The analysis of knowledge transfer processes in the authenticity of the intangible cultural heritage in tourism destination competitiveness

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As tourism regarding intangible cultural heritage usually encompasses a knowledge transfer process, the authenticity of the heritage (or its perception) can be affected by the knowledge transfer. These knowledge transfers occur to present the heritage to the tourists (courses, tour guiding…), but also in the destination itself when the heritage knowledge is codified in museums, tour guides are trained, or the heritage is transferred to newer generations. These situations present potential challenges where authenticity is distorted or even lost, and it affects the competitiveness of the destination. The work attempts to analyse those knowledge transfers and their challenges regarding authenticity to sustain the competitiveness of the destination.

Keywords: intangible heritage; authenticity; knowledge transfer; competitiveness; heritage tourism

Introduction

As competition in the tourism sector increases, destinations strive to attract and retain tourists (García-Almeida & Hormiga, 2017). Due to the impact of globalization, the analysis of competitiveness in the tourism industry has increasingly focused not only on the business world but also on the destination arena (Kozac, Baloglu & Bahar, 2010). In their quest for attracting, satisfying, and retaining tourists, destinations should provide relevant attractions and offer products which can target one or several segments of tourists.

Heritage tourism has experienced a dramatic growth in the last decades (Chhabra, 2010). For Prentice (1993), cultural and historical attractions are very relevant factors to motivate tourism trips and this has generated the growth of a large heritage industry. The tourism economies of some destinations are based completely on cultural heritage, and for some others it is a relevant attraction (Timothy, 2011).

Heritage can become a relevant resource to become and stay competitive in the long run, since it can be the basis of the destination's sustainable competitive advantage. In recent years, intangible heritage has become an interesting field of research (Pfeilstetter, 2015), though research on the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and tourism is scarce (López-Guzmán and González Santa-Cruz, 2017).

Enjoying intangible heritage assets by travellers is generally part of the cultural tourism experience (WTO, 2012). For Datta, Bigham, Zou & Hill (2015), intangible heritage site ecologies are intangible manifestations of history and culture via dance, song, art style, audio-visual presentations, among others. It is constantly recreated by groups providing them with a sense of identity and continuity (WTO, 2012). In the tourism field, authenticity is also a concern in the analysis of intangible heritage (e.g., Gonzalez, 2008).

The concept of authenticity has played a prominent role in tourism research (Olsen, 2002), and discussions of this issue are a core aspect of heritage tourism (Walter, 2017). Searching for authentic experiences is one of the key trends in tourism, especially in heritage tourism, and consequently it is a relevant aspect in the development and marketing of this kind of tourism (Kolar & Zabkar, 2009; Chhabra, 2012). Authenticity has been examined and discussed from several perspectives, notably objectivism, constructivism, postmodernism, and existentialism (Wang, 1999; Rickly-Boyd, 2012a). Thus, the analysis of this concept and its implications have been enriched from the lenses which several scientific frameworks adopt to explain it. However, the processes by which authenticity is constructed remain under-studied (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). The knowledge-based view has not been used to understand the concept of authenticity, its sustainability in the long term, and the process of authentication. But authenticity regarding tourism and intangible heritage is only

revealed, perceived, and experienced if the underlying knowledge is transferred to the tourist. Moreover, the sustainable exploitation, and even existence, of the intangible heritage depends on several transfer processes in the destination.

This work attempts to analyse the implications of knowledge transfer in the authenticity and authentication of intangible heritage tourism by studying its role from the supply and demand perspectives. This broad goal of the work can be achieved by addressing and meeting three objectives. The first objective of this study is to explore the relevance of authenticity in the competitiveness of a destination regarding the underlying knowledge of its intangible heritage attractions, and how knowledge transfer can affect it. As authenticity could be enhanced or destroyed with knowledge transfer processes, the second objective is to identify the challenges of authenticity in the intangible heritage attractions when heritage knowledge is transferred in the destination. But key knowledge transfer processes regarding intangible heritage occur where tourists are the knowledge recipients, and it affects their perception of authenticity. Consequently, the third objective of the work is to analyse the knowledge transfer processes that involve the tourist's participation and how they influence heritage authenticity.

