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RESILIENCE, AUTHENTICITY, AND DIGITAL HERITAGE TOURISM

Deepak Chhabra



Resilience, Authenticity, and Digital Heritage Tourism

This book examines the authentication of authenticity in heritage tourism by using a resilient smart systems approach. It discusses the emerging trends in cultural tourism and outlines, in a detailed manner, their significance in negotiating the authenticity of tourism experiences.

Authentication of authenticity is an evolving, less-researched field of inquiry in heritage tourism. This book advances research on this subject by exploring different authentication processes and scrutinizes their resilience in building transformative heritage tourism pathways. It offers a kaleidoscopic view of the manner authenticity has evolved over the last several decades by observing a broad spectrum of cultural expressions. The evolution and meaningfulness of negotiated authenticity is identified and discussed in the context of pre-, intra-, and post-pandemic times. This book focuses on the moral and existentialist trajectories of authenticity and the notion of self-authentication. It proposes a smart resilient authentication model to delicately negotiate the objective and self-dimensions of authenticity in transformative times. Furthermore, by sharing examples of best practices, it offers unique insights on how authenticity is authenticated and mediated via digital platforms and artificial intelligence.

This book offers novel perspectives on negotiated authenticity and its authentication in heritage tourism and will appeal to both practitioners and students/scholars of Heritage studies; Design and Innovation; Tourism Studies; Geography and Planning across North America, Europe, and East Asian countries.

Deepak Chhabra is an associate professor and senior sustainability scientist at Arizona State University, United States. Her research interests include authenticity and authentication of heritage, economic equity, smart/sustainable marketing strategies for heritage tourism, and alternative healing/restorative systems and eudaimonic well-being of both visited and visiting communities.

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Deepak Chhabra

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Preface

From the time I joined my PhD program at North Carolina State University (Raleigh, USA), I have kept track of ongoing deliberations on the authenticity phenomenon. My dissertation, for the most part, had focused on the authenticity of heritage festivals (Chhabra 2001). During the past nineteen years, I have advanced my research in this field by exploring, identifying, and testing new settings and pathways. Additionally, I have viewed a variety of authentication processes associated with numerous heritage expressions and settings. In my book titled *'Sustainable Marketing of Cultural and Heritage Tourism'*, I featured authenticity as one of the core elements in the proposed marketing model and critically scrutinized it, using a sustainability perspective while contextualizing it within numerous heritage expressions. Undeniably, documented literature is saturated with numerous journal articles on authenticity. However, books examining negotiated authenticity and authentication of heritage, from a resilience viewpoint, are sparse. To my knowledge, no book to date has scrutinized digital authentication of heritage in an in-depth manner. Pressing focus on innovative practices from negotiated authentication and digital as well as digital detox standpoints makes this book a useful contribution in the pandemic times; it also opens the path for further deliberations, particularly in the context of heritage resilience and sustainability.

Authenticity, undoubtedly, continues to be the cornerstone of heritage tourism and is now considered a strategic component in managing sustainable heritage tourism. United Nations designated 2017 as the 'year of sustainable tourism for development'. Authenticity of heritage tourism is featured as an important contributor to this theme. It is of no surprise then that the authenticity discourse has taken center stage during the past several decades and has been the subject for various deliberations and analyses. It has become a new path to accomplish smart development of heritage tourism (Lugosi 2016; Park, Choi & Lee 2019; Pine & Gilmore 2008). Multiple views have shaped the discursive path of authenticity, with special attention to essentialist/object (genuine, true to the origin), constructivist (commodified for revenue purpose), existentialist (seeking optimized and euphoric state of mind), and negotiated authenticities centered on both supply and demand

perspectives (Cohen 2002; Kolar & Zabkar 2010; MacCannell 1976; Pine & Gilmore 2008; Reisinger & Steiner 2006; Wang 1999).

As stated by MacCannell, a cultural production can serve one of the two vital roles: "it may add to the weight of the modern civilization by sanctifying an original as being a model worthy of copy or it may establish a new direction, break new grounds, or otherwise contribute to the progress of modernity by presenting new combinations of cultural elements" (1976, p. 81). The authenticity targeted today in heritage tourism negotiates between both these functions: first, an attempt is made to copy the original; then the copy is modified to meet the needs of the contemporary communities (Chhabra et al. 2003, p. 704). Objective authenticity (the purest version of authenticity) is popularly used as a reference point and it connotes genuineness and traditional culture from the place of its origin. The present-day authenticity pays tribute to the "original" concept and this view is reiterated by Taylor: "tourism sites, objects, images, and even people are not simply viewed as contemporaneous productions. Instead, they are positioned as signifiers of past events, epochs, or ways of life. In this way, authenticity is equated as original (2011, p. 33). Heritage tourists, often quest for an authentic experience and believe that "the authentic experience resides outside the boundary of everyday life in.... today's society. People think either the past was better or lives outside their space are better" (Chhabra et al. 2003, p. 705).

Recent literature continues to suggest that authenticity is a negotiated rather than an absolute trait of the heritage tourism spectacle. It is negotiated by a broad spectrum of stakeholders, which include the government (at local and national levels), destination marketing organizations, heritage tourism institutions, the business community, tourists, and, in the case of indigenous communities, agents from minority or silent groups. Different dimensions of the authentic can be viewed as: "commodification versus spontaneity (non-commercialization), cultural evolution versus museification, economic development versus cultural preservation, ethnic autonomy versus state regulation, and mass tourism development versus sustainable cultural tourism" (Wall & Xie 2005, p. 19). Tension within and between each of the dichotomies exist and perspectives of culture and heritage are created/recreated by different agencies/stakeholders who hold and/or claim a particular perspective of authenticity. What informs and directs these claims constitutes an important area of study; that is, how do numerous agents authenticate authenticity is important to know. In fact, authentication of authenticity is an emerging field of inquiry. As a scholar, I feel compelled to advance scrutiny in this field.

