Is This the Real Deal?
*Authenticity for a True Heritage Experience*
Abstract

This paper aims to explore and understand how locals and tourists perceive authenticity on a truly authentic heritage site. The empirical study was conducted with a sample of Scandinavians and South Africans that had or had not visited the heritage site in Cape Town, Republic of South Africa. The result indicated a correlation between authenticity and heritage experience. The most interesting finding was however when heritage was positioned somewhere else but the individuals' home countries. These findings provide insight into the ways tourists and locals perceive authenticity and the demand for heritage tourism and true authenticity, which highlights the importance of authenticity in tourism destinations.

Keywords

Authenticity, Experience, Heritage, Robben Island, Tourism, Travel
Acknowledgments

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Annie Jakobsson, Kalmar 11.01.2021
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Chapter One:
Heritage & Authenticity

Why did I question authentic heritage?

Why would I, like so many others, get on that horrific boat that takes many curious travelers from point A to point B (and makes us all seasick), who search for an authentic feeling associated with visiting a heritage site or participating in historical events? The most challenging transport of all time (Yes, I am being dramatic, and I am probably exaggerating, but the more I think about it, the worse it gets. With that said, it was truly awful) took us from the Waterfront of Cape Town, The Republic of South Africa to Robben Island to experience a part of the South African history which my friend and I saw as a 'must-do' when in Cape Town. For us, it was truly interesting (when I did not dose off from my seasickness) and we got to see the cell where Nelson Mandela was kept for many years. The tour guide was an old prisoner and made the whole experience feel even more real than we had ever hoped for and as the group was taken around the island. Looking at the prison, in which so many people were kept, it was difficult not to think about what an awful life (definitely worse than my boat ride) the prisoners had for so many years whether they deserved to be in prison or even worse, the ones who did not.

After the trip I spoke to my local friends, none of them had visited Robben Island and they saw it as a typical tourist attraction. They did not understand why I wanted that experience in the first place. I was shocked because I saw it as an important part of their heritage and something important to experience, but now when I am thinking back, I cannot help but wonder, was that even the real deal?
1.1 Experiencing Heritage

Heritage tourism is one of the oldest ways to travel and one of the most notable and widespread types of tourism. Heritage tourism refers to tourists who travel to experience historic places of cultural importance and is typically falling into the same category as cultural tourism (Towner 1996). The meaning of heritage is socially produced, and thus constantly negotiated (Park 2014; Williams 2009). In the tourism context, heritage can be broadly defined as ‘the present-day use of the past’ as heritage includes both intangible and tangible elements of the cultural landscape (Ashworth 2003; Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000; Timothy & Boyd 2006). Tangible heritage refers to movable cultural heritage (paintings, sculptures, coins, and manuscripts), immovable cultural heritage (monuments, archaeological sites, and so on), and underwater cultural heritage (shipwrecks, underwater ruins, and cities). Whilst, intangible cultural heritage is about oral traditions, performing arts, and rituals (UNESCO 2017).

Experiencing heritage has become one of the top motivations to travel. The heritage tourists seek to experience the lifestyle of residents, local arts, and historical events at the destination as they increasingly desire both unique and authentic experiences. This idea of the ‘the real’ experiences when on holiday is usually contrasted with everyday life experiences (Park, Choi & Lee 2019). Park, Choi and Lee (2019) suggested a few factors contributing to the increased demand for heritage tourism;

(i) increased heritage awareness, (ii) an ability to, through the awareness of historical environments or staged history express individuality, (iii) access to the arts, more leisure time, mobility and greater affluence, (iv) the need to better modern experiences to compensate for insufficiencies and demands; and/or (v) to meet psychological needs to show gratitude of personal family history

(Park, Choi & Lee 2019:100).
This, however, ironically makes heritage tourism a major driver for the commodification of the past (Ashworth 2003; Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000; Timothy & Boyd 2006; Waitt 2000). Depending on the context and time, the meaning of heritage varies as heritage is a flexible concept that has been applied in tourism development with success (Park 2014; Williams 2009). Park (2014) expresses the growing demand for heritage as something that has become “a raw material that authenticates and fabricates the past and present for touristic consumption.” (7).

Experiences, during travels, are intangible and they cannot be stored as physical items or objects (Sundbo & Sørensen 2013). Indeed, for Sundbo and Sørensen (2013) an experience “happens in peoples' minds, it is determined by external stimuli and elaborated via the mental awareness that people have from earlier motivational experiences, mental needs, and personal strategies. “Experience can be released by stimuli that affect all the senses” (Sundbo & Sørensen 2013: 2). Tourists may desire authentic experiences but are often fooled by the heritage site into believing that what they experience there is authentic (Timothy & Boyd 2006). Heritage tourism increasingly relies on “fairy tales as facts and replicas as reality” (Timothy & Boyd 2003: 239). This all results in the increasing dependence of heritage destinations on perceptions of authenticity of tourists' experience rather than the actual one (Timothy & Boyd 2006).

1.2 Robben Island

Robben Island is located about 12 km outside of Cape Town and became a prison island for rebellious sailors in the 15th century (Boehme 2005). The island came to serve its true purpose between the 17th and 20th centuries as a prison, a hospital for socially unacceptable groups, and a military base. Robben Island provided maximum security for political prisoners during the Apartheid and those imprisoned for fighting against Apartheid and racism and for democracy. Robben Island became a national museum in 1997 and a World heritage reserve in 1999 (Jungle Corner 2015A). The well-preserved island and prison have made the Robben Island Prison Tour unique as it can teach and show others the impact
apartheid and the prison had on South African history. The Robben Island prison is where the South Africans former president Nelson Mandela was held for 27 years (along with many other political prisoners). Nelson Mandela would, after his time in prison, become one of the most important characters in South African history, the man who succeeded to end the apartheid and take the country on the path towards country democracy and freedom (Boehme 2005).

1.3 Problematization

The notion of authenticity in heritage tourism is a pivotal issue studied by many prominent scholars, who have argued that tourists travel in a constant search for authentic experiences (e.g., MacCannell 1976; Urry 1995; Wang 1999). Scholars generally agree that only those experiences that are thought of as authentic can be ‘termed’ meaningful tourism experiences (Chen & Rahman 2018; Hargrove 2014; Pine & Gilmore 2011).

MacCannell (1973) was one of the first to adopt the authenticity perspective to understand tourists’ travel experience at heritage sites. Importantly, however, he saw authenticity as a tangible quality found in an object, which is argued to be true due to tourism objects often being related to authenticity through tourism sites, attractions, and experiences (MacCannell 1999; Rickly-Boyd 2012). Yet, tourism experience is an individual phenomenon that requires a physical body to receive it and understand the nature of tourism (Li 2000; UNWTO 2020). Therefore, the authenticity of tourist experience can be perceived in different ways, influenced by a diversity of backgrounds, values, attitudes, and beliefs brought to the site of the experience (Chen & Rahman 2018; Wang 1999). The experience of authenticity also differs depending on whom you ask and in what situation. Some discuss that an authentic experience provokes nostalgia and romanticism whilst others argue that one can find the authentic experience even in a shopping mall (Sundbo & Sørensen 2013).

Importantly, tourism scholars noted that tourists’ desires for real experiences can be fulfilled through inauthentic heritage, as replicas are often felt as truly authentic
A. Jakobsson

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(Timothy & Boyd 2003). Timothy and Boyd (2003 see Timothy & Boyd, 2006:5-6) “categorized inauthentic heritage (distorted pasts) as invented places, relative authenticity, ethnic intruders, and sanitized and idealized pasts. Invented pasts are epitomized in the creation of places and events that never existed, the presentation of replicas of historic sites and objects and unreal accounts of history”. Timothy and Boyd (2006) suggested that because of different inauthentic destinations presenting the possibility to see the burial site of Alice in Wonderland and the 'actual scene' where Peter Rabbit ate McGregor's vegetables, many popular heritage destinations fall within this category of inauthentic heritage.

Arguably, engaging with the culture fosters authentic touristic experiences. Such authentic-, and immersive experience requires active community participation and engagement in a cultural tourism setting (Hargrove 2014; Prentice 2001). In the immersive experiences, residents are the ones who will deliver the authentic feeling of their industries through cultural interactions with artists and business managers, and staff (Hargrove 2014; Tung & Ritchie 2011). However, vast research was dedicated to the notion of authenticity in tourism and highlights authentic perceptions of inauthentic experiences. In this perspective, attention goes to the authenticity of the tourism experience that is produced by inauthentic objects that imitate the original arrangements (Wang 1999). This significant tourism phenomenon requires further consideration and support in different cases. Thus, this thesis project focused on the case of the Robben Island Prison Tour as an example of total authenticity, which UNESCO (2020) named ‘Robben Island’. By studying Robben Island through the lens of authentic experience theory, the findings on what provided the feeling of authenticity will be presented.

1.4 Purpose

Much of the argument in the literature focuses on the perceived authenticity in heritage tourism experience (e.g., Hargrove 2014; Tung & Ritchie 2011; Urry 1995; Wang 1999). The study at hand follows this line of research. By investigating tourists’ experiences at the Robben Island UNESCO heritage site, this study seeks to gain a better understanding of what makes the experience of heritage sites an
authentic one. To this end, I examine the perceived authenticity of the Robben Island experience through the lens of three Scandinavian visitors and three residents of which two refuses to visit the island. To examine the results from the focus group further, two interviews were held with one visitor and one resident to validate the findings.

The question this study seeks to answer is ‘How is authenticity perceived on the Robben Island Prison Tour?’

1.5 Demarcation
This project has several limitations. The boundaries of this study come with a shorter timeframe to reach a result worthy to publish. Examining authenticity, which is a complex subject, takes time and I have just touched the surface of what could be learned about the Robben Island UNESCO heritage site. The study proceeded by researching theories and previous literature with the support from one focus group of six participants to prove validation and reliability of the study. The demarcation of this study came down to three South Africans, and three Scandinavians who provided information that led to a result presented in the thesis.