Authenticity of intangible cultural heritage in tourism competitiveness from a knowledge transfer view

According to Buhalis (2000), a tourism destination is a defined geographical region which is perceived by its visitors as a unique entity, with a political and legislative framework for tourism management. Thus, a destination could refer to a country or several countries, a region, a province, an island, a city, a national park, a natural area

with outstanding beauty, a coast fragment, etc. (Fyall & Wannhill 2008).

Destinations have resources or attractions that act as magnets and/or become motivations for visitors. Leiper (1979) defines tourist attractions as sights, events and facilities oriented to experiential opportunities for tourists. In their competitive race on tourism markets, destinations have to face the challenge of managing and organizing their scarce resources efficiently in order to supply a holiday experience that must outperform alternative destination experiences on the tourist market (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2008). A salient concept to understand these tourism dynamics is competitiveness. Destination competitiveness can be defined as the degree to which a destination can attract and satisfy potential tourists (Enright & Newton, 2004). Destinations are seen as amalgams of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers (Buhalis 2000). The key to compete on tourism markets is the experience offered to the tourist, and several agents interact to offer that experience: firms that offer tourism services or supporting activities, destination management organizations, public administrations, local residents and other publics (Crouch 2010). In an era of globalization with strong homogenizing forces, the distinctive social and cultural characteristics of places are obscured (Peterson, 2005). But precisely due to that, many tourism destinations analyze and reflect on which resources they have got in order to explore differentiation advantages and compete in the tourism sector.

Heritage tourism can be defined as the activities of travelers seeing or experiencing built heritage, living culture or contemporary arts (Timothy, 2011). Intangible heritage tourism directly refers to the element in that definition related to the sight and experience of the living culture in a destination. The concept of intangible heritage includes practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills of communities and groups, and sometimes individuals, as well as the instruments, objects,

artefacts and cultural spaces linked to them (UNESCO, 2003; Pereira Roders & van Oers, 2011). Intangible cultural heritage is an attraction included in many tourism products. Thus, Wang (1999) include festivals, rituals, cuisine, dress, and housing as products of tourism which can be described as authentic or inauthentic. Moreover, Esfehani and Albrecht (2018) indicate that by merely staying in the local communities and being exposed to the local life style, traditional practices, or customs in person, intangible heritage becomes an element of the overall visitor experience, sometimes even in an unintended way.

As authenticity is a positive characteristic of the tourism experience related to the perceived value of heritage attractions, it becomes a relevant aspect of destination competitiveness. As Timothy and Ron (2013: 102) indicate, authenticity "is a current buzzword that sells very well in the tourism marketplace". By integrating the objective and constructive perspectives, Yang and Wall (2016, p.26) state that authenticity 'involves a negotiated and creative process with stereotypes, judgments, and local values imposed on the setting or products by a variety of stakeholders, including tourists, hosts and suppliers'. The tourism literature often displays assertions that authenticity (along with uniqueness) is a core value of many tourism markets (Carson & Harwood, 2008). Custódio Santos, Ferreira & Costa (2014) empirically find that authenticity is more important than traditional variables such as prices, quality of the gastronomy or health and leisure facilities for the competitiveness of a destination. Carson and Harwood (2008) states that authenticity is differently evaluated by different markets and even segments in those markets, and it could be the source of competitive advantages for some destinations. Authenticity can be seen as fantasy that has considerable implications for the impetus and motivation to travel (Knudsen, Rickly & Vidon, 2016).

Intangible heritage has a strong knowledge element. The concept of knowledge is complex and widely discussed in the academic literature, since it can be approached and understood from several perspectives. Alavi & Leidner (2001) observe several views to address the concept: a state of mind, an object, a process, a condition of having access to information, or a capability. Learning theories outline the importance of the active construction of knowledge and that this develops over time and with experience (Koohang & Paliszkiewicz, 2013; Lee, Lajoie, Poitras, Nkangu & Doleck, 2017). Leonard & Sensiper (1998) view knowledge as information that is relevant, applicable and at least partly based on experience, emphasizing the time dimension. Knowledge is held by individuals, but is also possible to refer to group, organizational and community knowledge. Nosek (2004, p. 54) outlines that 'group cognition means moving away from idiosyncratic, subjective mental models of the world to the notion that agents with similar capacities to act can potentially discern similar action possibilities in the world'. This is the conceptual framework to include intangible heritage as knowledge developed by a group or community and transmitted to newer generations along time.