Equally important is the revisit of this phenomenon in the intra-pandemic times. COVID-19 is an unimaginable 'watershed' moment. Around a time, when the tourism industry was still grappling with the impacts of over-tourism, the entire globe catapulted into an undertourism or a no-tourism predicament. The scale of disruption caused by COVID-19, to international tourism, is immense. According to UN-WTO, more than 95% of the

countries worldwide have imposed travel restrictions and many destinations have closed their border to tourists. Some have been selective in entry permissions. Mobility and social contact form the core of the tourism and hospitality industry and the pandemic has imposed restrictions on both. It is feared that social distancing might become integrated as a cultural norm; driven by fear, warm gestures of hugs and handshakes might depart from many cultures and become a thing of the past. At the same time, a need has simultaneously emerged to resurrect/reform destinations and their offerings and strategically shape their product life cycles. This is also a wakeup call for all 'influencers and shakers' of the heritage tourism industry. As the crisis is evolving, as of end of August 2020, several countries are opening their borders cautiously and modifying their restraining measures. Heritage tourism is a crucial component of tourism with surging demand over the last several decades. Undoubtedly, many heritage institutions have had well-established agendas; but now all are at a reset level. Regardless of the turn, heritage tourism will take in the post-pandemic times; authenticity will remain its biggest moral, sustainable, commercial, and/or marketing asset. It is highly likely that it will be treated and negotiated in a more delicate manner if the new level of global consciousness remains slanted towards solidarity, virtuosity, and sustainability. Time will tell whether this awakened consciousness will sustain and produce far reaching transformations and outcomes. This book, therefore, is timely as it expands the parameters of the authenticity discourse in the context of unforeseen disasters of magnitude.

In focusing on negotiated authenticity, this book pushes the boundaries of heritage tourism research by developing a smart resilient authentication model, underpinned on ethical principles. By aiming to be smart, the purpose is to make the model both adaptable to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and viable for non-digital settings and experiences. Technology today is not just an interface; rather it performs a phenomenal role in shaping the supply side of heritage tourism (Hausmann & Weuster 2018) and its crucial (in fact survival) role during the pandemic times cannot be denied. At the same time, it cannot be refuted that the pre-pandemic digital era had produced a radical shift in the manner heritage offerings were developed, promoted, communicated, and sustained. More specifically, it influenced the manner in which authenticity was showcased and interpreted by different heritage tourism agencies. Emerging call for digital detoxification of heritage tourism was obtaining a strong foothold. However, the pandemic has shifted everything and crowned digitalization for facilitating connectivity; all physical touch points of socialization have been either altered or replaced. While valorizing the innovative digital boom, at this juncture, I would also like to argue that a critical discourse on digitalization should be inclusive of non-digital detox authentication perspectives of authenticity. The latter are also crucial for the development of resilient practices rooted in hands-on traditions that can open or lead to new routes of exploration to promote objective authenticity and long-term sustainability of heritage resources.

In this book, I identify and discuss the evolution and meaningfulness of negotiated authenticity in the pre-, intra-, and post-pandemic eras. Using an exploratory technique, I identify numerous case studies from across the world to examine vulnerability of a broad spectrum of heritage expressions and their resilient capabilities, particularly in the context of negotiated authenticity. Furthermore, I also scrutinize different authentication processes and offer a discourse on the manner in which authentic values are assigned to heritage objects and experiences (Wall & Xie 2005; Xie 2011). The power of authentication (both mutual and of the self) in bestowing authenticity remains a marginally explored area of study (Lugosi 2016). Furthermore, transformative solutions are needed to reform heritage tourism and bring it to the next level of moral self-authentication. It is not just the institutions and stakeholders and host communities who need to reform, but the tourists also need to deeply transform themselves beyond hedonistic and self-gratifying pursuits. They need to wake up to their inner level of consciousness and depart from hypocritical dispositions to optimize existentialist authenticity in a way that they become citizens of the world and virtuous human beings. In other words, moral selving and moralized self-authentication hold enormous potential to open new pathways toward attainment of eudaimonic well-being and social transformation, thereby fortifying resilience and sustainability. I close the book by opening this trajectory of research for future scholars.

Structure of the book

The book is divided into twelve chapters. The introduction chapter (one) offers an overview of how authenticity has evolved in heritage tourism. It presents emerging trends and discusses the manner in which they highlight the significance of authenticity in heritage tourism. It also summarizes the progress in the field of authenticity, especially in the context of its various notions, sustainability, economic value, marketing (specifically branding), and authentication.

The second chapter outlines the manner in which the notion of negotiated authenticity is developed and embraced in heritage tourism. One important contribution of this chapter is that it examines this form of authenticity from the lens of vulnerability and accords special attention to the micro and macro environment factors. As the authentication perspective gains momentum, it is important to study how heritage institutions and mediating agents authenticate heritage (Khanom, Moyle & Kennelly 2019; Wall & Xie 2005; Xie 2011). Chapter three presents the 'how' in respect to the authenticating process. The aim is also to examine the role of tangible and intangible markers and recognize mediating platforms that help shape and orchestrate the manner in which authenticity is portrayed. Digitalization continues to revolutionize heritage tourism. Chapter four shares recent trends in ICT (Information and Communication technologies) and discusses

how it has or will shape authenticity of heritage tourism during COVID-19 times. It scrutinizes the role of ICT as a mediating agent in the authentication process. Furthermore, it offers insights on how ICT is employed, by heritage institutions across numerous scenarios across the globe, to promote negotiated authenticity.