1.6 Disposition
The disposition of this thesis is designed so that the reader can build on the knowledge of concepts presented in each chapter to advance their understanding of authentic experiences in heritage tourism. The thesis opens with a light introduction in the first chapter, explaining the background to this study and then to explain the concept of experiencing heritage before discussing the problematization of authenticity. The second chapter, the theory chapter, guides one through the concept of heritage and further moves over to authenticity and experience which lays a foundation for the focus of the theory which is Wang’s (1999) framework. In chapter three, the methodology of the research is presented for the reader to understand how the research was executed to later in chapter four, get the result of the theory along with the data collected from the focus group before concluding the thesis in chapter five.
Chapter Two:  
A Study on Heritage-Tourism, and Experience

There is a constant search for the past and demand for authentic experiences when exploring heritage sites. Maybe you, just as I, searched for authenticity and heritage tourism when traveling but rarely consider those attractions in my hometown. The demand for authenticity is, at least for me, more exciting and thrilling when traveling. Getting that feeling of a culture that is not your own does something to your brain, and whether it is indeed authentic or not, people demand it.

Authenticity is one of the key concepts explored by several tourism scholars. This theory chapter will provide you with the knowledge I gained from the research without taking the ferry over to Robben Island (or dose of from seasickness on the tour bus). This research on authenticity will provide you with some scholars' thoughts and theories on authenticity, which will later be explored further by defining three types of authenticity based on Wang's (1999) framework. This particular approach is relevant for this study since it has become one of the most significant perspectives on tourism authenticity. By presenting this framework, the variety of perspectives becomes clearer. However, it is essential to understand that the notions of authenticity often depend on the context in which the experience occurs.

2.1 Heritage

Wright (2009) argued that the developed capitalist and industrial societies were future-oriented and evolved around progress, whilst the pre-capitalist society saw stability in the past-oriented which they cherished. The growing concern over the disconnection from the past affects people's sense of security and identity, making it inevitable for people to develop a longing for the past when being in the middle of turbulence and change. They see the past as a sense of security and belonging. Heritage becomes like an island of security, which people can latch onto when in a crisis (Park 2014). Consequently, nostalgia plays a crucial role in the increasing
appeal of cultural heritage. As the contributing factor to the feeling of dissatisfaction in everyday life, "nostalgia implies a sense of homesickness and sentimental yearning for the past" (Park 2014:8). Horne said:

Why would tourists be seeking the past? Why should the past have any particular resonance?... Throughout the age of industrialism, there has been nervousness in finding valid expressions of modernity. The tourist experience, with its seeking for an authentic (and well researched) past, has been part of the same crisis in reality that has produced so much scholarship, so much sociology and so many experiments in art forms… Uneasiness with the present was so great that… the past was nostalgically plundered to provide a modern sense of dignity and meaning.

(Horne 1984 see Park 2014:8)

Tourists seeking heritage are looking to explore both tangible and intangible aspects of the past (Park 2014). The outcome of the past in heritage is not fixed or static, but instead presented and interpreted in the context of tourism. Heritage is continuously reinterpreted and reconstructed to reflect the modern world's socio-cultural changes and meet the tourist's expectations and demands. Thus, heritage and tourism are intricate, complicated, and symbiotic (MacCannell 1973; Park 2014). Park (2014) pointed out that it must be understood that heritage is a flexible and manipulable concept. It remains open to multiple negotiations and interpretations as "the present-centered nature of heritage is deeply associated with an increasing contemporary use of the past" (1), which is a heritage industry that is manifested in popularity.
Heritage is a powerful word on its own, for it is at once extraordinarily suggestive and ideologically charged, but simultaneously vague enough to be applied to nearly everything across any space and time. It is a word whose significance changes with its myriad invocations, designations, or legislations. Depending on its usage, heritage can determine personal property, explicate unknown qualities, foster patriotism among disparate peoples, become a tourist destination, exacerbate geopolitical tension, or call for help in the form of preservation, among other usages.

Di Giovine (2009:91)

The quote from Di Giovines (2009) points out the difficulties and complexities in contextualizing and conceptualizing heritage. When there is a new era with an obsession with the past (Park 2014), then heritage means "anything you want" (Hewison 1987:32). In modern times, there is a broader scope of heritage with meanings ranging from historical and cultural significances, intellectual and spiritual meanings to communications and political implications, making the concept of heritage fleeting and vague in a constant fluctuation (Park 2014).

2.2 Authenticity and Experience

Chen and Rahman (2018) argued that an experience needs to be authentic to be considered an experience. However, that is not always agreed. Hargrove (2014), and Tung and Ritchie (2011) presented language and interactions as a part of the authentic experience. They argued that for an authentic experience, the residents at a tourist destination must show an active involvement and be trained in the hospitality industry to deliver a high-quality experience where the performance leads to a memorable experience (Hargrove 2014; Tung & Ritchie 2011). This would mean that even though the experience is presumed to be authentic, it is the performers’ involvement and training that make the inauthentic experience authentic. Further, leading to the hospitality industry and heritage performances not always being genuine.
The experience of authenticity or lack of it, is relative depending on each tourist and their definition, making the phenomenon of authenticity more complex (MacCannell 1973; Wang 1999). Authenticity is no longer presumed to be inherent in an object but rather based on the tourist's perception, experience, and interpretation of authenticity (Wang 1999). For it to be an authentic experience, Prentice (2001); and Hargrove (2014) suggests that the tourist experience should relate to the culture through committed community participation, to provide an authentic experience as an alternative to seeing authenticity in the object or performance itself.

2.2.1 Living History

Tourism scholars have extensively discussed the connection between authenticity and experience (e.g., MacCannell 1973; Rickly-Boyd 2012; Wang 1999). The main discussion has revolved around the essentialism and the constructivism perspectives. For instance, it has been debated whether the authenticity reflects an accurate image of the past (essentialism), or it is subjected to new inputs and influences (constructivism) (Ram, Björk & Weidenfeld 2015).

The term 'authentic' often describes objects as original, reliable, real, and prototypical, in contrast to being reproduced, copied, or created the same way as an original (Ram et al., 2015). Objective authenticity is based on originality and the genuineness of objects and sites verified by experts (Kolar & Zabkar 2010). As such, living history is "the simulation of life in another time." (Anderson 1985 see Handler & Saxton, 1988: 242). Anderson (1985) aimed to document both a living-history movement and legitimate living history as a scholarly subdiscipline. Authenticity means historical accuracy for living-history practitioners, and under the term living history, Anderson (1985) grouped museums, archology, and re-enactment as three types of historical simulations.

In contrast, Handler and Saxton (1988) refer to an authentic piece of living history as a particular scene, event, or place that is an exact simulation or recreation of the past. These simulations or recreations are created to make the past come to life.
employing history in an authentic setting. For example, personages such as battlefields or historic houses that use authentic props in originals or replicas make authenticity a dominant value in living history.

Museum-linked usage is the main form of living-history that has been extended to the tourism sector (Wang 1999). Sharpley (1994) described such products of tourism to be "works of art, festivals, rituals, cuisine, dress, housing, and so on are usually described as authentic or inauthentic in terms of the criterion of whether they are made or enacted by local people according to custom or tradition" (130). Sharpley (1994) further described it as such that authenticity in that sense connoted traditional culture and origin, and that those aspects should provide a sense of the genuine, the real, and the unique (Handler & Saxton 1988; Sharpley 1994).

The museum-linked usage of authenticity in tourism simplifies that complexity in the tourism experience by separating authenticity as two different issues (Handler & Saxton 1988; Wang 1999). The two issues speak of the tourist experience and the toured object. These issues are diverse due to their authenticity, the tourist experience is naturally authentic and provides an individual with the feeling that one is in touch with both the real world and the individual self, whilst the toured object is staged and usually irrelevant to the authenticity (Wang 1999).

Cohen (1988) proposed that authenticity is negotiable. As the cultural product or trait has been judged as artificial or inauthentic at some stage, they evolve and generally become to be recognized as authentic with time. Tourism scholars have also discussed that authentic experience relies on the tourist's experiences of toured objects, specifically whether they perceive those objects as a sign or symbol of authenticity (Culler 1981). Reality and symbolic authenticity have a remote connection, and often, the authenticity is determined by a projection on one's beliefs and certain stereotypes created by mass media and media marketing (Britton 1979; Silver 1993). With the proposition that authenticity is negotiable and can be recognized as authentic even when not (Cohen 1988), Pine and Gilmore (2011)
presented the concept of mass customization to provide tourists with authentic experiences and the authentic experience that the tourists are looking for.

2.2.2 Mass Customization

Pine & Gilmore (2011) believe that an authentic experience's offerings should be more mass customizes not to produce more but to produce only and precisely what the individual customer wants. Producing the desired product would automatically turn the service of that product into an experience, as the goods of that production automatically turn into a service. Mossberg (2003) suggested that one can accept and appreciate artificial stimuli if one knows it is fake. It is not expected for the locals to wear outdated national costumes to provide authenticity and provoke an experience.

The experience economy is not focusing on merely producing more physical goods but rather on being more innovative (Loureiro 2014). By designing engaging events, or even to use the service as a stage, and goods as props, it is possible to engage the individual customer which will create experiences and memories in that specific event (Loureiro 2014). Mass customization creates new values, and the customer will unknowingly sacrifice authenticity as they show what they want if they settle for the mass customization. The customization creates experience but reduces authenticity during the trip (Pine & Gilmore 2011). Therefore, it is discussed that the stimuli can be provoked whether the experience is authentic or not (Sunbo & Sørensen 2013).

2.2.3 Meaningful Heritage Experience

In contribution to a long-standing concern in philosophy and ethics about the authenticity of experience and emotions, Waitt (2000) noted that the notion of authenticity in tourism is historical, cultural, or connected to the past, contributing to the desire for authenticity remains one of the main factors motivating heritage tourists (Ka Leong 2016; Lu, Chi & Liu 2015; Poria, Butler & Airey 2001). The act
of tourism offers a complex experience, and people travel to create memories and emotions related to the destination (Li 2000; Noy 2007).

A prominent scholar, MacCannell (1973), was one of the first to adopt the sociological perspective on authenticity to understand why people travel to historical and cultural sites and the perceived tourist travel experience at those sites. Authenticity is a tangible quality found in an object, this has been seen in tourism objects related to authenticity through tourism sites, attractions, and experiences (MacCannell 1999; Rickly-Boyd 2012).

This form of travel entails visits to sites of historical importance, including built environments and urban areas, ancient monuments and dwellings, rural and agricultural landscapes, locations where historic events occurred, and places where interesting and significant cultures stand out (Timothy & Boyd 2006:2).

Authenticity is an essential element of meaningful heritage tourism and meaningful experiences (Hargrove 2002). Authenticity increases the tourist's perceived value and satisfaction significantly. It is suggested that the heritage tourism satisfaction is not based on the real sense of authenticity but rather on the perception of the tourist's thoughts on authenticity (Chen & Chen 2010; Chhabra, Healy & Sills 2003). For the overall assessment of the destination and the perception of authenticity to generate a positive destination image. Therefore, authenticity becomes a crucial factor as it has an influence/effect on the overall evaluation of the destination and the perception of authenticity generates a positive destination image among visitors (Frost 2006; Naoi 2004).