Authenticity has been often regarded as the most important criterion for the development of cultural tourism (Xie & Wall, 2002) and the literature confirms that the objective manifestations of authenticity motivate heritage tourists to travel to distant places and times (Chhabra, 2012). In addition, discourses on authenticity influence the approach to heritage and its conservation (Boonzaaier and Wels, 2018), which are also relevant aspects for sustainable competitiveness in destinations with cultural attractions. The authenticity of the underlying knowledge in the intangible heritage is then an aspect of interest in heritage tourism. If the community's knowledge is the central element to define the authenticity of intangible heritage, an objective view is adopted.

The assessment of authenticity of intangible cultural knowledge is conducted from several perspectives. In the tourism context, intangible heritage products/elements are usually described as authentic or not depending on whether they are made or performed by locals according to their traditions (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006a). The most recognized means to assess the singularity of intangible heritage worldwide is its inclusion on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, which inscribes those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate the diversity of this heritage and raise awareness about its importance (UNESCO, 2003). One of the criteria for the inscription is to reflect cultural diversity and to testify to human creativity. The reference to creativity of the knowledge present in the intangible heritage calls for the recognition of its authenticity, based on the ideas of originality and genuineness underlying the objective perspective of heritage. However, it is also important to note that this indirect relevance of authenticity in the UNESCO's Representative List is directly downplayed on the Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2006), since it states that 'the term "authenticity" as applied to tangible cultural heritage is not relevant when identifying and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage' (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18). This idea is based on the fact that intangible cultural heritage is constantly recreated and contradicts the view of the 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity, which indicates that 'the understanding of authenticity plays a fundamental role in all scientific studies of the cultural heritage, in conservation and restoration planning, as well as within the inscription procedures used for the World Heritage Convention and other cultural heritage inventories' (UNESCO, 2018, p. 3). Moreover, the relevance of the quest for authenticity in many tourists' segments make the analysis of authenticity appropriate and pertinent in a competitiveness context.

The objective authenticity discourse is based on the genuine, original, made by locals versions of heritage (Chhabra, 2012), and this kind of authenticity is related to pure authenticity in the literature (Chhabra et al. 2013). Though the community's knowledge is subject to evolution, the core aspects are sought to be retained along time in a frozen way. This objective discourse of authenticity remains the dominant vision in heritage tourism (Chhabra, 2012). The literature outlines the relevance of the creation of authenticity in tourism since tourists' decision of the destination to visit and ex-ante and ex-post evaluation is, in many cases, strongly influenced by the desire of witnessing and participating in authentic experiences (e.g., Xie, 2003). Nevertheless, authenticity must be perceived by the tourist, as well as underpinned in the destination. For that to happen, knowledge transfer processes are necessary.

Knowledge transfer is conceived as an event through which one entity learns from the experience of another (Darr & Kurtzberg, 2000; Kumar & Ganesh, 2009). The participating entities in this event or process can be individuals, groups, organizations or even communities. Many authors have used a communication-based model to describe the transfer process, from a source or sender to a recipient agent through a channel. However, the process of knowledge transfer is not, per se, a mere transfer of knowledge (Liyanage, Elhag, Ballal & Li, 2009), since receivers construct their knowledge by integrating the knowledge inputs with their prior knowledge. Knowledge construction in the heritage setting is not new. For example, Falk & Dierking (2000) use the term knowledge construction when referring to the experience enjoyed by two visitors in a museum.

