit Circle Trail' which is promoted in the 'Aboriginal Tourism Guide 2009-2010'. Some of the places that could be visited and are connected with aboriginal culture are: Indian reserves Grand River, Rainy River (including a place with long rapids within it), aboriginal cottages on the lakes for fishing, aboriginal festivals, so-called Pow-Wows, which are organized across Ontario and so on.

Aboriginal tours. 'Moccasin Trail Tours' are tours which are very interesting for tourists because they provide them with active participation in different activities. These tours cover the entire province of Ontario and are organized by a receptive tour operator from Thunder Bay, which is specialized in aboriginal culture tourism. Their offer includes different contents: getting to know cultures of different tribes, watching polar bears along the Hudson Bay Coast, discovering ancient aboriginal tombs, rowing and canoe riding on lakes and river rafting, hiking through different sceneries, camping in nature, etc. The tours last from 2 to 14 days and they mainly include transport within the province, accommodation, food and aboriginal tour guide. 'The Great Spirit Circle Trail Tour' comprises eight aboriginal communities on Manitoulin Island in the region of Sagamok in north-eastern Ontario. Manitoulin Island is the biggest freshwater island in the world, and the region Sagamok is the home of a group of Anishnawbek tribes consisting of the Ojibwa, Ottawa and Potawatomi tribes. They offer half-day cultural tours and events; one-day guided tours and multiple-days package tours. Tour guides are Indians who carefully plan the itineraries and who are experienced and knowledgeable about the local area. The region offers opportunities to have a guided walk in the nature, learn an aboriginal craft, taste traditional aboriginal food, have fun watching aboriginal outdoor performances and learn how to bake a bannock on the camp fire.

Indian reserves. Indian reserves are visited in order to: buy cigarettes which are three times cheaper than in Canadian shops, enjoy the splendour of their rituals in summer and to persuade oneself that Indians still exist. Before entering some of the reserves, it is necessary to warn tourists to respect their customs and habits so as not to cause any incidents. Based on the opinions of interviewed Indians (Figure 8), reserves helped significantly to preserve aboriginal culture, 77% of the respondents agrees with the statement. Those who think differently, believe that reserves are limiting and that they are too much isolated. Regarding other Canadians, they do not share this opinion. Half of them (50%) believe that it is helpful to those who live in the reserves; because they are surrounded by their own people and can practise their customs with each other. Some, however, believe that reserves are not preserving culture, but education and generation transfer are preserving culture.

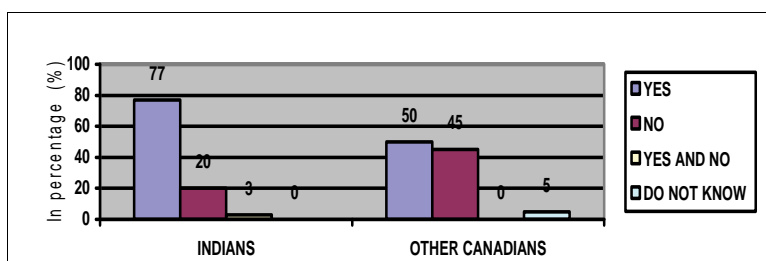


Figure 8. Replies of Indians and other Canadians to the question "Have reserves helped in preserving aboriginal culture?"

Indian reserve Rainy River is situated in the north-eastern part of the province, to the east from Thunder Bay and not far from the border with the U.S. This reserve has been home for the Ojibwa tribe for a long time and they still live in this area within a reserve. The Ojibwa tribe, with the help of Canadian government, has established a museum and a small tour for visitors within a beautiful and spiritual place called Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung in native Indian language, which is translated as a place of long rapids. This is the most important centre of natives in this area where there are holy burial places, which are visited during the tour. This was declared as a place on national significance in 1970, and its importance has been acknowledged for generations, on behalf of all the cultures and people who lived or travelled through this area. Organized tours are last for half an hour or longer, and you go there in small golf buggies. These tours include visiting holy burial places of the tribe Ojibwa and enjoying beautiful nature. Those who have not felt peace and tranquility will certainly find it here, because in addition to birds twitting, brooks babbling and winds murmuring, there are no other sounds. Tour guides are Indians who say that

tourists mainly respect their culture and that they are very curious. However, there are those who only come to criticize. Regarding the income generated from tourism, it is rather small. The chiefs (i.e. reserve chairs) distribute income and allocate the salaries for guides, considering them not to be there to make profit but to teach others about their culture. The largest number of visits is between May and October, during the season time here, and at best, the number of visitors reaches 2,000, which is not satisfactory for the employees who would prefer this number to be much higher.

Indian events - Pow Wow. Each year during the aboriginal heritage week in Ontario (the last week of February), aboriginal culture, history and tradition are celebrated. Annual Canadian Aboriginal Festival in Toronto is the largest aboriginal festival in North America with more than 3,500 dancers, drummers, musicians and actors in traditional performances and dances. Pow Wows are traditional dances which are very interesting for tourists. Although the holy aboriginal dances are private, not all of them are of religious character, so some of them can be observed by tourists and they can even participate in some of them, which is especially interesting. In summer, Pow Wow is organized almost every week, but each time it is organized in a different Indian reserve in the Province of Ontario (www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca). The dances are mainly organised in the open air, unless in case in bad weather. In this case, there are numerous venues for these dances. These venues are round shaped and must be opened towards the sky. In the middle of the venue there is a round stage for musicians. The dancers dance around them in special dancing costumes which they have made themselves. The dance floor is covered with sand so that the dancers are as close as possible to the ground. The dance is learned from an early age from parents and older tribe members. What is characteristic of the dance is that dancers move to the left, thus following the cycle of life. If they would be moving to the other side, it would mean that they are going back in the past, which is believed not to be good. Dramatic drums and multi-coloured clothes are a characteristic of the dances. Tourists are usually welcomed during the events, but there are reserves where dances are performed only within their own tribes and closed for others. This should certainly be respected and one should make enquiries in tourist information centres about those which are open.