In 1979, MacCannell introduced the concept of *staged authenticity* in the concept of ethnic tourism. To produce and offer an appealing package, the hosts put their culture on sale, including their hosts. MacCannell (1979) pointed out that, “to the degree that this packaging alters the nature of the product, the authenticity sought
by the visitor becomes ‘staged authenticity’ provided by the touree (host)“ (596). He referred to the tourist who becomes victims of staged authenticity, and in response, they seek to find originals. In contrast, Crick (1989) suggested that since “cultures are invented, remade and the elements reorganized” (65) they are all staged and therefore inauthentic in some sense. Cohen (1988) spoke of emergent authenticity to describe the evolutionary process of the remake and reorganized cultures. He proposed that authenticity is negotiable as the cultural product or trait has at some stage been judged as artificial or inauthentic, generally become to be recognized as authentic over time.

2.2.4 Staged Authenticity and Touristic Performance

Performance authenticity in tourism is achieved when the performance and the projection of living history run parallel. The tourist's satisfaction of authenticity occurs when one is affected/touched by the performance, and the perception of the real world and the real self are in harmony. (Handler and Saxton, 1998; Daniel, 1996). Artistic forms in tourism are often representative of products that are more commonly used more “authentic” or “Genuine”, outside of tourism settings (Daniel 1996:782). Daniel (1996) wrote about the issues that come with artistic forms in tourism, where the one issue mentioned was the consideration of what is authentic? Daniels’ (1996) describes authenticity in various art products where the authentic revolves around replicating or anonymous authorship and skills. Authenticity is also related to functional items from one society (ornamentation, entertainment, or contemplation); however, a sense of boundary is included among varying sets of regulations, rules, or conventions.

Handler and Saxton (1988) argued that there are two kinds of “authentic” where the first applies to visual arts being an external judgment by the spectator. Here authenticity is often based on collectors’ tastes, naming, and categorization of genres and styles (Kasfir 1992). The second kind of authenticity relates to performing arts being a circumstance of living history in an experiential authenticity (Handler & Saxton, 1988). Handler and Saxton (1988) note that the
experiential authenticity concerns simulations replicating the past. It pertains to define the degree of a similarity where one can see a structural form between the recreation of a living history activity or event. From both the performer and the viewer perspectives in the tourism settings, authenticity aims for historical, geographical, and cultural accuracy. This usually includes movement materials that are, sequences, gestures, and/or rhythmic motifs that have been identified with a particular movement or social group of which has been arranged to some extent (even in improvisational performances). These movement sequences have often been passed down from previous generations and are now a structural form of staged authenticity (Daniel 1996; Handler & Saxton 1998).

Handler and Saxton (1988) combined the thoughts and feelings of the participants/actors with a particular site during specific events of performance of living history projects, a type of staged authenticity (MacCannell 1973), which over time was given rise as "magic moments" during those times when there was an experience of the past in the present reality. When actively demonstrating the past, the past becomes "really real" (Handler & Saxton 1988: 245-247). Later, Wang (1999) and de Bernardi (2019) noted this, who referred to tourists dancing the rumba in Cuba. Namely, whether the dance is re-enacted as close to the traditional version as possible would not matter, as the tourists find 'an alternative source of authenticity' in the dance.

However, Selwing (1996) went one step further and explained how the authenticity of experiences relates to as knowledge (also discussed in MacCannell 1973) and to relate the experience of a "real" self to authenticity as a feeling. Further, Wang (1999) thought it was incorrect to propose that the emotional experience of the "real" self has a relation with the epistemological experience of the "real" world, with the argument that the latter would, in that case, influence the former. The importance of differentiation was made clear by the influential framework by Wang (1999), who argued that the differentiations are crucial to introduce alternative sources of authentic experiences. Because of the complex nature of authenticity,
Wang (1999) further made distinctions and classified three distinctions as *objective*, *constructive* and *existential* authenticity.

### 2.3 Wang’s (1999) framework of authenticity

Wang's (1999) framework on authenticity has through a genealogical meta-analysis mapped out conceptual developments of authenticity over 1964-97. It concludes three classifications of authenticity and their differences in theoretical approaches toward authenticity in tourism studies (Table 1). Wang's (1999) framework organizes and explains the three conceptions of authenticity: *objectivist*, *subjectivist*, and *postmodernist*. By differentiating the three classifications, Wang (1999) simplified the complex phenomenon by illustrating three types of authenticity and how they interlink.

**Table 1: Three definitions of authenticity (Wang 1999:352)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object Related Authenticity</th>
<th>Activity Related Authenticity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correspondingly authentic experiences in tourism are equated to an epistemological experience (i.e cognition) of the authenticity of originals.</td>
<td>Existential authenticity refers to a potential existential state of Being that is so activated by tourist activities. Correspondingly, authentic experiences in tourism are to achieve this activated existential state of Being within the liminal process of tourism. Existential authenticity can have nothing to do with the authenticity of toured objects.</td>
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**Constructive authenticity** refers to the authenticity projected onto toured objects by tourists or tourism producers in terms of their imagery, expectations, preferences, beliefs, powers, to name a few. There are various versions of authenticities regarding the same objects.
2.3.1 Object-Related Authenticity

Object-related authenticity relates to how tourists perceive objects. In a museum, the linked usage of authenticity involves the toured objects of the originals that follow. The authentic experience is caused by the recognition of the toured objects as authentic. To measure authenticity there is an absolute and objective criterion that is considered. The tourists might believe that they have experienced genuine authenticity but, that particular experience can be as the experience is based on inauthentic, toured objects that are false, contrived, or staged (Wang 1999).

Boorstin (1964) was the first scholar to openly condemned mass tourism as pseudo-events. Boorstin (1964) noted that "if the tourist cannot find a story, then he must make one" (253). He proposed the notion of pseudo-events, which refers to the modern tourist who seeks out inauthentic experiences (Boorstin 1964). He suggested that tourists are rarely able to see through inauthenticity in artificial attractions. Therefore, Boorstin's (1964) concept of pseudo-events suggests an objective authenticity, the authenticity of the original, and the tourist experiences. The homogenization and standardization of tourist experiences were brought upon by the commoditization of modern western cultures: the tourist attractions that manufacture scenes or pseudo-events, and the tourists who do not necessarily like the authentic product of foreign culture but rather prefer one's regional expectations (Boorstin 1964; Wang 1999).

Whilst Boorstin (1964) mocks mass tourism and tourists, MacCannell (1973) re-establish the holiness and quasi-pilgrimage significance of the motivation with the argument that "concern of moderns for the shallowness of their lives and inauthenticity of their experiences parallels concerns for the sacred in primitive society" (MacCannell 1973:589-90). Thus, it would be justified for tourists who are seeking the authenticity of an experience. Nevertheless, MacCannell (1973) used authenticity from two perspectives: authenticity as a feeling and authenticity as knowledge. He suggests an increasing disagreement between the demand for authenticity and the staged authenticity in tourist space. He points out that the
search for authenticity of an experience is involved in tourism and the tourists' concern with the state of authentic feeling in an authentic experience. However, when MacCannell (1973) spoke of *staged authenticity*. He argued that due to the experience not being authentic, neither is their personal experience, no matter if the tourist believes so themselves as the tourist who seeks authenticity of originals becomes a victim of *staged authenticity* (MacCannell 1973; Wang 1999).

In the case of *pseudo-events* or *staged authenticity*, Boorstin (1964) and MacCannell (1973) insist on a museum-linked and objectivist conception of authenticity. The touristic search for authentic experience has a broader spectrum than just being black and white; it is more than an epistemological experience of toured objects which are believed to be authentic. Authenticity is rich in ambiguous colors but is still criticized as being inauthentic or staged by others who are experienced as authentic and real from an emic perspective. The tourists experience authenticity in the same way (Wang 1999).

The concept of the *objectivist paradigm* has been used after Wang (1999) in different situations. For example, Apostolakis (2003) wrote that “the concept of authenticity is a pivotal significance in heritage tourism settings” with the argument that authenticity is the attribute that brings the two components, tourism, and attraction together. Apostolakis (2003) was researching this subject to combine the demand and supply paradigms of heritage tourism, which was achieved by partly use Wang’s (1999) framework and use and ideas from the objective approach where he referred to Wang’s (1999) argument that the concept can be separated into two separate issues, the *tourist experience*, and the *toured objects* and later on used Wang (1999) as a contributing scholar to support the facts about the *post-Fordist* paradigm as of its involvement in changing significant of heritage tourism, and how putting authenticity to perspective, tourists can use their intellect to interpret authenticity as they want, closer to their standards and understandings (Apostolakis 2003).
However, *objectivism* has not always been applied because of how it works but rather has been criticized due to its approach. However, Martin (2010) critiqued the critics as he wrote about Wang (1999) and *objectivism* in his article *Living Pasts, Contested Tourism Authenticities*. The article aimed to understand the previous critique of the concept of authenticity and its effect on silencing claims and counterclaims in tourist performance of authenticity amongst host communities. Martin (2010) argued that critiques falsely claimed inauthenticity was "an objectively measurable ideal condition of authenticity, a state of grace from which the commodified native" (Martin 2010:539).

In contrast, he found it useful that the framework distinguishes the three approaches of authenticity: *objectivism, constructivism*. Martin (2010), however, agreed with the suspicion of postmodern critiques, who claimed that authenticity is a question of a certain quality or a set of qualities that are inherent to the object under scrutiny, such as a "flint ax head in a museum display case or a culture that is being performed" (Martin 2010:549).

The concept of *object authenticity* became the predominant approach in the late '80s and forward. However, its critiques rejected the concept of authenticity due to the conspiracy that authenticity itself had to be denounced (Martin 2010). After the '80s, the critiques were predominantly relying on the socially *constructive* critique, which was also an equally possible response to *object authenticity*. By considering the variety of ways authenticity can be measured, the *Constructivist* approach turns authenticity into a question regarding different social positions and how social relations are differently valued in those terms (Martin 2010). As Bruner observes; "No longer is authenticity a property inherent in an object, forever fixed in time; it is seen as a struggle, a social process, in which competing interests argue for their interpretation of history' (Bruner 1994 see Wang 1999:354).