By utilizing the knowledge transfer view of authenticity, some processes and dynamics regarding the concept can be better understood as they deeply affect tourists, hosts, local governments, and tourism firms. Due to its immaterial nature, one of the

key challenges of intangible cultural heritage in tourism destination competitiveness is how its authenticity develops as its underlying knowledge is transmitted. This can be paramount because if the destination's intangible heritage is characterized by authenticity, then transferability and replicability by competitors are highly hindered. But some transfer processes are required and need to be fostered. Assuming the importance of the knowledge component in the underlying pillars of the intangible cultural heritage, the relationship between authenticity of the intangible heritage and the transfer of the underlying knowledge of that heritage becomes a strategic aspect for the destination. That relationship can be analysed from two different perspectives: a demand-based view and a supply-based one.

Authenticity and knowledge transfer in the intangible heritage attractions

Cultural heritage is an element of the tourism resource base for most countries in the world (Timothy, 2011). Timothy and Boyd (2003) observe heritage supply as a mix of elements that encompasses the heritage attractions offered to visitors, the setting and context in which the heritage exists, and the support services which have developed in the tourism activities and flows. In that sense, heritage tourism is a unique sector since supply usually precedes demand (Timothy, 2011).

The core of heritage tourism lies on heritage attractions (Timothy and Boyd, 2003). In the case of intangible heritage, the living culture inherited from the past is obviously the main attraction. In the long-term perspective and tourism development, the protection, safe-guarding and even exploitation of the intangible cultural heritage requires that certain knowledge transfer processes are implemented. But in these processes authenticity can be damaged or even lost.

The most obvious transfer process is the inter-generational transfer of the underlying knowledge of intangible cultural heritage. Intangible heritage is constantly recreated by groups in response to their environment, their interactions with nature and their history, providing them with a sense of identity and continuity, and it is transmitted from generation to generation (WTO, 2012). For Rickly-Boyd (2012b), authenticity is connected to aura, since they result from and are embedded in ritual and tradition. However, that tradition can be altered after transmitting it to the younger generation. Social and economic factors can distort the authentic nature of the reconstruction of knowledge that the recipients (that is, the younger generation) conduct.

Zhu (2012) documents how intangible heritage knowledge is transferred to a dongba. Witnessing rituals in the family, having mentors, and even attending formal training activities were relevant to 'inherit' the knowledge (Zhu, 2012). The formal training activities lack the necessary social context to fully acquire the knowledge, so social embeddedness is also required (Zhu, 2012). These knowledge transfer assume that source and recipient do want to teach/receive the knowledge, but it cannot be taken for granted.

According to Steiner and Reisinger (2006a), one of the two meanings contained in the term 'authenticity' is related to a human attribute (the other one refers to genuineness of artifacts and events). Authenticity as a human characteristic refers to 'being one's true self or being true to one's essential nature' (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006a, p. 299). Wang (1999) and Cohen (2007) have classified this interpretation of authenticity in the light of the existentialist discourse of the concept. However, from the knowledge perspective this human-attribute view of authenticity can be observed in a more complex way, since younger individuals in a knowledge transfer setting of

intangible culture heritage can feel two opposing forces. The first one would be viewing authenticity as following one's aspirations and desire to evolve after being exposed to new cultural environments, and the second one would be observing authenticity as keeping values and cultural elements that the society and relevant groups have embedded in earlier stages of life and consequently in 'one's essential nature'. The former one reflects a 'future orientation' associated with the idea of 'being true to one self' and the latter could be defined in terms of a 'past orientation' which decisively impose the tradition and cultural elements from the past as a major force in determining one's life path. This tension could result in a smooth transfer process, or in adaptation or even rejection of key intangible heritage knowledge which permeates modern cultural elements and alters the 'objective' authenticity. Wesener's findings (2017) in his empirical analysis in an intangible heritage context can relate to this, since there are people only welcoming "new experiences" closely related to traditional processes, and others embracing new processes and structures as authentic.

Zhu (2012) describes the evolution/clash of a local culture that suddenly becomes an attraction after the inscription of Lijian (China) in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The residents who live in the destination have elements of judgment to evaluate whether their culture and heritage remains authentic when their distinctive traditional culture is being eroded by commodification (Zhou, Zhang, Zhang & Ma, 2015). In intangible heritage destinations, locals with traditional knowledge are exposed and confronted to socio-economic transitions which can alter the authenticity of the knowledge (Zhu, 2012). Zhou et al. (2015) outline that authenticity is a concept that derives its meaning only when comparing to its opposite, since people is aware of authenticity when the environment is gradually becoming inauthentic Thus, authenticity

can be deemed altered or lost, causing social tension and family frictions, even before the tourist arrives.