Chapter five discusses negotiated authenticity and its authentication from a marketing standpoint. Undeniably, authenticity has become an important marketing tool and is being extensively used to create distinct heritage brands. Existing smart/sustainable heritage tourism frameworks are identified and examined for the manner in which they embrace negotiated authenticity. The resilience of negotiated authenticity in sustainable marketing is ascertained, especially, by taking a present-centered perspective. Next, heritage hotels and resorts have become popular cultural and historical centers for showcasing unique and especially indigenous heritage environments across the globe. Such built heritage-oriented settings significantly contribute to local and regional development in that they enrich the heritage tourism portfolio of local communities. Chapter six describes the significance of negotiated authenticity from a cultural hospitality standpoint (Chhabra 2015; Derrida 2000; Ellis 2000). Negotiated authenticity and its authentication process are discussed in the context of heritage accommodations. Also, deliberations are offered regarding the impact of the pandemic on this sector.

Homestays have emerged as an important asset of community-based tourism in rural settings across the globe to satisfy tourist quest for an authentic, novel, and personalized experience and promote sustainable consumption of cultural and rural resources. As an alternative form of accommodation that takes place in small and often remote, rural communities, its vulnerability/resilience and authentication (especially during the intra-pandemic times) are worthy of study. Chapter seven affords special attention to the authentication of homestay tourism in the Himalayas of India. Next, a review of existing literature shows that somewhat limited attention has been accorded to the authentication of national branding (Katz & Lee 1992; Pretes 2003; Smith 1991; Tang, Morrison, Lehto, Kline, & Pearce 2009). Heritage holds a significant relationship with national identity (Palmer 1999) and it is generally the most marketed aspect of a nation and an important index in the construction of national brands.

Clancy (2009) argues that nation branding by the tourism marketers influences both internal (at home) and external (abroad) audience perceptions of a nation. Authenticity of preferred narratives/icons and national identity is worthy of investigation as selective interpretations and identities continue to be debated. Chapter eight shares different meanings/images communicated/portrayed by the different stakeholders of heritage tourism and offers insights on the authentication paths pursued to brand a nation. It also offers insights on the impact of COVID-19 on how a nation's brand is perceived and the manner in which a favorable repositioning can be devised.

Museums are important repositories of heritage. They may be viewed as an early form of commodification. Several studies argue that the museums are no more the touchstones of authenticity and much debate has centered on the commodification of museums in the era of global-local nexus. Because of the changing market trends and budget cuts, museums have relaxed their traditional norms to adapt to changing environments. As pointed out by Chhabra, “museums do not exist in a vacuum. They have to reflect the current culture, and the influence of the ruling power relations” (2008, p. 428). She suggests a negotiation framework to address the fundamental problem faced by multiple and often conflicting ideologies in the contemporary era. Chapter nine extends this discourse on negotiated authenticity and its authentication by museums, especially from the pandemic standpoint. Chapter ten extends the conversation by scrutinizing the manner in which authenticity is negotiated and portrayed through selected markers in ethnic cuisines. Extant literature acknowledges that food functions as an authenticating agent for ethnic experiences (Barbas 2003; Robinson & Clifford 2012; Sims, 2009). Moreover, it is an important mechanism and provides an ideal setting to accrue cultural capital (Andersson & Mossberg 2004). Research on authenticity and authentication of cultural food offerings remains meager (Mkono 2011, 2013; Sims, 2009). According to Chhabra, Lee & Zhao, negotiated ‘othered’ food offerings are sought by consumers and restaurants also endeavor to negotiate their efforts to authenticate authenticity in a manner that appeals to their patrons. Patrons prefer to experience the ‘other’ in an objectively authentic setting but in a negotiated manner that is conducive and pleasurable to their comfort and lifestyle. This chapter examines negotiated ‘otherness’ of ethnic cuisines in several countries across the globe. It also offers insights on how these popularly sought heritage experiences have been impacted by the non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) imposed by the pandemic.

Chapter eleven directs attention to the authentication of heritage merchandise with special focus on souvenirs. Cohen (1993, 2002) and Chhabra (2005) trace two paths of research associated with the study of souvenirs: supplier strategies (producer and vendors-retailers) and consumer preferences and behavior. The manner in which authenticity is authenticated and digitalized in the souveniring (authenticating process) process constitutes an important area of study. Insights are also offered on the way the souvenirs are taking a new meaning in the COVID-19 times.

The last chapter (twelve) ‘Going Forward’ offers an outline of key points raised in the book chapters and re-examines the core themes unveiled in Chapters 1–11. It presents a smart resilient negotiated authentication paradigm and offers insights, based on important lessons learned by pursuing negotiated authenticity and scrutinizing its authentication in a variety of heritage settings. It discusses the future of negotiated authenticity, from a resilient standpoint, in the context of digital/non-digital and location specific environments. It appropriates the authenticity and its authentication

discourse, across different heritage expressions, in the context of the intra- and post-pandemic times. Localism and new economic order are likely to shape sustainability of heritage tourism in the future. By highlighting the sustainable prospects of mutual authentication (between guests and hosts) and moral aspects of self-authentication, the book closes with a call for expanding these trajectories of research so that they can be employed meaningfully to transform heritage tourism and relaunch it in the post-pandemic times.