### 2.3.2 Constructive Authenticity

_In the constructivist view, authenticity_ is a social construction. It is not a measurable quality of an object (Wang 1999). The appeared authenticity is based on the tourist's
points of view, beliefs, perspectives, and powers rather than the object's inherent authenticity. Therefore, the authenticity is relative and depends on each tourist. It can be negotiable, contextually determined, and even ideological. The expectations, dreams, or stereotypes can project onto the toured objects and one's experience and therefore differ from others (Wang 1999).

Several scholars viewed authenticity as a socially constructive phenomenon (e.g., Burner 1994; Cohen 1988; Hobsbawn & Ranger 1983). Several characteristics can distinguish the constructive view of authenticity. Burner (1994) believed that no one is born into the beginning of culture but rather in the middle. He saw the culture being something always in progress and relying on the past and absent. Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) were some of the first to use construction and invention notions. Their approach to the invention of traditions is the social process: origins or traditions are formed in terms of need of the present, traditions based on tourists' demand could be created whether the traditions were a part of history or invented without any roots in history. Burner (1994) argued that when inventing traditions, the inherent authenticity in objects will disappear and forever be fixed in times as those authentic objects competing against the produced objects which do not possess their interpretation of history.

On the other side of the spectrum, the perspectives, and interpretations of how one sees things, determines whether their experience is authentic or inauthentic. In other words, each tourist has ones' background and interpretation of authenticity (Littrell, Anderson & Brown 1993; Pearce & Moscardo 1985,1986; Redfoot 1984; Wang 1999), leading to stereotyped images and expectations on authenticity. In their adventures, tourists seek to experience something authentic even when it is just a fragment of someone’s imagination (Adams 1984; Bruner 1991; Duncan 1978; Laxson 1991; Silver 1993) and can do so, for example, through a touristic performance. This means that if toured objects (or invented traditions) are experienced as authenticity by conventional tourists, then their experience should be termed as authentic for them (Cohen 1998).
MacCannell's (1973) perspective that authenticity must be the original or an attribute of the original is too simple compared to his thoughts on authenticity's complexity. Therefore, MacCannell (1973) has been questioned several times by other prominent scholars (e.g., Bruner 1989; Cohen 1988; Handler & Linnekin 1984; Lanfant 1989; Spooner 1986; Wood 1993) and Burner (1994) who indicated four different meanings to authenticity. First, the *historical verisimilitude of representation* focuses on the resembles of the reproduction of the original to look credible and convincing. Second, *authenticity means genuine*, a copy should be historically accurate, and immaculate simulation. Third, *authenticity means originals*, Burner (1994) suggested that in the third meaning no reproduction could be authentic only a copy presented in the first and second meanings. In the fourth meaning, however, replication can be authentic if *the term refers to authority or power which authorizes*. Therefore, the replication is authentic for as long as it has a certified and legally validated authenticity and approved by the government (Bruner 1994:400; Wang 1999).

Wang (1999) proposed that even though authenticity involves various meanings, restricting it to the originals is oversimplistic. This, in response, makes the devotees of constructivism treat authenticity as a social construction. *Constructivism* can be sometimes used interchangeably with *constructionism*. However, despite their similarities, *constructionism* is often used in conjunction with the social. It stresses the social or intersubjective process in creating reality and knowledge. Ones' interpretations and constructions are pluralistic and plastic; therefore, the reality is instead seen as the results of the version. "Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered in mind" (Schwandt 1994:125), the validity of knowledge is claimed not to be found in the relationship of correspondence to an independently existing world. Therefore, what seems to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of that perspective (Wang 1999).

Constructivists allow for multiple meanings of the same experience. These meanings can be constructed from different perspectives depending on specific context situations or intersubjective settings. Different people may adopt different
constructive meanings. This generalization of a constructive perspective has been applied to authenticity by several, (e.g., Bruner 1994; Cohen 1988; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983).

Zatori, Smith and Puczko (2018) used Wang's (1999) framework to present some aspects of the provider's effect on tourist experience and to frame the questionnaire used for the empiricism. They applied the questionnaire to the measurement of constructive and existential authenticity. However, as authenticity tends to be measured with qualitative rather than quantitative tools, it was not suitable for measuring objective authenticity.

Constructive and existential authenticity are indications or types of perceived tourism (Zatori, Smith & Puczko 2018) and therefore implemented Wang's (1999) definition of constructive and existential authenticity. In response to constructive authenticity (Wang (1999) defined it as a symbolic manner reflecting a personal evaluation), Zatori, Smith and Puczko (2018) said that constructive authenticity should be measured through indicators: 'Most of the sights seemed authentic (genuine)', 'The tour was a good reflection of local life and culture', 'My experience seemed to be authentic'" (Zatori, Smith and Puczko 2018:115).

de Bernardi (2019) looked into the case of the Sámi, in which he explored "the critical realist conceptualization of authenticity". de Bernardi (2019) referred to one of Wang's (1999) suggestions that conceptualization of existential authenticity is where the problem lies in the definition of authenticity. de Bernardi (2019) took two approaches in his research: a constructive and existential approach based on Wang's (1999) framework. de Bernardi (2019) wrote that authenticity is a layered concept that depends on a group and the relation of a subject, and therefore saw the constructive approach as something socially constructed in authenticity, like through a photograph. Wang (1999) noted that the discussion includes the conceptualization of authenticity as experienced authenticity by the tourist, but inauthentic from a research view. Zhou et.al., (2018) who studied negative authenticity through the constructivist viewpoint that it is “the true but unacceptable
part of the destination” (60) explained that some parts of heritage are selectively forgotten and ignored, such as poverty, and that authenticity is only assigned when considered appropriate (de Bernardi 2019).

The constructivist viewpoint has been studied by others and has included the construction of identity and performance between local entrepreneurs and tourists as of performance being involved in the construction of places related to guided tours (de Bernardi 2019). Bruner’s (2001) field case about the indigenous population Maasai saw an interaction between the hosts and the guests visiting the heritage site where the performance was crucial for authenticity as it is meant to recreate folk songs for the tourists (de Bernardi 2019). Understanding the individuals’ experience is allowed by the constructivist view of authenticity (Olsen 2002) as it is a tool to understand how different people view a specific place (Lane & Waitt 2001).

2.3.3 Existential Authenticity

From the existential experience perspective (presented under activity-related authenticity), what the tourist seeks is symbolic authenticity, which will make the big distinction between the former two types of authenticity with the third (Wang, 1999). Both objective and constructive authenticities involve how and whether the toured objects are authentic, “existential experience involves personal or intersubjective feelings activated by the liminal process of tourist activities” (Wang 1999:351). In liminal experience, (the moment in-between the object and the meaning) one can feel themselves to be more authentic and freely self-expressed, not because of the toured object being authentic but instead because they are outside of their everyday life. When engaging in non-ordinary activities, existential authenticity is an addition to objective and constructive authenticity as the distinctive source of authentic experience when free from daily constraints (Wang 1999).

The discussion of relevance between existential authenticity and tourist experience has been made by several researchers as the existential authenticity signifies the
state of Being where one is true to themselves (Wang 1999). According to Heidegger (1962), there is a direct connection between asking about the meaning of being and authenticity. However, Turner and Manning (1988) criticize that view where authenticity is a thing or a social fact. They believe that authenticity is dependent on a specific mood rather than property or characteristic of actors and settings and questioned the validity of the conventional concept on tourism without further developing that statement and was therefore questioned. Hughes (1995) suggested that to recover authenticity in late modernism; one must turn on a qualified existential perspective where the authenticity is rethought.

Existential authenticity differs from object-related authenticity and has no relation to whether a toured object is real or not (Wang 1999). Existential authenticity is derived from tourists who are participating in an activity rather than being spectators; the activation makes them preoccupied with an existential state of Being, which is stimulated by certain tourist attractions. During the performance, such as dance or near-ecstatic experiences, one can find pleasure, joy, and fun as the performance becomes their entire world for a specific moment (Daniel 1996; Wang 1999). Dance can be treated as a toured object which would mean that it involves objective authenticity. Even if the dance is a re-enactment of the original dance that has turned in to tourist activity, it re-emerges as an alternate source of authenticity (MacCannell 1979)

Tourism can be associated with simpler, freer, more spontaneous, authentic, less severe, and romantic times. A lifestyle that differs from the days where the only concerns are the authentic experience, rather than the genuine authenticity of the toured objects (Wang 1999). In activity-based authenticity, the ideal of that authenticity can be characterized by either nostalgia or romanticism. Nostalgia refers to the idealization of one's life, which felt freer, more spontaneous, and purer when one was being more faithful to themselves than usual. One is nostalgic about the parts of their lives one wants to relive in tourism even when temporary, emphatic, and symbolic. Activity-based authenticity is also romantic as it accents naturalness, sentiments, and feelings. Increasing self-constraints contrasts everyday
life, and the tourists' only chores are linked to the ideal of authenticity (Wang 1999). However, it is argued that tourism is only a fantasy or illusion. The thought that travel removes all kind of constraints is debated as one still schedule, think of finance and itineraries, just in a different environment (Dann 1996). *Existential authenticity* is therefore questioned about being inaccessible illusion or fantasy. Wang (1999) suggested that even if tourism is a fantasy, it is a real one. An experience involves its constraints but is from the tourist view seen as a necessary cost to achieve - rather than being an obstacle of authentic experience.

In Zatori, Smith and Puczko’s (2018) article *Experience-involvement, memorability and authenticity: The service provider's effect on tourist experience* they presented *existential authenticity* as being experience-oriented and that sometimes, the tourists are looking for an experience that is less exciting and has fewer surprises even when 'inauthentic'. When researching individual tourists, they found that some tours offer interactions with tour guides, residents, and other tourists. These aspects of *constructive* and *existential authenticity* make the tour's authenticity performance dependent on the connection between the staff and tourists smaller than the potentially spontaneous experiences during the tour (Zatori, Smith & Puczko 2018). *Existential authenticity* was defined by Wang (1999) as a personal feeling that arises during consumption with the perception that when reaching an authentic form of being, forms the individual. Consumers can relate to experiences leading to *existential authenticity*. They can give them new meaning or self-learning that the consumer can relate to and can construct through them a new, previously unknown meaning, or to learn about the self. Zatori, Smith and Puczko (2018) measured *existential authenticity* by indicators as "'I experienced something which I could relate to', 'I learned about myself during the tour', 'I felt it contributed to my personal development'” (115). The empiric research result confirmed that the interaction from a tour guide and the interactive experience environment and customization influence affected the experience's memorability and authenticity positively (Zatori, Smith & Puczko 2018).
Chapter Three:
Implementation of The Study

In this methodology, I have put together the information needed to find the study results. Step by step, this chapter guides a reader through the research design.