Another relevant strategy to protect, safeguard and exploit the intangible cultural heritage is the creation of museums or other cultural institutions and even to disseminate digital content. These knowledge repositories should carefully integrate the knowledge and its context to keep the elements underpinning its authenticity. Regarding intangible heritage and its preservation, the classical museums have evolved to new formats such as open-air museums which are also concerned with the broader cultural and social environment in which they exist, including a sense of place and locality (Alivizatou, 2016).

Cultural institutions worldwide face many challenges in understanding and presenting intangible heritage (Alivizatou, 2016). Dalkir (2005) defines tacit knowledge management as the process of capturing the experience and expertise of the individual in an organization or community and making it available to anyone who needs it. Museums play a relevant role in this collective codification process that entails a transfer of knowledge. Knowledge has to be analyzed and codified in such a way that it can become a part of the existing knowledge base (Dalkir, 2005) of the community. But this codification process can have negative similarities with commodification, since it is also producing a substitute of the reality where many nuances and details are lost in the translation and adaptation to tourism needs. Like cultural commodification, the knowledge codification in the knowledge transfer processes can destroy local authenticity.

The implication and participation of the community with the cultural institutions to transfer their knowledge provide authenticity. This is so because the knowledge stems from the source and it is not the result of outsiders' descriptions and interpretation

that do not reflect the cultural framework, values and identity that sustain the intangible heritage. Oral histories and traditional knowledge and beliefs are increasingly incorporated in official museum narratives (Alivizatou, 2016). According to Halewood & Hannam (2001), the lack of authenticity often stems from the commodification processes, since they provide an alienating and explicit exchange value. Thus, Cohen & Cohen (2012) mention stagnation occurs when local residents have to dress and behave in petrified traditional ways in 'living museums'. These isolated representations are somehow separated from the original reality and prevent any experience of authenticity (MacCannell 1992).

However, hyperreality is an element in modern tourism (Yang & Wall, 2016) and the digital approach to many cultural sites and events complement the tourism experience. In that sense, staged authenticity can be preferred to the real or original manifestation of the cultural elements due to sustainability and fragility concerns about the heritage (Cohen 1995; Yang & Wall, 2016).

Special attention should be also paid to tour guides who often become intermediaries of the experience related to intangible cultural heritage, as they become first recipients but also sources of the intangible heritage knowledge. The analysis of the knowledge authenticity with regard to tour guides require to review the conditions to avoid the superficial approach it can take. Training activities and embeddedness in the practice are paramount to construct the knowledge they will have to share with tourists in a later stage. Their role as translators and boundary spanning with tourists who possess another cultural framework than the one the intangible heritage has is very relevant to effectively transfer knowledge. If tour guides are locals, the training process is more effective and efficient, but the subsequent knowledge transfer to tourists will be more problematic (language and cultural barriers). If tour guides are not so familiar with

the heritage culture, as it is frequent with foreign tour guides with similar nationalities than the tourists, their absorptive capacity can be a problem to learn the heritage knowledge since they lack prior knowledge to be able to understand it (Szulanski, 1996).

Knowledge transfer to the tourist and authenticity

Regarding the demand perspective, the encounter between tourists and individuals who possess knowledge about the intangible cultural heritage and/or knowledge repositories on the topic is often evaluated by the former in terms of the level of authenticity that the experience provides. Thus, attraction and satisfaction as key competitive variables regarding destinations are affected by knowledge transfers happening prior and during the visit.