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Acknowledgments

This book grew out of my years of work on authenticity and the authentication of heritage that began with my PhD dissertation. My interest in this topic continues to be piqued as authenticity has become a cornerstone and key sustainability criterion in heritage tourism. I am deeply engaged with scrutinizing the manner in which scholarship on this subject has progressed and evolved. From the point of time when most authenticity discourses were anchored in three dominant ideologies (objective, existentialist, and constructivist) with strategies to bridge them in a meaningful manner, to the present era where attention has shifted toward scrutinizing the processes through which objects, places, and experiences are authenticated, I remain a devoted observer and an active contributor. Recent studies have moved beyond the conceptual dissection of authenticity to examine the dynamic and multifarious process of authentication. This book is one more addition to this ocean of new knowledge and makes a dedicated effort to pen down the journey of the negotiated authenticity discourse and its authentication using multiple heritage and digital settings. I have worked to further knowledge on this topic by offering insights into how heritage can be made more resilient to survive the test of time and the disequilibrium effected by unforeseen chaotic forces. What I initially conceived as a quick and modest project turned into a lengthy and complex part of my enriching research journey. I am enormously grateful to numerous people, scholars, and heritage institutions for their assistance and support from the beginning of this work to its completion. I am also indebted to my dog, Ebony, for patiently keeping watch over me during long hours of work.

Finally, I wish to thank my father. This book is dedicated to my father, Dr. G. S. Chhabra, who is sadly no more with me but continues to inspire me through his overwhelming support and guidance, the enormous love he showered on me, and the memories we created together.

1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the different dimensions of authenticity, its significance, and its authentication in heritage tourism. It argues that negotiated authenticity can offer a strategic pathway to support smart resilient authentication processes that are premised on ethical production and consumption of heritage. It also examines the potential of negotiated authenticity to promote resilience and sustainability and situates the discourse in the context of COVID-19.

The authenticity discourse has taken center stage in heritage tourism over the past several decades and has been the subject of various deliberations and analyses. Heritage tourism can be defined as a form of travel where travelers seek to view or experience ‘built heritage, culture or modern-day arts’ (Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher 2005; Frost 2006; Moscardo & Pearce 1999; Timothy 2011). It is a “phenomenon that focuses on the management of past, inheritance, and authenticity to enhance participation and satisfy consumer emotions by evoking nostalgic emotions; its underlying purpose is to stimulate monetary benefits for its various constituencies such as the museums, historic houses, festivals, heritage hotels and other stakeholders” (Chhabra 2010a, p. 5). On a positive note, heritage tourism can serve as a vehicle for conserving culture and landscape for a long time, although misuse of heritage resources (both tangible and intangible) often leads to compromise of authenticity and manipulation of the past for business goals (DeSoucey, Elliot, & Schmuz 2019; Park, Choi, & Lee 2019). Most contemporary issues in heritage tourism are associated with the following:

- forging meaningful ties between cultural heritage management (CHM) and tourism;
- viable use of heritage resources for the purpose of revenue and user-fee debate;
- visitor engagement strategies and authentic interpretation; congestion management; heritage politics (dealing with dissonance and societal amnesia);
- globalization effects (in terms of showcasing fragmented heritage);

questions are posed with regard to the foreseeable path of the authenticity discourse and its possible direction during the post-pandemic times.

Authenticity has become a driving force of tourism consumption and qualifies as a crucial benchmark for the advancement of sustainable and smart heritage tourism (Chhabra 2009b, 2010a). Its centrality in heritage tourism is undisputed (Chhabra 2010a, 2010b; Kirillova et al. 2016; Naoi 2004; Sims 2009; Timothy 2011). Some studies have shown that authenticity enriches the quality of heritage tourism (Mrda & Carić 2019; Park et al. 2019).

Furthermore, as pointed out by Ram, Björk, and Weidenfeld (2016, p. 110), “authenticity in the context of tourism suppliers is perceived as an essential asset of firms that provide services for consumers, which are not only satisfied with low costs and high quantity, but also seek genuine experiences (Pine & Gilmore 2008)”. A review of documented literature shows that authenticity has been examined immensely from both supply and demand perspectives (Chhabra 2008, 2010b; Park et al. 2019; Timothy 2011). It is a complex phenomenon because multiple views shape its discursive path. Based on antecedent viewpoints of special interest are essentialist/object (legitimate, true to the origin), constructivist (commodified for income), existentialist (optimal and euphoric), and negotiated authenticities (Chhabra et al. 2003; Chhabra, Zhao, Lee, & Okamoto 2012; Cohen 2002; DeSoucey et al. 2019; Kolar & Zabkar 2010; MacCannell 1973; 1992; Pine & Gilmore 2008; Reisinger & Steiner 2006; Wang 1999). The pure essentialist view focuses on cultural continuity. It refers to the traditional elements of culture (Taylor 2001). According to Taylor, authenticity is a kind of reproduction that holds a mirror to the original version of past. It is argued that everything authentic today is a symbol or signifier of past occurrences, eras, or ways of living (Rickly-Boyd 2012b; Salamone 1997; Timothy & Boyd 2003). In a nutshell then, the essentialist (also referred to as objective) version holds proxy to the true, original, genuine, actual, and unchanged version of heritage (de Bernardi 2019; Reeves et al. 2020; Timothy 2011). It is frozen in time and implies continuity in its most virtuous form. By the same token, several scholars also argue that essentialist authenticity is an impossible goal to accomplish (Salih 2020).