3.1 Research Approach

Authenticity is personally defined, and studies show it is not related to objects or patterns but rather based on the belief that reality (Smith 2017; Wang 1999) and different observers would see the nature of that reality differently. The study approach is to find out the role authenticity plays in demand for heritage experiences (Park, Choi & Lee 2019; Smith 2017). To research the purpose of this study, I chose deductive reasoning; a theoretical category where one first studies the theory and then goes out on the field to support the theory they studied (Smith 2017). The theory was founded by researching three dimensions of authenticity presented by Wang (1999) to show different angles from which authenticity can perceive. The theory was then examined through a focus group to support the theory from the field. When doing deductive research, it is more common to collect quantitative data for the research (Bitektine 2008). However, that is not the only possibility in methodological approaches as the research findings can also be found whilst collecting qualitative data. Collecting qualitative data in a deductive theory testing has previously given many essential contributions to the field when using the unusual method (Smith 2017; Bitektine 2008). Deductive reasoning with qualitative data compares observed outcomes patterns whilst having an expected outcome derived from the theory (Bitektine 2008). For this study, the deductive approach collected information, researched through the qualitative paradigm, and then the collected qualitative data through focus groups (Smith 2017).

3.2 Informed by the theory

The theory chapter was built on pre-existing theories of authenticity (Smith 2017) and provided a review of relevant research. I started the study by getting an
overview of the different approaches used in the study of authenticity. A theory's purpose is to explain the phenomenon under study, authenticity is a complex phenomenon and consists of more than a straightforward explanation (e.g., Li 2000; MacCannell 1973; Noy 2007; Wang 1999). Thus, after researching various authenticity concepts, I chose Wang's (1999) framework that I argue works for the thesis's analysis. Wang's (1999) perspective enabled me to explore further other relevant information collected by scholars (Smith 2017) that shape the research from both the theory and the focus group to describe the connection between authenticity and heritage tourism.

3.3 Focus Group method

A focus group was hosted to understand different perceptions of authenticity domains (Wang 1999) at the Robben Island Prison Tour. Focus groups are used to collect data that one would not get from interviews (Denscombe 2014). The data collected from focus groups include comments and observations from several participants interacting with each other. The discussion can sometimes lead to disagreements or heated exchange of ideas, and this is the essence of the method above - as the conflict and contractions are harder to be detected through revealed in an in-depth interview method. This is important, and the disagreement and discussions were the aims of this research approach (Smith 2017).

3.4 In-depth Interviews

To validate results from the focus group- and possibly gain a better understanding of some results concerning the perceived authenticity of heritage tourism experience, two interviews based on the focus group's results were conducted with two of the participants. These interviews further explored and strengthened the result from the focus group discussion. Combining the focus group with individual interviews provides more depth and details on the critical aspects of heritage tourism authenticity discussed in the group interview (Morgan 1997). The in-depth interviews were conducted with a participant from a group of Scandinavian tourists and a resident participant who was asked to elaborate on several open-ended
questions on the most important subjects discussed in the focus group. This strategy arguably provided additional depth to the study as the finding from two methods can be compared and analyzed further (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins & Popjoy 1998).

3.5 Sample of Participants

The perceived authenticity of heritage tourism has been researched from a Swedish University with a focus on the Robben Island Prison Tour located in The Republic of South Africa. Therefore, I selected participants who appeared relevant to the study purpose and can compare residents and tourists. To get a broader perspective on the Robben Island Prison Tour, I invited three participants from Cape Town, South Africa of which one spent one's primary school' years in the US before moving back to Cape Town, and three participants from Scandinavia, representing Sweden and Denmark to be a part of the focus group. Further, I reflect on the experience and my thoughts on authenticity on the prison tour.

The perception of an experience is individual and dependent on previous thoughts, backgrounds, and expectations (Wang 1999). The invited participants took the Robben Island Prison Tour simultaneously and were, therefore, relevant candidates for this research. The local participants are individuals I discussed the experience with after the tour. With access to the participants' names, I send a request on Messenger and then a follow-up email with further instructions after the participants had agreed to join the focus group. The participants will be anonymous in the result but named, as participants Visitor A-C and Resident A-C, including their country of origin. Further information about the participants can be found in the appendances, chapter 7.1-3, including invitation and follow-up letters.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Transparency is recognized as a requirement for the quality of qualitative research (Hiles 2008). Transparency refers to the clarity in describing the research process, and it set out to accomplish two main things: the accessibility to decide whether the method used was appropriate; and for other researchers to redo the study and achieve a similar result (Given 2008). "When using any web-based source, you need
to be cautious about the reliability of content" (Smith 2017:53), I have therefore only collected articles published on Google Scholar, OneSearch, and ResearchGate to decrease the risk of invalid articles. The access to most articles was provided to me by my university, the student access provides the scholar with a wider variety and gives the scope needed to write the thesis. Using credible articles and scholars has given the right expectations to believe that this study is reliable with small risks of twisted information (Smith 2017). Even using empirical and subjective research, it is not 100% certain that the result is valid. However, it makes the study more valid than when only using one source (Smith 2017).

The questions were formulated to explore the relevant issues related to the tour's perceived authenticity (Bitektine 2008). I am aware that my background and the theoretical research done before the empirical research, might influence my thoughts and outlooks on the questions (Bitektine 2008; Smith 2017). However, the focus group relied on the participants' input. I took a moderator's role to supply the group with themes relevant to the study (Morgan 1997).

3.7 Processing Data and Method Analysis

'Is this the real deal?' analyses the data and observations found in the research through looking at narratives to investigate how each individual's story is linked between the experience and the research. "The narrative analysis is a genre of analytic frames whereby researchers interpret stories that are told within the context of research and/or are shared in everyday life" (Allen 2017). This type of analysis enabled me to make diverse—yet equally substantial and meaningful—interpretations and conclusions by focusing on different elements 'staging' authenticity of heritage tourism experience as my respondents perceived it. This was possible because the narrative analysis is used to understand the meanings people attach to a particular topic, in this study, authenticity. In this case, narrative analysis is used to produce a rich understanding of the participants' individual experiences surrounding the phenomenon of authenticity in heritage tourism (Smith 2017).
3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are essential to show the researcher's concerns to anyone involved in the study (Smith 2017). One ethical consideration in my role as a researcher who has a relation to the location and participants studied is to acknowledge what impact that might have. I visited Robben Island in 2017 with some of the participants in the focus group. I have interacted with the other participants in some way after that event. Having a relation to the location and the participants previously can influence my understanding and the interpretations of the results. Transparency is critical (Hiles 2008), and my acknowledgment of the issue is, therefore presented as an ethical consideration.

The focus group and interviews were voluntary, and the interaction was respectful and considering everyone (Adams 2020). Before the meetings, the participants were introduced to the subject and the research and then informed about potential risks in a deductive study, including information about protection regarding data collection and how their information would be used (Adams 2020). The participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time before, during, or after the study. They were assured to remain anonymous when I present the findings of the semi-structured questions in the focus group (Smith 2017; Adams 2020).

3.9 Limitations and Disclaimers

This study aims to understand the phenomena of authenticity and doing so with my greatest respect for the scholars who have researched the phenomena previously. The scholars whose work has been reviewed in the study have been referenced and mentioned to respect copywriting (Smith 2017). Having visited Robben Island myself might influence my interpretations of results and issues that I chose to present. On the one hand, this can be viewed as a limitation for this research. On the other hand, it can strengthen my understanding of what the study participants mean and their experiences. Being aware that

my personal experience interacts with the respondents' perceptions of the Robben Island tour, I reflect upon those experiences.
Researching authenticity within two months is like dipping your toes in the Atlantic Ocean. Time has become a constraining factor in selecting articles and works I refer to in this thesis. Not being able to further investigate the phenomenon within the given time limits generates another gap in interpreting the findings and relating them to the literature.

3.9.1 Focus Group
For this study, there was only be one focus group used to accomplish the study. By the focus group meeting, the Norwegian participant withdrew, leaving the focus group with three South African and three Scandinavian participants. The focus group was performed on Zoom’s online platform, where everyone could be seen and heard. Arranging the focus group online gives everyone attention (Denscombe 2014), but the consequences of using online platforms could impact the result. It can be not easy to keep track of who said what in a video conversation with several participants. However, with the small number of participants, there was a relaxed feeling around the participants, and everyone managed to communicate what they had to say. The focus group provided me with all the information needed to get a result for the study even if I am aware that another environment might have given a different result. Further limitations are the age group of the participants, they are all in their 20’s limiting the research to one age group.
Chapter Four:
Authenticity on Robben Island

*This chapter will discuss the empirical results in light of the theory. The focus group had six participants; three were from a Scandinavian country and three from The Republic of South Africa. Four out of six participants had done the prison tour out of which three are Scandinavians, and one is South African, the resident who had been to the island four times out of which the participant had been to the tour once. Besides the participants' answers, I will provide this result chapter with my thoughts and memories from my trip to Cape Town and the Robben Island Prison Tour.*

*By discussing the findings from the theory and the focus group, this chapter aims to provide you, readers, with a result of the study, and answer the question "how do tourists and locals perceive authenticity on the Robben Island Prison Tour?"

*Focus Group Meeting – 2020.12.22 (All Participants Anonymous)*

4.1 The heritage of Apartheid

With Apartheid ending 26 years ago in 1994 when Nelson Mandela became the president of the Republic of South Africa (Little 2020), this part of history is still a part of the residents' everyday life. The significance of Apartheid is apparent to all the residents, but the constant reminder can sometimes put a toll on them, being that one does not want a frequent reminder of the pain their ancestors caused, and sometimes being blamed for themselves. The segregation in South Africa is still apparent, and the fight against racism is an everyday struggle. The South African participants got to share their thoughts on the prison tour and Apartheid as a complement to understand the importance of Robben Island and why the residents do not want to go there.
4.1.1 Local Residents and Apartheid

Two out of three participants had not visited the prison island and had no interest to do so. Resident C (2020) is the non-visitor who spent one's primary school years in the US and therefore missed out on the learning experience and is not interested in doing the prison tour, whilst the other non-visitor felt like it was another reminder of the past not worth having (Resident B 2020). Resident A who did visit the prison, did not do so by one's own choice but went along with another Afrikaans friends' family who was going there as a field trip when the participant was 14 years old. Residents A and B (2020) reminded me that the constant reminders in Cape Town and South Africa were enough without having to go to the prison island to experience Apartheid further.