MacCannell (1973) indicated that tourists are motivated by a desire to see life as it is really lived, even to get in with the natives. Though this can be questioned in light of the tourist who just seeks fun and excitement (e.g., Boorstin, 1992), the recognition of different needs for tourism and expectations, and the postmodernity view of authenticity still holds for several tourism products. Tourists seem to seek authenticity in varying degrees of intensity (Cohen, 1988). In the case of intangible heritage, the addition of the time dimension increases the value of the potential experience, since the tourist does not only anticipate the exoticism of the spatial difference but also the ancient origin of the underlying knowledge. But the mere observation can be extended to a deeper need for involvement, and there are places where people seek out to satisfy their learning needs, like museums (Falk & Dierking, 2000). The classical economic framework distinguishing between search and experience goods (Klein, 1998) can provide interesting insights for this discussion. The 'intangible' nature of heritage

knowledge causes tourists to be uncertain about the potential satisfaction of their tourism needs in a higher degree than tangible heritage. Though tourism is widely considered a service, the tangible nature of the attractions reveals some product attributes for which much information can be obtained before the purchase; in contrast, intangible heritage, though repetitive and recreated along time, is more limited in providing that kind of information and the uncertainty about the tourism experience could be higher. Authenticity could help to make informed decisions of travel for those segments.

Lord (1999) addresses the demand of cultural tourism by presenting four categories of tourists: the greatly motivated ones, the motivated in part ones, the adjunct ones, and the accidental ones. For the two first groups, the experience provided by the intangible heritage is central on their trip, and it suggests their willingness in knowing more about the intangible cultural setting and heritage. For the other two groups, though their participation in knowledge transfer activities cannot be dismissed, the ex-ante perception of authenticity can be a major driver to engage in the visit to the intangible cultural setting due to their initial lack of motivation and interest in the cultural product.

The first knowledge transfer process occurs when the individual (or leading person in a joint decision-making) obtains data, information and insights about the intangible heritage destination, often in a competitive format. Systematic patterns of tourist behavior are attributable to the information available to them (Fodness & Murray, 1999). Brochures, guide books, digital content, articles in specialized publications or magazines/newspapers, and other written promotional material issued by tour operators and travel agents are codified knowledge. Much of this knowledge usually implies a transfer of the introduction to the intangible heritage knowledge in a cool format. UNESCO's listings and other certification methods such as studies by

historians are ways to coolly authenticate intangible heritage (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Nevertheless, this cool authentication is not effective if that knowledge is not successfully transferred to the tourist who must assimilate that knowledge and integrate it in his/her prior experiences. Heritage attractions reveal as a means for the discovery and articulation of identity, with public administrations often selecting particular versions to communicate and acting as a mediator (Henderson, 2002). Once the relevance of authenticity has been outlined by segments (Cohen, 1988; Xie, 2003), the knowledge transferred in these formats can attract tourists in search of authenticity, probably including those who value external status or recognition of the experience.

Other tourists who have experienced the intangible heritage in the destination (i.e., relatives, friends, co-workers, etc.) and travel agents with direct experience on the specific destination will also transfer knowledge and will include in their message their perception or even feelings about its authenticity. This hot authentication (Cohen & Cohen, 2012) is based on tacit knowledge and tends to be customized as a result of the interaction with the potential tourist. The knowledge and hints that a potential tourist got from these sources reveal elements of authenticity that can appeal the tourist in a different register than the one provided by cool formats.

The message of authenticity can be reinforced in 'at destination' referrals (Wang, Severt & Rompf, 2006), which become knowledge transfers with recommendations and comments by locals. These referrals by individuals who are in direct contact with and even live the intangible heritage on a daily basis transmit a higher degree of authenticity based on the source credibility. In fact, hosts make their own interpretation of authenticity (Zhou et al., 2015). The relevance of locals' referrals and recommendations are two-fold: on the one hand, it attracts tourists whose main motivations for the visit are not the intangible heritage; on the other hand, it contributes

to appreciate the authenticity of the experience based on the insiders'/locals' comments. This last aspect connects with the satisfaction of the experience as one of the pillars of destination competitiveness.

Tourist's satisfaction is another relevant aspect of tourism competitiveness, and the perception of authenticity through knowledge transfer about the intangible heritage can increase it. In that sense, destinations with intangible heritage provides the tourist with a formative experience where learning usually occurs. There are several sources at the destination which provide knowledge to tourists about the intangible heritage's history and its cultural meaning. Not only tourists interact with locals in different degrees, but they also visit museums, participate in local tours, access digital and written sources about the heritage, etc.