The constructivist view supports commodified forms of authenticity such as fake settings and deliberately constructed pseudo-backstages (Chhabra et al. 2003, 2012; MacCannell 1992; Medina 2003). It relates to a commodified version of culture (Trilling 1972). Because it is performed to please the markets, its true and original form gets distorted (Cohen 2002; du Cros 2009; MacCannell 1973, 1976, 1992; Silver 1993; Timothy 2011; Uriely 2005). It is argued that commodification changes the meaning of cultural markers in that they eventually become distanced from their initial worth (Chhabra et al. 2003). Next, the negotiation stance is slanted to rationalize a midway point, by retaining its originality or embracing sanitized modifications, to meet consumer demand. According to Adams (1996), this stance is a jointly constructed process between the suppliers and the consumers. Through

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- effective use of technology to conserve and market heritage;
- forging effective partnerships and stakeholder management; and
- managing tension between commodification and conservation of heritage and increasing demand for an authentic experience (Aas et al. 2005; Arnold 2005; Chhabra 2010a; Chhabra & Zhao 2015; Du Cros 2008, 2009; Garrod & Fyall 2001; Hede & Thyne 2007; Lowenthal 2000; McKercher & du Cros 2002; Medina 2003; Parsons & Maclaran 2009; Timothy 2011; Timur & Getz 2009).

Additionally, authenticity is itself a problematic concept with multiple meanings, appropriations, and relocation issues associated with rescuing a heritage building that can fuel a debate between its in situ preservation and re-erection procedures (Reeves, Dalton, & Pesce 2020). In the latter case, controversy emerges in the manner the meaning is contested in that it is “partially derived from its intrinsic worth and partly from how various interest groups perceive the building” (2020, p. 4). From a positive standpoint, authenticity has become a cornerstone of effective and sustainable management of heritage resources. It is being increasingly regarded as a core attribute of heritage tourism experience (Andriotis 2011; Ateljevic & Doorne 2005; Beverland 2005; Chhabra 2005, 2010b, 2012b; Chhabra, Healy, & Sills 2003; Cohen & Cohen 2012; Crang 1996; DeLyser 1999; Grayson & Martinec 2004; Halewood & Hannam 2001; Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai 2016; Rickly-Bod 2012a, 2012b; Taylor 2001) and plays a key role in attracting visitors to heritage sites (Bendix 1997; Bunce 2016; Chhabra 2010c; Kolar & Zabkar 2010; Park et al. 2019; Rickly-boyd 2013a; Timothy 2011; Xie 2011). It is regarded as a viable economic resource in that it can serve as a sustainable path to achieve smart heritage tourism development (Cavanaugh 2019; Chhabra 2015; Desoucey et al. 2019; Lugosi 2016; Pine & Gilmore 2008; Thompson & Schofield 2009; Timothy 2011; Waitt 2000; Waller & Lea 1998; Xie & Wall 2003). Smart cultural heritage tourism refers to tourism to places and sites that promote cultural heritage by embracing smart technologies, knowledge, and sustainability (such as conservation and social inclusion) (Vattano 2013). Smart heritage approach, reliant on innovative and harmonious technology, can augment the value of culture/heritage by making it more accessible, both in visual and cognitive terms. As an instance, emerging mobile technologies are offering innovative digital services that provide location- and context-specific information to tourists. Furthermore, they have the potential to offer innovative ways to regulate tourist flows, cultural heritage conservation, and beneficial social change through enhanced/meaningful relationship with the host communities. This chapter touches on key aspects of the authenticity discourse to date, especially in the context of its multiple meanings, morality, economic value, marketing, sustainability, digitalization, and the process (authentication) through which tangible and intangible heritage are endorsed. It explores the notion of resilient authentication and closes with an overview of the manner in which heritage tourism is paused and disrupted by COVID-19. Important

offers a more comprehensive and realistic approach by situating tourists in environmental and sociopolitical contexts; it recognizes the complex notion of authenticity shaped by an interactive dialogue between the visited place, trust, encounter, and the self (Belhassen, Caton, & Stewart 2008, p. 685). Several studies have used the theoplicity connotation to support negotiated positions of authenticity (Belhassen et al. 2008; Chhabra 2010b; Chhabra et al. 2012; Chhabra, Lee, Zhao, & Scott 2013; Robinson & Clifford 2012). It attaches social and cultural meanings to physical artifacts. Perusal of recent literature supports the emerging popularity and practicality of the negotiation standpoint as it seeks to reconcile between economic, cultural, and subjective worlds (Belhassen & Caton 2006, Belhassen et al. 2008; Chhabra 2008; Kirillova et al. 2016; Knudsen & Waade 2010; Lee & Chhabra 2015). In support of this view, many studies have reported that a tourist enjoys an optimized experience, feels a sense of happiness, and is in touch with himself or herself in an essentialist (original/genuine) setting. In this manner, McCabe says, "commodification can be situated within the ongoing cultural construction process" (1998, 233). Recent literature reports that embrace of authenticity (especially essentialist and negotiated versions) generates a positive value, both in economic and noneconomic terms (Chhabra 2008, 2010b; Mkono 2011; Robinson & Clifford 2012; Taylor 2001; Timothy 2011; Xie 2011; Yan 2011).

Authenticity is often touted as a key element of CHM. Authenticity from a CHM perspective is associated with portraying the past in an accurate manner (Du Cros 2001; Graburn 1989; Timothy 2011; Timothy & Boyd 2003). Against the traditional view that authenticity showcases unique cultural characteristics that have been preserved through territorial departures, the global view of commodification viewpoint implies that cultural thresholds are established to a large extent by supplier/corporate and public interests centered on monetary goals (Moscardo & Pearce 1999; Waller & Lea 1998; Wall & Xie 2005). Most fragmented perspectives of authenticity are positioned on two bipolar scales: objectivist/constructionist and existentialist/objectivist (Chhabra 2010b). Within marketing research, two research streams have evolved: authenticity as an attribute of a subject (i.e. employee's emotional authenticity; Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler 2006) and as a trait of an object (i.e. brand authenticity; Beverland, 2006).