During the focus group meeting, the residents demonstrated much knowledge about this period as they say that Apartheid is, and I quote:

> ingrained in us from when you are in school.

(Resident A 2020)

Resident A and B (2020) described how they were taught about Apartheid from the age of 10 as a part of their school curriculum. During their school years, they got to learn the history behind Apartheid. Because of it being a part of their parents' lives, they would get constant reminders at home along with the monuments located around, for example, the parks in Cape Town and in the employment incentives ‘The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment’ (no further discussion as it is a political topic and not relevant for the study). Further, the reminders would come to follow Resident A to a collage in Stellenbosch where all protest happenings were founded in Apartheid, who now means that because of Apartheid being such a big part of their lives, (s)he is not starting to lose interest. Resident A and B both felt like Apartheid has been shoved at them since they were small, and Robben Island has always been there in eyesight from where they live, that they now instead focus on what is happening in the now, and the future to come.
Resident B (2020) further explained that it is not about Apartheid being uninteresting, but rather that one does not want to be constantly reminded about it. (S)he views South African history as extremely interesting and unique, but as the past is truly terrible, it is not a comfortable thing to be reminded of and would rather experience other cultures than one's own. However, Visitor B (2020) suggested that if one is interested in their own country enough, they would have wanted to visit the island even with the terrible memories due to history's importance. Zhou et.al., (2018) suggest that the withdrawal from history is a part of 'negative' authenticity and describe it as the unacceptable part of the past, that is true but selectively ignored or forgotten.

To understand whether Zhou et.al., (2018) were right in this specific case, Resident B was asked to elaborate on one's statement in a personal interview. I wondered if (s)he does not want to be reminded due to inconvenience or because of the uncomfortable thoughts it provokes, and Resident B answered:

> It is not a yes or no question; it is neither just inconvenient nor just uncomfortable; it is so much more complicated than that.

(Resident B 2021)

Resident B (2021) further explains that it is inconvenient to think about Apartheid and pointed out that one must not forget about the past. However, (s)he still sees the importance of looking forward and not blaming everything in the country's past. Resident B (2021) clarified that one must still look back and learn from their ancestor's mistakes so that Apartheid is neither repeated nor forgotten but visiting the prison on Robben Island is far from the only way to do so. The Apartheid was a part of their parents' upbringing, but the participants mean that for them it is now just history, and in modern times there are other things to think about moving forward which for now, are more important to them than the past (Resident A 2020).

When one travels to experience heritage and authenticity, Zhou et.al., (2018) suggest that it should be authentic, but not so authentic that the experience becomes
unpleasant for the participants. de Bernardi (2019) proposed that the experience needs to be pleasant for the tourists to appreciate the tour, which would mean removing the truly real, such as poverty and suffering. This suggestion is thought-provoking as I see the importance that lays in the truly real. Therefore, I elaborated on this topic in a personal interview with Visitor A and Resident B, wondering if an experience must be pleasant is something that both Visitor A (2021) and Resident B (2021) disagreed about. Visitor A (2021) proposed that when an experience is truly authentic, that is when you remember it the most. (S)he further stated that even if some things are difficult to see and grasp, it is imperative to see the 'negative' authenticity. The 'negative' authenticity provides one with a deeper understanding and fulfilled knowledge about the past (Zhou et.al., 2018). Resident B (2021) added to what Visitor A (2021) pointing out, that genuinely authentic heritage sites are fascinating, and when not pleasant, it is a good heritage site that creates long-term memories as one got to feel empathy and learn about the past.

The constant reminders of which the South African participants discussed was something that I noticed when traveling in The Republic of South Africa back in 2017, and I was surprised to see all the reminders of the past, providing knowledge about Apartheid, the racial unrest, colonial history, and segregations that one from Sweden is struggling to grasp. However, the reminders of Apartheid are incredibly knowledgeable and essential to have (especially for someone that comes from a safe country as Sweden), and by being exposed to so many pieces of South Africa's heritage and history, the awareness of the terrible years was expanding. The unpleasant reminders of segregation are presented everywhere and as you get to know the locals better; their everyday struggles were interpreted in my memory, and so was the history behind Apartheid, and I started to understand why one might want to forget about it, at least sometimes.
4.2 Why we Travel

Reasons to travel are individual, and all tourists will perceive the experience differently depending on our backgrounds and expectations (Camilleri 2017; Chen & Rahman 2018; Wang 1999). Because of the tourism experience needing a physical body to receive and understand tourism, the experience is a unique phenomenon (Li, 2009; O'Dell, 2017; UNESCO 2017). Park, Choi, and Lee (2019) suggested that one of the tourists' top reasons to travel is heritage tourism. Tourists travel for various reasons (Lundberg 1972), and by asking the participants about their main reasons for traveling it is possible to figure out whether Park, Choi and Lee (2019) are correct in suggesting the need for further understanding should be presented.

4.2.1 Heritage is Reason to Travel

The study participants were asked about their travel motivations. Unsurprisingly, all of them wanted to remove themselves from their everyday life and chores. This is consistent with earlier discussions of heritage tourism motivations (e.g., Park, Choi and Lee, 2019; Wang, 1999). The participants also agreed that when traveling, and they seek heritage tourism and historical monuments. The participants reflected on their travels and seemed to desire to explore more countries and cultures worldwide. Thus, search for cultural heritage has been their primary drive to travel (Ashworth 2003; Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000; Timothy & Boyd 2006; Waitt 2000).

4.2.2 The Search for Existential authenticity

A distinctive source of authentic experiences is when one is free from daily constraints (Wang 1999). *Existential authenticity* occurs when one is engaging in non-ordinary activities in addition to objective and constructive authenticity. In the search for *existential authenticity*, one looks to be involved and explore oneself correlating to the past in a liminal experience and finding the direct connection
between the meaning of being and meaning of authenticity (Heidegger 1962; Wang, 1999).

When discussing the search for heritage tourism participants unanimously agreed that heritage tourism is more exciting and exciting when traveling abroad.

You do things abroad that you do not do at home because it is more exotic when it is out of the country, even if it is just a boring museum.

(Visitor A 2020).

The year 2020 has been different due to Covid-19, and some of the participants traveled domestically. However, they searched for both tangible and intangible experiences that include authenticity and heritage (Park 2014; UNESCO 2017; Visitor B 2020). The search for monuments, historic locations and buildings, and museums (Visitor A 2021) became important in their own countries just as Park, Choi and Lee (2019) suggested. A correlation between what Wang (1999) called existential authenticity is found when looking past this year's pandemic. Respondents noted that unless they are forced to travel within their home country, such as for school field trip (Resident B 2020), they would rather travel and explore overseas, and like Wang (1999) suggests, remove themselves from the daily (Resident A, B & C 2020; Visitor A, B & C 2020).

Wang (1999) further described existential authenticity as a state of mind where one can freely self-express one's feelings. This theory links to the discussion between the perceived thought on other peoples' history more interesting than their own, as a more attractive typical response, was that they are tired of their history. Several participants discussed the factor that you learn about your own countries' history throughout your whole schooling carrier, and therefore it seems to be less attractive as it becomes a part of your everyday life (Resident A, B & C 2020; Visitor C 2020; Wang 1999).
Evidence that Wang’s (1999) *existential authenticity* thought on how self-learning gives one more meaning and a personal feeling arise during the consumption of new knowledge was found in Residents A’s (2020) approach to heritage tourism when traveling abroad. Resident A (2020) discussed the time one spent learning about the destination before traveling. The participant explained that when people travel, much research is done previously to make sure that you have enough knowledge and information about the destination and place planned to visit before the trip for the experience to be more authentic.

Horne (1984 see Park 2014:8) suggested that tourists seek an authentic past, which is well researched by Park (2014), and these two aspects constitute an authentic tourist experience. Resident A further explained:

> It feels like, as soon as you go overseas, you go to all the historical places because you would google it all before you go, and then I will suddenly become interested in history and see what everyone else is doing in their countries.

(Resident A 2020)

The connection between Wang's perception of *existential authenticity* being an experience outside of the daily is proved to be accurate as Resident A (2020) elaborated the quote by stating that when a traveler returns home, one embraces their everyday lives do not reflect upon the heritage tourism nearby. Park (2014) suggested that when traveling, tourists search for a sense of security and identity. This search is manifested through the need to visit heritage attractions to reconnect with the past.

The other participants further supported Wang’s (1999) perception of *existential authenticity* and agreed on the statement that you become interested in heritage, history, and culture when traveling abroad even though it is not something that interests you at home (Resident B & C 2020; Visitor A, B & C 2020; Wang 1999). However, *existential authenticity* needs to work parallel with *object-related* and
constructive authenticity to make a full experience. The connection between object-related authenticity and existential authenticity can be shown in Park (2014), who explained the participants' behavior as an obsession with the past. Visitor A (2020) explained it as (s)he has never been to a museum in ones' home country and has worked next to one for the last five years but never gone inside. Nevertheless, when going abroad, the museum is a must-do. Wang (1999) suggested that the usage of object-related authenticity in the museum-linked form of living-history has extended to the tourism sector, on which Sharpley (1994) and Handler and Saxton (1988) suggests that museum-linked objects can provide a sense of the unique, real, and genuine, making the tourists more inclined to experience the living-history and existential authenticity when traveling abroad.