Van Winkle & Lagay (2012) empirically find that tourists increase their perception of authenticity when learning in their travels. The knowledge transfers at the destination in which the tourists participate are endowed with a higher degree of authenticity. As in museums, people engage in some learning characterised by its free-choice nature (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Most visitors learn something important during their visit to heritage sites (Prentice, Witt & Hamer, 1998). The intangible heritage setting is one of those context where tourists decide to experience and learn about past culture. Rickly-Boyd (2012a) observes that the experience in a heritage site includes the past as a function of the present through symbolic cues and narrative communication. Free-choice learning tends to be non-linear, personally-motivated and characterised by a high degree of discretionary behaviour in the selection of the elements, places and times to learn (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Tourism presents a unique learning environment enabling both unplanned and planned opportunities (Van Winkle & Lagay, 2012).

Timothy (2011) states that several characteristics affect the heritage tourist's understanding and evaluation of experiences and behaviours, such as demographic and psychographic variables and places of origin. Falk & Dierking (2000) analyse learning in museums in a model of overlapping personal, sociocultural and physical contexts along time. This model has become very influential in the heritage field (King, 2015) and it shows how the personal context encompasses the preferred modes of learning and a variety of experiences and knowledge (Falk & Dierking, 2016). The learning styles, and the preferences for activities to learn in tourism experiences, also vary across different groups of tourists.

In the objective view of authenticity, the authentic experience is generated by the recognition of the toured objects as authentic (Wang, 1999). Hence, the validity of the knowledge source in the transfer is paramount. In the constructive perspective, events appear authentic not due to an inherent authenticity but because they are constructed as such from the perspective of beliefs and points of view (Wang 1999). Under this theoretical orientation, the role of knowledge transfer is different since the emotional element and the transfer of stereotypes that fit the tourist's expectations occupy a central position in the mobilization of knowledge. Existential authenticity is based on the idea that people feel more freely self-expressed and authentic than in everyday life because they engage in non-ordinary activities (Wang, 1999). Though this shows an individual-centered process, knowledge transfers that would show a different reality away of daily routines and situations that the tourist experiences at home tend to foster that existential authenticity.

As for the specific sources with provide the knowledge, they have the power to transmit varying degrees of authenticity. Locals in the events and performances associated with the intangible heritage could leave the strongest impact on the tourist.

The tourist learns some basic ideas of the practices, even when s/he does not fully understand the underlying values and meaning. MacCannell (1973) indicated that some tourists make incursions into the life of the society they visit, or are at least actually allowed to observe some aspects of daily life. Though the commodification of culture for tourism purposes could dilute the heritage, witnessing the practices and being able to construct knowledge from it increase the perception of authenticity if the event is 'credible'. Nevertheless, it is not possible to take for granted that locals are going to transmit their knowledge to tourists, because residents at some destinations could see sharing and preserving their culture as conflicting goals (Besculides, Lee & McCormick, 2002). Furthermore, it also applies the paradox that the knowledge which is characterized or recognized as authentic reduces its degree of authenticity (MacCannell, 1976; Cohen 2007), in the sense that the feeling of 'knowledge discovery' is somehow lost.

Museums and culture repositories (videos, digital content, books, etc.) on intangible heritage areas are also key elements in demand-oriented knowledge transfer processes, and where tourists can form an opinion/perception about authenticity. In that sense, museums and culture repositories along with tour guides are key elements in the recognition of authenticity, since authentication endow an event with authenticity (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). But the experience in the museum must be carefully designed in order to transfer knowledge and 'defend' authenticity. The mere presentation of expressions and representations de-contextualised from the original places where the knowledge was developed presents limitations to generate rents in the long term from that knowledge for most categories of tourists; staged or constructive authenticity could be hence rejected by many tourists who could only accept it under certain conditions (security problems, extreme rarity or accessibility, secondary or push motivations for

the tourism experience, etc.). Old-fashioned museums de-authenticate the heritage (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). In addition, there could be some debate about the intensity of knowledge construction that tourists undertake in their visits to intangible heritage museums, but Falk & Dierking (2000) categorically assert that people do learn in museums. In fact, the learning that takes place in those free-choice learning settings is key for the survival of these institutions (Falk & Dierking, 2000) or for its competitiveness in the tourism industry. As for books and written material about the intangible heritage knowledge, they can complement the authenticity of the experience. The authentic reproduction of a pioneer village described by Rickly-Boyd (2012a) attempts to reinforce authenticity through meaning transfer with the village's guidebook.