From a marketing standpoint, extant literature recognizes that authenticity is a significant motivating driver (Frisvoll 2013; Grunewald 2002; Hughes 1995; Kolar & Zabkar 2010; Lee, Phau, Hughes, & Quintal 2015; Park et al. 2019) and has become a key selling point for heritage sites and destinations (de Bernardi 2019; DeSoucey et al. 2019; Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland, & Farrelly et al. 2014; Timothy 2011). It has become a distinct branding tool (Beverland 2006; Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman, & Taheri 2015; Chhabra 2010c; Fritz, Schoenmueller, & Bruhn 2017; Grayson & Martinec 2004; Kolar & Zabkar 2010; Morhart, Malar, Guevremont, Girardin, & Grohmann 2014). In other words, it can be used to retain consumer interests and attract

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negotiation, it is possible to safeguard and retain the core elements of object authenticity (DeSoucey et al. 2019; Jennings & Stehlik 2001; Medina 2003). Negotiation traverses between essentialist and constructivist notions; this theory argues that authenticity is not completely harmed or risked when it is modified to satisfy the market demand if it is done delicately and with caution; that is, several elements of essentialist authenticity can stay intact while adhering to the needs of the tourists market (Chhabra et al. 2003; Halewood & Hannam 2001; Waitt 2000; Wall & Xie 2005).

The existentialist view advocates optimized experience, discovery of one's true self and 'being true to oneself' (Wang 1999). It refers to exaltation and exhilaration by being just yourself and being able to express freely without inhibitions (Sloan 2007). It is purely a state of mind, hence subjective (Kim & Jamal 2007; Kirillova & Lehto 2015; Mkono 2011, 2013; Steiner & Reisinger 2006). It is key to a person's well-being and self-fulfillment (Gino, Kouchaki, & Galinsky 2015; Mkono 2020). Gino et al. argue that it is an ongoing process of personal negotiation that encompasses acknowledgment of one's "personal thoughts, emotions, needs and wants, and acting in accordance with those experiences" (Mkono 2020, p. 3).

It is centered on experiential consumption and can be delineated into two categories: intrapersonal and interpersonal. More recent work on existentialist authenticity raises scrutiny on moral grounds. Sloan (2007) writes that inauthenticity of the self is experienced when there is a disconnect between our external behavior and our real inner self. This disruption causes feelings of discomfort, dissonance, and a sense of alienation (Gino et al. 2015; Rickly-Boyd 2013b) and results in "lower moral self-regard and feelings of impurity, which trigger a desire for cleansing and prosocial, compensatory behaviors" (Mkono 2020, p. 3). In other words, when we choose to conform to our true selves, we are existentially authentic. But, if we are not able to stay true to our inner self, we are inauthentic. The pre-pandemic world has not been conducive to authentic retention because "a large portion of our existence is being lived out and shared in the digital world, where boundaries ... have become more blurry between real and fake, personal and social, private and public" (Mkono 2020, p. 3). The outcome is that a tourist can live in a state of apprehension as he or she continuously negotiates to seek harmony between the inner self and self-expression to others (Grauel 2016). Some scholars obviously argue that the existentialist state of mind is an impossible feat. In the next chapter, I will examine this position from a negotiated perspective. Furthering this probe from a technological perspective, Tribe and Mkono (2017) use the context of super-connectivity (information and communications technology [ICT]). They inquire into the manner in which super-connectivity shapes authentic experiences. The authors refer to e-lienation to examine the degree to which ICT helps or resists an alienated experience or setting.

While acknowledging the objective (essentialist), constructive and existentialist/inauthentic-self positions of authenticity, the theoplicity standpoint

potential markets through appropriate positioning and branding techniques (Bunce 2016). Having said that, it is important to identify consumer preferences for the type of authenticity sought and frame tailor-made competitive offerings (Kolar & Zabkar 2010). Several studies have confirmed that theoplicity which seeks a middle path between essentialist and existentialist types of authenticity helps explain consumer behavior in heritage tourism (Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher 2010; Chhabra 2010b; Hede & Thyne 2007). Understanding satisfaction and loyalty (such repeat visits and positive word of mouth), based on different kinds of authentic experiences, has become paramount to a destination or site's successful performance (Chhabra 2010b; Lee et al. 2015; Park et al. 2019). Using a consumption model of authenticity, Chhabra (2010b) examined relationship between perceived authenticity and tourist satisfaction at heritage sites. Her study offers strategic suggestions for proactive brand management strategies.

The dominant role of authenticity in destination image formation necessitates managers/custodians of local culture, customs, architecture, and historic landmarks to position authenticity in their branding strategies. From this standpoint, staged authenticity approach can be utilized by recreating and reenacting heritage traditions as experiencing authenticity is more about feeling one's authentic self rather than having the 'real' or 'objective' authentic experience (Moscardo & Pearce 1999). Lending a voice to this credence, Turner and Manning (1988) emphasize that the desire for authenticity is especially strong in times of change and uncertainty; it is then individuals seek safe environments that offer a sense of continuity. On the other hand, the need for authenticity is attributed to the increasing homogenization of the marketplace (Beverland & Farelly 2010). In particular, authenticity merits attention in the context of quality and differentiation in terms of market transparency and prompt flow (both viral and unidirectional) of information (Eggers, O'Dwyer, Kraus, Vallaster, & Guldenberg 2013). Informed consumers are more likely to desire consistency and authenticity in the brands they seek (Holt 2002). Brand authenticity offers a unique marketing route and has piqued the interest of numerous heritage destinations and businesses which claim to offer objectively authentic experiences.