Park, Choi, and Lee’s (2019) highlighted that tourists look for ‘the unique’. Wang (1999) presented constructive authenticity to be a part of one's beliefs and interpretations of how one sees things rather than authenticity. Schwandt (1994) would further explain it as, knowledge and truth being created and not discovered. About that claim, this can prove the correlations between Wang (1999) and Schwandt's (1994) perception of constructive authenticity, and the participants thought on authenticity in a tourist attraction (2020). The focus group showed that experiencing and discovering something unique about peoples' cultures seems to be more remarkable when one travels abroad. They view this as part of their history, which they have not heard before (Visitor C 2020). Whether or not the tourist attraction is truly authentic, the participants wanted to visit monuments, see figures, and so forth to make themselves feel closer to the culture of the country visiting (Visitor A, B & C 2020; Resident A, B & C 2020). Genuinely this further elaborates on Wang's (1999) description of object-related authenticity and the relation to the participants' thoughts. It does not necessarily matter if the object or heritage is authentic or not, but rather how that object is perceived. The participants meant that if they perceive the experience as authentic, then it is worth experiencing.
4.3 The Robben Island Prison Tour

The Robben Island prison tour is a truly authentic heritage site (UNESCO 2017), and the one who seeks an authentic experience should consider going on the tour. My perception of the Robben Island prison tour was that it provided me with object-related, constructive, and existential authenticity as I was taken around the island and the prison, this is why:

The Robben Island prison tour is a four-hour-long journey that takes tour groups from the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town, The Republic of South Africa, to Robben Island (Jungle Corner 2015B). To get to the island, the main transportation is the two ferries that go between the waterfront and the island, the very same ferries that transported political prisoners during the Apartheid and takes around 30min-1h (with the recommendation to take seasickness pills advised by the tour hosts) (Jungle Corner 2015B). These ferries are an example of objective-related authenticity (Wang 1999) as you get to take the same transportation, route, and ferries that the inmates did, making the experience more authentic. When stepping off on the island you get a perceived thought of authenticity, and the constructive authenticity expands from your point of view as you get to walk around a bit before getting on the tour bus that takes you around the island and to the physical prison, another object-related authenticity. Just as you get off the boat, you see the house where families and visitors to the prisoners were staying during their visits, giving one a perception of existential authenticity as one got to go to the same jetty and imagine how it was to be a visitor to the inmates. After a small stroll, you take a bus far away from there to get to the prison. As you go around the prison island, you get to see the lighthouse, some churches, and many other things that can be read about on the Robben Island museum website (Jungle Corner 2015C).
The Robben Island prison tour is a tourist attraction:

If you are a tourist, it is a supergood place to go because then it becomes more real, like oh this is insane, this man did nothing wrong, and then he ended up imprisoned for 27 years on an island before becoming the president. That kind of puts it in perspective for you, and if you need to see that to make sure it is legit then that is a good thing, and that is why there are still tourists on that boat every day.

(Resident B 2020)

My experience from the prison tour is that, after I arrived at the prison, I was able to experience the prison with the guidance of past inmates who now work at the prison as tour guides, providing the tour with further existential authenticity as the guide can be perceived as a performance and because one can get a sense of connection between the inmate and the past as he tells his stories (Wang 1999). What you get to see in the prison is what you would expect to see, you go to where they cooked and cleaned, the old prison cells and many other rooms, the object-related authenticity of which you might not be mentally prepared to vision but decides to have a look at (for the real experience). After the prison tour, it was time to gain to get back on the ferry that took all visitors back to the mainland. With one authentic experience richer and an extra worry wrinkle on your forehead, you are trying to grasp the experience you just went through, and all the new knowledge presented to you.

4.3.1 Perceived Authenticity on the Prison Tour

In the meeting, the four participants who had been on tour were asked to think back on the time visiting Robben Island and the prison as I wanted them to remember the critical aspects of the tour that felt the most genuine and real. Besides the shared memory of the ferry (which was traumatic for everyone except Visitor A (2020) who happily said that one enjoyed the transportation), there was two shared perception on authenticity where one was existential authenticity found in the
previous inmate working as a tour guide and the second, *object-related authenticity* found in the cell of which Nelson Mandela was kept for so many years.

### 4.3.1.1 Object-Related Authenticity on the tour

Further, we discussed the island tour's perceived authenticity, starting with the ferry that took participants out to the island. Visitor B (2020) (who truly dislikes boat transportations and wonders why one decided to go on that tour in the first place) shared an exciting conclusion that (s)he reflection about the tour. Visitor B (2020) felt that authenticity occurred already as one stepped on the ferry when realizing that the ferry was the only way to get on and off the island. The ferries are the same as the ones the political prisoners were taking, you

Stepping onto the very same ferry that once had taken political prisoners to the prison island during Apartheid, one started to understand how isolated the imprisoneders were on the island and how far away you are without the possibility to escape. Being on the ferries used during Apartheid is what Timothy and Boyd (2003) would call genuinely authentic, and Wang (1999) would call an authentic experience. This is proof that Wang's (1999) framework suggests that authenticity is too complicated and that the classifications of authenticity correlate. In this example, the correlation is between how *object-related* and *existential authenticity* emerges as one providing a truly authentic experience due to the participants being a relic boat and connecting with the past and the inmates.

However, most of the participants (Visitor A, B & C 2020) who took the tour were not aware that the ferry was a relic from the Apartheid and did therefore not add a sense of *constructive authenticity* to the experience as the participants were unaware about the real situation (Wang 1999). Nevertheless, the participants had an authentic and genuine experience which suggests that if one is unaware of the heritage is a replica (or in this case, the original). Wang (1999) proposed that one would still have the same experience, whether it is a replica or not. The experience is about the perception of authenticity in that said experience and not specifically in an object-related authenticity (Resident A 2020; Timothy & Boyd 2003).
Moving over to the solid ground, the most memorable experience for the participants was the part where they got to step inside of Nelson Mandela's cell, one participant said:

One cool thing was that you got to stand in the Nelson Mandela cell, I am only 25, and I cannot imagine spending 27 years in a small place like that.

(Resident A 2020)

Wang's (1999) perception of object-related authenticity and how the use of an original prison, makes the prison tour naturally authentic. Handler and Saxton (1988) further suggested that making the past come to life by using historic houses as authentic props to make authenticity a dominant value in living-history. These aspects of object-related authenticity link together with existential authenticity because of how the participant put oneself in Nelson Mandela's 'shoes' for just a brief moment. This event provides the individual with a connection between the real world and oneself, making the tour an authentic tourist experience (Wang, 1999).

4.3.1.2 Existential Authenticity on the tour

As explained at the beginning of this chapter, existential authenticity is a way to connect the past with the present. Existential authenticity can be activity related according to Wang (1999), and by including performance in a tourist attraction, the participants can feel present with the past as one got to be involved in the tour. MacCannell (1973) argued that staged authenticity is inauthentic and therefore, so is the experience. However, in this specific situation MacCannell was wrong as the staged performance, in this case, was truly authentic due to the tour guide being a former inmate. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the performance might become staged or even inauthentic when the previous inmates resign and retire.

Wang's (1999) perception of existential authenticity can be linked to the participants' perception of the tour guides' performance. The participants who had
visited the prison (Resident A 2020; Visitor A, B & C 2020) thought that having a previous inmate as a tour guide created a memorable experience and all respondents agreed that when a real prisoner tells the story, the history becomes more real and they felt connected with the past. The former inmate told his stories with passion and sorrow from the time imprisoned and then happiness as he realized, the tour got a whole new sense of authenticity. The former inmate made the tour feel genuinely meaningful with a greater sense of authenticity that is reliable, valid, and original (Ram, Björk & Weidenfeld 2015).

Wang (1999) further suggested that *existential authenticity* derives from tourists who are participating and not speculating, as the activation makes them preoccupied and will provide them with stimulation and pleasure. Nonetheless it is the *constructive authenticity* that involves the tourists in performance and creates the *existential authenticity*. *Constructive authenticity* provides the connection between the former inmate and the tourists, including identity and performance, involving the tourists in the experience.

The desire to experience authenticity is one of the main factors motivating heritage tourists (Ka Leong 2016; Lu, Chi & Liu 2015; Poria, Butler & Airey 2001). Contributing to that, the notion of authenticity in tourism is historical, cultural, or connected to the past (Waitt 2000), further, prove Wang's (1999) *existential authenticity* theory that the tourist seeks to connect oneself with the past. Tourists travel to create memories and emotions that are related to a destination (Li 2000; Noy 2007) which makes the experience on Robben Island unique as the participants continued to discuss the perception of authenticity on the island.

However, the participants (without knowing) revealed interlinkages between Wang's (1999) three authenticity domains. They talked about how you get to see *object-related authenticity* in the well-preserved areas where the inmates had been sleeping and washing, which increased the *constructive authenticity* and reminded them of the importance to reconnect with the past, the *existential authenticity*, where one goes back in time to experience, interact and learn about the history of
culture by being involved and active as a participant. By including all three types of authenticity, the experience became unique. Wanting to be involved and participate for another experience agrees with Bruner (2001) that in his field case saw how important the interaction between hosts and guest were for the authentic experience and was used as a tool to understand how people view a particular place (Lane & Waitt 2001).

4.3.2 Replica, Authentic or Inauthentic?

When the participants were asked if a replica of the prison put somewhere else would feel authentic, different answers were given. Resident C (2020) said that one would much rather see the real thing than seeing something rebuild or the shell of something no longer authentic. Resident C's (2020) perception of authenticity (or inauthenticity) links to Wang (1999) who suggests that the replica would reduce the perceived thought of authenticity from the object-related due to the perception of the tourist. This would further find support in MacCannell (1973); Timothy and Boyd (2006); Chen and Rahman (2018); and Ram, Björk, and Weidenfeld (2015) who suggested that the only way to experience authenticity is through the originals, genuine authenticity and genuine.

4.3.2.1 Constructive Authenticity on the tour

Moreover, it was somewhat agreed upon by Resident B (2020) that heritage would lose some of its perceived value once you know that it was rebuilt and that some parts of the prison had to be reconstructed. However, Resident B (2020) also proposed that if one were not aware, and believed that it was authentic when not, the resident would still experience Constructive authenticity as one would overlook (Wang 1999). In this line, Sundbo & Sørensen (2013) proposed that an experience is happening in peoples' minds and is dependent on the tourist's knowledge and awareness due to prior trip research or prior experiences.

Understanding what the previous participants argue for, Resident A (2020) proposed that no matter if an object is a direct replica of the original, you will still
have the same experience. Resident A (2020) said that one would still get the same sense of authenticity and gave an example of the cell in which Nelson Mandela was held, which links to Wang’s (1999) perception that **constructive authenticity** is negotiable. If that cell, which is an **object-related authenticity** had been recreated somewhere else, you would still get a real experience and perceive it as **existential authenticity** because it is a direct replica, even when located elsewhere (Resident A 2020). The participant further explained that even in a direct replica you get the same opportunity to step inside the cell and imagine spending 27 years in that small space and was considering if perhaps more people would have gone to see it when located somewhere else so that you do not have to get on the ferry.

Cohen (1988) proposed that tourists can recognize a cultural trait as an authentic object. Respondents in this study wanted to understand how people live and function in a country foreign to them to immerse themselves in a visited place’s culture. This means that even if the object is so-called 'toured' (Wang, 1999), the experience can still be felt as authentic (Culler 1981; Wang 1999). Wang (1999) meant that **Constructive authenticity** is negotiable and dependent on the expectations, stereotypes, and dreams projected into the experience. If the experience is appeared to be authentic by the tourist, one might be okay with it being not being genuinely authentic if it is inherent in authenticity (Burner 1994; Wang 1999).