Other tourism offer can include their traditional dishes and feasts, organized for tourists in some reserves, traditional souvenirs, fishing in lakes with accommodation in specially designed cottages, visiting rocks with ancient drawings, etc. Regarding the feasts, they are organized in the Rainy River reserve once during a year. Tourists are offered their specialties, such as: traditional baked bannock, corn soup and blueberry tea. Traditional souvenirs

such as dreamcatchers, moccasins, beads, jewelry, pottery and a lot of other objects can be found in almost every souvenir shop in Canada. Fishing on Canadian lakes is very popular, which was recognized by some of the Indians who built more modern cottages offering accommodation, fishing and game hunting with or without a guide. What can also be included in aboriginal tourism offer are ancient drawings on the rocks near the lake coast, which are well-preserved today and remind prehistoric cave drawings. It is unknown exactly how old they are and they are present in several places within the Rainy Lake. They mainly represent scenes and figures from aboriginal everyday life, such as canoe rides, human and animal figures, nature.

Table 1. "Swot" analysis of Indian tourism

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Vast pristine nature in reserves.</p> <p>Mainly positive attitude of Indians towards tourism development.</p> <p>A diverse aboriginal offer (Pow Wow, museums, traditional food, souvenirs).</p> <p>Profound government interest in aboriginal tourism development.</p> <p>Supporting aboriginal tourism offer by travel agencies and other tourism stakeholders.</p> <p>The presence of an organization (ATC) which supports the development, growth and marketing of aboriginal tourism offer in Canada.</p> <p>The presence of 28 market ready aboriginal tourism products.</p>	<p>In some of the reserves, tourists are still not welcomed, as well as other Canadians.</p> <p>Emission countries are not informed about aboriginal tourism offer in Canada.</p> <p>Lack of basic infrastructure within individual reserves (North Ontario).</p> <p>Indians are not well-informed about tourism as a source of income.</p> <p>Inflexibility of employment system (seasonal employment) and insufficient training of Indians to work in tourism.</p> <p>Lack of service facilities and generally accepted development vision within some of the reserves.</p> <p>Lack of professional marketing campaign on the Internet and through media.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Profound government interest in the development of aboriginal tourism offer and conducted research on the topic.</p> <p>Government investment in the development of infrastructure for the tourism offer presentation (museums within reserves).</p> <p>Increased tourist interest in cultural tourism and getting to know other cultures.</p> <p>Employment opportunities for a large number of Indians.</p> <p>Interest and support by the international community for the development aboriginal tourism offer (the UK, Germany, France, etc.).</p> <p>Tourism as an opportunity to preserve aboriginal customs and cultures.</p> <p>Authentic experience interacting with Indians.</p>	<p>Decreases long-term loyalty of guest because of negative experiences when in contact with Indians.</p> <p>Loss of potential market because of not keeping up with competition (Australia and the US).</p> <p>Difficulties in agreement on priorities because of the conflict between aboriginal and government interests.</p> <p>Turning aboriginal culture and customs into business.</p> <p>Mass tourism development would create inauthentic offer (souvenirs made in China, etc).</p> <p>Destroying natural beauty by the development of tourism infrastructure.</p>

Conclusion

Today, Indians live in reserves, which helped them in preserving their customs and culture. However, if there was not great spiritual strength at the time the white people wanted to 'cleanse' the continent from the Indians, we could not be the witnesses of their culture now. Meeting other cultures enriches us and helps people to better understand each other, and thus lead a better life. Across the territory of Ontario, we can observe a lot of diversity in cultures and religions, but it is certain that aboriginal culture is special and the most interesting one because of its long tradition in this region.

Most of the Indians recognized the benefits of participating in tourism, presenting parts of their culture to tourists and thus spreading the awareness about spiritual life which should be above material one. There is a significant chance for aboriginal tourism to be developed in the Province of Ontario, if tourism trends are followed and tourists are better informed about aboriginal offer. The tourism offer should emphasize their differences and particularities, authentic experience of aboriginal culture and possibilities for tourists to participate in the creation of the aboriginal tourism product. What should be avoided in the placement of aboriginal offer is certainly inauthenticity and creating business in every possible way. There will always be those who just want to make profit from tourism, but tourists can recognized true values and want to get to know about the richness of aboriginal culture and the splendour of their dances.

Current tourism offer of Ontario still favours Niagara Falls, the famous CN Tower in Toronto, great amusement parks, such as Marineland, numerous events, unavoidable lake fishing, walks, camping in nature, etc. Indians are slowly joining this tourism offer through organizing walking tours on their own, presenting their culture in museums and events like Pow Wow, organizing different tours for tourists within reserves and organized historic and holy places and in other ways.

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