Brand authenticity

Brand authenticity can be described as the perceived genuineness of a brand that is showcased in the form of constancy and consistency (i.e. continuity), uniqueness (i.e. originality), ability to assure (i.e. reliability), and unpretentiousness (i.e. naturalness) (Bruhn, Schoemuller, & Heinrich 2012). Numerous studies increasingly support the notion of brand authenticity as consumer quest for authenticity has become "one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing" (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry 2003, p. 21). According to Gilmore and Pine (2007, p. 23), "quality no longer differentiates; authenticity does". Scholarly understanding of brand authenticity is shaped by the

conceptualization offered by Grayson and Martinec (2004). Building on Peirce (1991) philosophy of signs and MacCannell's (1973, 1976) distinction between 'original' (i.e. objectivist perspective) and 'staged' (i.e. constructivist perspective) authenticity, Grayson and Martinec (2004) designed a framework to examine consumer perceptions of authenticity (using indexical and iconic versions). Drawing on consumer's objective and subjective versions of authenticity, a handful studies can be identified that focus on a brand authenticity scale (Bruhn et al. 2012; Morhart et al. 2014; Napoli et al. 2014). Based on Beverland's (2006) study, Napoli et al. (2014) identify three dimensions: quality commitment, heritage, and sincerity. Morhart et al. (2014) develop a continuum based on four factors: continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism. Although the measurement scales depict departures (consumer's agreement of being true to themselves is only reported by Morhart and colleagues), "their operationalizations demonstrate substantial similarities, in so far as they all cover the aspects of consistency (i.e. continuity, heritage), honesty (i.e. reliability, quality commitment, credibility), and genuineness (i.e. naturalness, sincerity, integrity)" (2015, p. 5).

In summary, brand authenticity refers to the comprehended reliability of a brand's behavior, showcasing core values and patterns, so that it can be labeled as genuine. It is important to note that research on brand authenticity is still in its infancy stage. Heritage institutions and corporations require further insights on how brand authenticity can inform consumer perceptions and shape behavior. What is lacking is empirically tested suggestion, on the manner in which authenticity can be branded to help forge consumer bonds.

In this book, I argue that a brand authenticity framework for heritage tourism and its different manifestations is crucial. The purpose is to forge meaningful connections with different stakeholders of heritage tourism in a manner that supports a sustainable branding protocol. In a forthcoming chapter, I will present a brand authenticity paradigm that is underpinned on the negotiated authenticity and integrates a smart resilient component to make it sustainable (economically and culturally viable) in the long term. Support for this paradigm is captivated from the core tenets of heritage sustainability (in addition to communication mix, research, market segmentation, and environment analysis): local community involvement/benefits, economic viability, partnerships and collaboration, authenticity and conservation, interpretation, and creating mindful visitors. I argue that sustainable marketing strategies should seek to uniquely position the brand authenticity of different heritage agencies and businesses.

Furthermore, to date, very few studies have examined the economic value of authenticity in heritage tourism (Chhabra 2010a; Pine & Gilmore 2008). It can be argued that objectively or negotiated authentic forms of heritage (tangible or intangible) hold current, optional, existence, and bequest values both in economic and nonuse terms. For instance, the contemporary museum ethos can benefit from leveraging brand authenticity to support its collection and preservation goals (Bunce 2016; Chhabra 2008) and build relationships

Frisvoll (2013) suggests a trialectic approach by examining the role of social representations of space and spatiality in the manner they intersect social representations (views of authenticity), materiality (as in the visual look), and practice (a tourism form such as mass, small-scale, or agricultural endeavor). In other words, he conceptualizes the process of authentication of rurality and rural space by examining the complex interplay of ideas, locality, and human practice. He studies the social process through which notions of authenticity emerge, and are gauged, and established. The 'how' and 'why' of authenticity need to be explored and in doing that, the author brings to light the "multifaceted nature of authentication meshed with materiality, social representations, political discourses, practices and performativity" (2013, p. 294). Cohen and Cohen define authentication as "a process by which something – a role, product, site, object or event – is confirmed as 'original', 'genuine', 'real', or 'trustworthy'" (2012, p. 1296). The authors delineate between cool authentication and hot authentication and argue that these two types of authentication are related to different kinds of authentic experiences. Cool authentication is a kind of endorsement by which authenticity of an object is confirmed to be original and real, rather than fake. Hot authentication, on the other hand, "is an immanent, reiterative, informal performative process of creating, preserving, and reinforcing an object, site's or event's authenticity" (2012, p. 1300).

Zhu contends that "authentication has become a governance strategy to legitimize inclusion and exclusion and to allocate economic, moral and aesthetics values" (2014, p. 12). Aligned to this, Xie (2011) examines authentication in the context of power relations and authority exercised by the role players. Multiple insights are needed to critically deconstruct and construct these areas of exploration to enrich understanding of authenticity and its authentication in heritage tourism. Clearly, the key notions of authenticity continue to be shaped by different players, who, in turn, are impacted by the broader environment beyond their control. Several studies stress on the need to explore authentication (social processes) to inspect the manner in which authentic values are imbued on heritage objects and experiences (Chhabra et al. 2013; Xie 2011; Wall & Xie 2005). Also, the role of power and authority in the authentication of authenticity remains a marginally explored area of study (Lugosi 2016).