**Constructive authenticity** is a social construction that builds on ones' background, beliefs, point of views, and previous experiences (Wang 1999), and in the search for authenticity, one is looking to experience just a piece of someone’s imagination (Adams 1984; Bruner 1991; Duncan 1978; Laxson 1991; Silver 1993). Visitor C (2020) agreed with the rest of the participants and suggested that people explore cultures and history when people travel. When one wants to interact with another culture, even just a little bit, and get closer to the residents, one must learn about the history. Robben Island is a big part of history and South Africa, so the importance is probably why people are going there, to get a bigger view.
It is a good thing as well, if it can make you somewhat more interested in the country's history, then it can proceed you to learn more about other things.

(Resident B 2020)

Resident B (2020) said that you could take a piece of where you traveled home with you when you go on the prison tour. One believed that if someone is going to speak of South Africa, the majority would know what and where Robben Island is. Once you can say that you have been there and learned that history is almost like a token of knowledge can take home with you. One can view Robben Island as a tourist attraction, and the visitors seemed to agree. Visitor A's (2020) answer was as simple as "the Robben Island prison tour is a tourisy thing to do when in South Africa". Nevertheless, existential authenticity is vital for seeing both the good and the bad parts of a country's history to get invested in another culture.

Visitor A (2020) told of where (s)he was staying, one could see the island from the town and the locals would often point and show one where it was. This, alongside the object-related authenticity, builds upon previous knowledge about Nelson Mandela and Apartheid, made the participant more intrigued to learn more and experience it physically, building up constructive authenticity as one had expectations about the trip. However, Visitor A (2020) gave another perspective on the tourist attraction and proposed that most tourists perhaps visit the island simply because it is a tourist attraction, nothing less and nothing more. Visitor A (2021) further explained in the in-depth interview that one might be visiting heritage sites as a part of something more social than honorable, meaning that (s)he would visit places just to have visited them and to be able to tell the story to others. One wants to build on the foundation of one's background and gain more knowledge, providing a broader spectrum, and believing in more than ever.
Chapter Five:
Robben Island, an Authentic Heritage Site

To finalize the research, I have put together the findings which were found when incorporating the theory chapter with the focus group and in-depth interviews. In this conclusion you will understand how the authenticity domains are intertwined with each other and with heritage tourism to create a true authentic experience on the Robben Island prison tour.

The notion of authenticity in heritage tourism is a pivotal issue previously studied by many prominent scholars, who generally agree that authenticity is an individually perceived quality of a tourist attraction. By investigating tourists’ experiences at the Robben Island UNESCO heritage site, this study sought an understanding of what makes the experience on Robben Island an authentic one. Specifically, this research used Wang's (1999) authenticity framework that identifies three authenticity domains: object-related authenticity, constructive authenticity. The aim of the study relates to Wang’s (1999) framework as it distinguishes three types of authenticity which has been applied by several followers in different scenarios to express authenticity in field studies (e.g., de Bernardi 2019; Lane & Wiatt 2001; Martin 2010; Zatori, Smith & Puczko 2018).

The results have demonstrated that most participants in the focus group agree that the travel experience is worthwhile when the travel perceives the experience as authentic. When traveling, one also wants to be aware of authentic and inauthentic aspects of the tour. Respondent believed that a heritage tourist attraction and storytelling are based on facts and when their experiences originate in heritage and history, the experience feels authentic. Thus, it does not matter whether the performance during the tour is staged, but whether the experience feels real because it is based on the historical facts and involved authentic artifacts.

What seems to be more accurate is the perception that authenticity is found in the experience, and often, but not always in connection to the historical object. Thus,
even with inauthentic objects presented during the tour, a tourist experience can be still perceived by them as authentic. Further, this suggests that one can have a truly authentic experience without a truly authentic heritage artifact. Additionally, the opinion that one views authenticity based on backgrounds, beliefs, and previous experiences connects the three differentiations of authenticity which in this thesis is based on Wang's (1999) framework which simplifies the perception of authenticity although the result chapter proved to still be complex as the three categories of authenticity intertwines. Wang is one of many prominent scholars that have impacted the perception of authenticity in the tourism sector with the use of his framework. Although Wang's perception of authenticity has been applied to differentiate the focus groups' perception of authenticity on the Robben Island prison tour, the results show that experience cannot be defined as either object-related, constructive, or existential authenticities, but rather that all the authenticity domains are interlinked.

The interconnectivity of authenticity domains in Wang's (1999) framework is showed through the participants' view of authenticity on the Robben Island prison tour and how the authenticity categories build on one another. Robben Island prison is a tourist attraction, and this fact is the main reason why the residents did not want to participate in the tour. However, the respondents further explained that it reminded them of the past that they prefer not to think about more than they already do. Arguably while no one doubted the authenticity of the Robben Island experience and the significance of the tour, the tour appears to target those who seek to learn about apartheid and the South African history, rather than residents who learned about it in their childhood.

The background of the participants and their perception of heritage was in this case somewhat relevant. Namely, residents who did not visit the attraction saw Robben Island and the prison tour as authentic, perhaps even too real. Backgrounds influenced respondent's perception instead showed whether the attraction was worth visiting or not, the residents felt like they knew enough about Robben Island, the prison, and Apartheid, therefore, did not show any interest in going. In contrast,
the Scandinavian respondents who lacked knowledge about the event wanted to take the tour to learn. The two distinct perspectives would further prove the participants' perception that one is more elaborate to learn and visit heritage sites, monuments, and so forth in other countries than ones' own, because as Resident B suggested, it has always been there. Young students are thought about history in their' own country from an early age, when one grows up it is more interesting to learn and explore other cultures, as it is new and outside of the norm.

The results of the study implicate that heritage tourism authenticity can be distinguished and connected with Wang’s (1999) framework. Wang’s separated objects based on the tourists' points of view and beliefs as object-related and constructive authenticity. The perception of the tourist makes authenticity negotiable and dependent on the tourist rather than the object. Existential authenticity, on the other hand, is based on personal feelings and the connection between oneself and the past outside of the daily. The results show that the Robben Island Prison tour can be viewed as the experience that offers all the domains of tourism authenticity, these domains are interlinked and relate to each other.

The study also revealed that interest in 'one's own' heritage depends on individual background, knowledge, and beliefs, arguably the participants agreed that it is more interesting to research someone else's culture and heritage than one's own. The search for existential authenticity is one of the main reasons for people to travel. To experience existential authenticity one must step outside of the daily and experience authenticity that connects the present with the past in spirit. However, it is not possible to reconnect with the past without tangible or intangible authenticity. The participants experience true authenticity when existential authenticity is intertwined with object-related authenticity in several situations such as taking the ferry to the island, a relic that recreates the experience that the former inmates had during apartheid. Further, the existential and object-related authenticity emerged when the tourers got to step inside the cell where Nelson Mandela was kept, the cooking and cleaning area, and the prison itself.
The interconnection between existential and constructive authenticity was proven in the former inmates' 'performance' where the constructive authenticity shows the importance of connecting the touree (host) with the tourer to get the tourist involved in the experience. The connection between touree and tourer makes the performance more interesting and perceived as authentic from the tourists' point of view, and beliefs presented in constructive authenticity contributes with the personal feelings in existential authenticity, connecting oneself with the past, and experiences a sense of security and belonging.

This study aimed to explore how residents and tourists experience authenticity on Robben Island and the prison tour, this was answered in the study but does open for further research. Due to time limitations, a more thorough study can be made, incorporating other scholars and go deeper into the phenomenon of authenticity. Additionally, one can research other heritage sites and compare the results, researching a heritage site that is not named 'truly authentic' could give a different answer than the one in this research. Other limitations such as the number of participants, age, and ethnicity could further have an impact on the result which would be interesting to research further and distinguish any other differences. This study opens several topics that are worth continuing researching, authenticity is complex, the phenomenon is almost endless in research fields and that is according to me, what makes it so interesting.
Chapter Six: 
Reference List


A. Jakobsson


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Chapter Seven:
Appendices

7.1 Focus Group & In-Depth Interview Participants

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<td>South Africa*</td>
<td>White South African</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
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*Resident C spent ones’ primary school years in the United States before moving back to South Africa
7.2 Invitation Letter to Focus Group Meeting

Hi (name), I hope that you are well and going strong even in these chaotic times.

I am in the middle of writing my thesis and I am here to ask for your help. My subject is about perceived authenticity on heritage tourism with a focus on the Robben Island prison tour as my field case. I will be hosting a focus group on Tuesday (22/12/2020) at 19.00 GMT +1 over Zoom as all participants are located around the globe. I am wondering if you would be interested in helping me out by participating in the meeting and give your opinion and thoughts on Robben Island and the prison tour?

Kind regards,
Annie Jakobsson
7.3 Follow-Up Letter before Focus Group Meeting

Dear friends, I am so happy to know that you all have decided to participate in this focus group tonight (22/12/20) at 19.00 GMT+1 on zoom, the meeting will take 30-45min of your valuable time. This focus group is empiric research for my final thesis before graduating, with the purpose to understand how tourists perceive authenticity in heritage tourism, this research is then examined through your perception of authenticity on the Robben Island Prison tour. Whether or not you have been at the prison you can provide valuable information that will help the study to a result. In particular, I am looking to understand if you perceived the Robben Island Prison tour to be genuine and real, and if you did, what made you think so. For those who have not visited the island, I want to understand why you have not the reason for not wanting to visit the prison island. More information about the subject will be presented in the meeting but for now, all I want you to consider before we start is:

- Why do tourists seek the ‘authentic’ and ‘real’ in heritage tourism?

Your thoughts are important to this research and what you say will influence the outcome of the paper. If anyone would be interested in an in-depth interview which will be a follow-up on the results from the focus group, let me know and we will arrange a time for that in a near future!

Privacy information will be repeated before the meeting but for your knowledge:
- No names will be used in the thesis; you are anonymous.
- The meeting will be recorded with audio and video for me to be able to transcribe the meeting afterward, the recordings will then be deleted.
- You can at any time withdraw from the study, before, during, or after the meeting - no questions asked

If you have any concerns, do not hesitate to contact me, I am here to answer any potential questions and considerations.

I will see you tonight!

Yours faithfully,

Annie Jakobsson