Tour guides could be classified as an example of hot authentication, since they tend to preserve and reinforce the authenticity of intangible heritage often without being a well-recognized authenticating agent (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Rickly-Boyd (2012a) indicates that heritage interpreters are significant to the tourists' narrative engagement with their knowledge transfers, but Reisinger & Steiner (2006b) are more sceptical about the authenticity that tour guide interpretation can provide since tourists adopt a passive role with them. The knowledge tour guides provide can reinforce the perception of authenticity of intangible heritage by explaining its origin and historical connections. However, their knowledge transfer towards the tourist could also jeopardize his/her perception of objective authenticity by influencing the evaluation of its key characteristics due to the partially-commercial goals which underlie the transfer. Those characteristics are origins, genuineness, pristinity, creativity/novelty, flow of life, and even sincerity (Cohen, 2007). Guides who have been embedded in the intangible heritage provide a more authentic experience, as Shackley (1994) suggests.

Conclusions

This work has analyzed how knowledge transfer processes regarding intangible heritage can have an impact on authenticity, which is a variable with a significant impact on heritage tourism competitiveness. The knowledge nature of the intangible heritage makes it possible to use the framework of the knowledge-based view. Addressing authenticity under this view provides new academic implications in the long debate about the concept in tourism, apart from clarifying its role on destination competitiveness.

Several knowledge transfers occur at the destination that are relevant to offer authenticity in the intangible heritage attractions. The most strategic one is the intergenerational knowledge transfer since it safe-guards its existence in the long- term. Shackley (1994) addresses the sustainability of the authenticity of the intangible cultural heritage, as old jobs are not kept and disappear due to modernization and economic forces. The new generations who acquire this knowledge can be confronted with the genuineness of a knowledge that they have not experienced in first person as part of their daily life. Though Cohen and Cohen (2012) contend that cool authentication can lead to fossilization and loss of value, knowledge transfers can invert this process due to the diffusion of the value of the intangible heritage and even the increase in the pride of keeping it. It would result in an increase of motivation for both sources and recipients in the knowledge transfer.

Codification processes in open-air museums, institutions that preserve living culture, and digital repositories, along with training processes for tour guides and heritage interpretation are also relevant knowledge transfers in the supply side of the heritage. Those transfers can entail a loss of authenticity if the cultural framework is not

also conveyed. Destination management organizations should know the main elements in the planning and development of those processes to give advice on the retention and enhancement of authenticity, since modern tourism trends underline their role in increasing competitiveness in internal aspects of the destination.

The knowledge transfer perspective also sheds light on how authenticity affects destination competitiveness. Promotional activities and material, travel agents and previous visitors convey the authenticity of the destination, which is relevant for the attraction of tourists. The transfer interaction between locals with heritage knowledge and tourists increase the perception of higher authenticity and influences the latter's attraction to and the satisfaction with intangible heritage products. This interaction can have multiple barriers such as language, culture, space and time limitations, and even source motivation as overtourism is becoming a major problem in certain destinations. The experience provided by museums and tours is also relevant to increase the perception of authenticity and hence the satisfaction with intangible heritage knowledge. Destination management organizations have a clear role in most of the marketing activities that entail a knowledge transfer to the tourists and can facilitate the enhancement of authenticity with them. Their role in those intra-destination barriers of demand-based knowledge transfer with an effect on authenticity is more limited but as leading agents in the tourism industry should also contribute to reduce them. In particular, the learning challenges associated with heritage knowledge and the strengthening of sustainable tourism should be on their agenda.

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