The entire interplay of politics in authentication is an outcome of "controversy and contestation" (Cohen & Cohen 2012, p. 1306). Selected role players or stakeholders/agencies hold or propagate the authority to authenticate and power dynamics differ in hot and cool authentication in that it is more specific in cool instances (as power to authenticate is vested in a few persons or agencies) and fragmented in the hot authentication process. According to Cohen and Cohen, "the political questioning regarding cool authentication is how power is obtained and how it is exercised or contested", for instance, "cool authenticating procedures deployed by experts and institutions are sometimes contested by other experts, leading to controversy regarding the authenticity of given objects, sites or events" (2012, p. 1307).

with its different publics (McLean 2012). Next, to overcome hurdles in the path of authentic branding of heritage, it is important to examine the process through which authenticity is conferred on heritage resources.

Authentication

Clearly, recent antecedent viewpoints support a middle path for authenticity. Authenticity is a negotiated rather than an absolute trait of the heritage tourism spectacle. It is negotiated by a broad spectrum of stakeholders, which include the government (at local and national levels), destination marketing organizations, heritage tourism institutions, the business community, tourists, and agents from minority or silent groups (as in the case of indigenous communities) (DeSoucey et al. 2019; Reeves et al. 2020). Different dimensions of the authentic can be viewed as: “commodification versus spontaneity (non-commercialization), cultural evolution versus museumification, economic development versus cultural preservation, ethnic autonomy versus state regulation, and mass tourism development versus sustainable cultural tourism” (Wall and Xie 2005, p. 19). Tension within and between each of the constructs continues to exist because authenticity, particularly, in the context of heritage tourism and the self is an evolving phenomenon. What informs, guides, and shapes their viewpoints make an important area of study. That is, it is important to discern how authenticity is authenticated. Recent studies have moved beyond the conceptual dissection of authenticity and are more focused on dissecting the dynamic process of authentication.

This recent shift calls for sustainable branding of authenticity and its authentication process (Cohen & Cohen 2012; Lamont 2014; Lugosi 2016; Xie 2011). Therefore, it is important to understand different perspectives of authenticity as deciphered by consumers, heritage institutions, marketing agents such as destination marketing organizations, and the government agencies. While looking at the significance of perceived authenticity of rural tourism, Frisvoll argues “the lack of a conceptual framework through which to view and assess claims for authenticity raises the danger that we are simply reproducing popular myths countryside authenticity” (2013, p. 272).

The social side of tourist spaces (contested, negotiated, and consumed) calls for scrutiny to understand both, complexity and bias in the legitimization process and the burden of moral obligation regarding selection of true expressions (Frisvoll 2013). Cohen and Cohen (2012) stress on the need of theorizing the social routes that shape the manner in which authenticity perspectives are produced, sustained, and fortified. Xie (2011) uses Said’s orientalism and Babha’s third space concepts to craft an authentication approach in the context of ethnic tourism. Frisvoll (2013) defines authentication as a social process that embraces a complex spectrum of components (such as tangible and intangible products, practices, and performances) connected to conversations outside the tourism environment.

This book seeks to broaden the discursive parameters of authenticity in all its totality of expressions and identify power mechanisms that shape the manner in which it is produced, marketed, and consumed. This is an attempt to share contemporary views on how the contemporary notions of authenticity are derived, interpreted, applied, processed, and legitimized in local and global contexts. Given the scholarly progress in this field, it is surprising that academic dialogue on authentication of heritage is still meager. In summary, the take away points from this chapter are that negotiated positions are noted in both heritage tourism supply and demand environments. It is posited that negotiated authenticity can offer a strategic pathway to support smart resilient authentication processes that are premised on ethical production and consumption of heritage. By striving to be smart, institutions show willingness to embrace Internet Communication Technology (ICT). A critical discourse of digitalization and digital authentication of authenticity remains an unexplored area of study. Technology today is not just an interface; rather it has played a phenomenal role in shaping the supply side of heritage tourism (Chhabra 2015). The contemporary digital era has produced a radical shift in the manner heritage offerings are developed, promoted, and communicated. More specifically, it has influenced the manner in which authenticity is showcased and interpreted by heritage tourism suppliers. A critical discourse of digitalization and digital authentication of authenticity remains an unexplored area of study.

In closing, situating the authenticity and authentication debate in the context of the current pandemic (COVID-19) is a complex task. The coronavirus pandemic has interrupted the entire socioeconomic structures across the globe and has deeply impacted the travel and tourism industry (Gossling, Hall, & Scott 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles 2020). COVID-19 has presented an unparallel catastrophe to the tourism sector, especially because of travel embargos, border shutdowns, and quarantine regulations. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is coordinating closely with the World Health Organization (WHO), its Member States, and tourism industry. Many World Heritage Sites across the globe have closed their doors, halting intangible cultural heritage performances, which has produced socioeconomic outcomes for host communities. The cultural heritage tourism sector holds tremendous potential to contribute in terms of recovery and reformation efforts. Recent studies have brought several suggestions to the table such as promotion of degrowth strategies, strengthening local supply chains, and promotion of local products (Gills 2020; Gossling, Hall, & Scott 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles 2020; Ranasinghe et al. 2020). It is hoped that the new social order will unfold “new forms of collective human consciousness; a new type of global social covenant; new forms of appropriate technology; and new forms of appropriate lifestyle” (Gills 2020, p. 579). The novel transcending routes should be centered on the long-term well-being and resilience of tourists, hosts, and the complete heritage tourism system.

In the following chapters, I will deliberate on questions such as: What it means to offer or have an authentic experience today? What shape will authenticity take when people start traveling tomorrow or in some countries where travel has commenced? It is likely that authenticity will take new meanings as reformatory cultural travel pathways are planned in the foreseeable future.

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