

## Authenticity in Tourist Experiences: a new approach based on Edgar Morin's Complexity Theory\*

Autenticidade em Experiências de Turismo: proposição de um novo olhar baseado na Teoria da Complexidade de Edgar Morin

Autenticidad en Experiencias de Turismo: propuesta de una nueva mirada basada en la Teoría de la Complejidad de Edgar Morin

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**Abstract:** *This essay aims to provide an alternative lens for interpreting the construct 'authenticity' in the context of tourist experiences. The literature review presents the main authors of the field and its different known types of authenticity, among them the objective, constructive, and existential authenticity. The analysis and reflection of these different perspectives provide the basis for proposing the adoption of an alternative epistemological ground to the interpretation of authenticity in tourist experiences, which may lead to a better understanding of this phenomenon. Thus, it is proposed that Edgar Morin's Complexity Theory may offer a complementary view to the understanding of authenticity in the context of tourism, insofar as it may allow an alternative to the traditional fragmented way of thinking, and reflections from a more holistic view of the phenomenon. This discussion resulted in propositions, which are discussed at the end of this paper.*

**Keywords:** *Authenticity. Tourism. Complexity Thinking Theory. Edgar Morin.*

**Resumo:** Este ensaio tem o objetivo de fornecer uma lente alternativa para interpretação do construto autenticidade no contexto das experiências turísticas. A revisão de literatura realizada apresenta os principais autores que tratam do tema e suas diferentes perspectivas a respeito de autenticidade, dentre estas a autenticidade

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\* This study was developed during the first author's doctorate, under the supervision of the second author, and was funded by the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq)



objetiva, a construtivista e a existencial. A análise e reflexão dessas diferentes perspectivas oferecem as bases para a proposição da adoção de um solo epistemológico alternativo à interpretação da autenticidade nas experiências turísticas, que pode levar a uma melhor compreensão desse fenômeno. Assim, propõe-se que o Pensamento Complexo de Edgar Morin pode oferecer uma forma complementar para o entendimento da autenticidade no contexto do turismo, na medida em que pode permitir ao pesquisador uma alternativa frente ao pensamento fragmentado tradicional que está atrelado a essa temática, e possibilitar reflexões a partir de uma visão mais holística do fenômeno. Essa discussão resultou em proposições, que são discutidas ao final deste trabalho.

**Palavras-chave:** Autenticidade. Turismo. Pensamento Complexo. Edgar Morin.

**Resumen:** Este ensayo tiene el objetivo de proporcionar una lente alternativa para la interpretación del constructo autenticidad en el contexto de las experiencias turísticas. La revisión de literatura realizada presenta los principales autores que tratan del tema y sus diferentes perspectivas respecto de autenticidad, entre ellas la autenticidad objetiva, la constructivista y la existencial. El análisis y reflexión de estas diferentes perspectivas ofrecen las bases para la proposición de la adopción de un suelo epistemológico alternativo a la interpretación de la autenticidad en las experiencias turísticas, que puede llevar a una mejor comprensión de ese fenómeno. Así, se propone que el Pensamiento Complejo de Edgar Morin puede ofrecer una forma complementaria para el entendimiento de la autenticidad en el contexto del turismo, en la medida en que puede permitir al investigador una alternativa frente al pensamiento fragmentado tradicional que está vinculado a esa temática, y que permite reflexiones a partir de una visión más holística del fenómeno. Esta discusión resultó en proposiciones, que se discuten al final de este trabajo.

**Palabras clave:** Autenticidad. Turismo. Teoría de la Complejidad. Edgar Morin.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The studies of authenticity originate from the period when debates about what is real and what is not real in the context of tourism activities came to the fore due to the process of globalization in the early 1960s. The pioneer author was Boorstin (2011), in his book *The Image*, published in 1962. In his work the word 'authenticity' is not mentioned, but the discussion of the subject runs throughout his entire book, and he is considered the first author to discuss the subject (MacCannell, 1973; Cohen, 1979; Urry, 1990; Chambers, 2000). Boorstin (1962), analyzed the experiences of tourism in the United States and made, in his seminal study, a critique of the superficial and extravagant lifestyle. For the author, people were continuously searching for events that distanced them from the reality of daily life. In addition, the control of nature and the rising

standard of living of the population would be the main reasons for people to create very high expectations of tourist experiences, which could only be achieved through what he called 'pseudo-events', which would be experiences, products, and events manufactured to surprise tourists, distancing them from reality and, therefore, the authenticity of the tourist product.

Another stream of thought about authenticity is initiated by the sociologist MacCannell (1973) in the early 1970s. The author corroborates Boorstin's (1962) views in regards to the inauthentic and superficial social life of the time, but the main difference in their views is that MacCannell (1973) argues that tourists always travel to seek authentic and true experiences, not just to repeat patterns and stay in their comfort zones. Tourism would be a new form of religion, and tourists would be pilgrims seeking to know the world and its authentic cultures. Thus, he

proposed, based on Goffman's (1956) concepts of front stage and back stage, that there are two kinds of authenticity: the real and the staged. The real authenticity is the existing one, and the staged is the one that is 'decorated' to be perceived by the tourist as the real one, which characterizes the place by the perspective of a temporary visitor.

Just as at the beginning, when Boorstin (1962) and McCannell (1973) did not find a consensus on authenticity in tourist experiences, discordance and doubts persisted throughout the studies on the subject.

Ning Wang (1999), a sociologist at Zhongshan University, China, who studies mainly sociology of tourism, proposed an organization and standards for the concepts of authenticity existing in studies in sociology of tourism.

In the search for new knowledge and explanations for authenticity, authors propose that only some of the known authenticity types are valid or seek to combine them together (Reisinger; Steiner, 2006; Kim; Jamal, 2007; Belhassen; Caton; Stewart, 2008; Lau, 2010; Chhabra, 2010). However, this combination can be questioned due to epistemological inconsistencies with the paradigms on which the concepts are supported, as pointed out by Steiner and Reisinger (2006). For instance, one can cite that objective authenticity is based on positivism while existential authenticity is based on existentialism. In this way, the combination of authenticity becomes unscientific if it is based on the classical paradigms of knowledge.

Given the lack of consensus on the theoretical bases that support the studies of authenticity, this essay seeks to contribute to the discussion of the theme and propose

what is meant to be an innovative reflection that may help in the debate about authenticity in tourist experiences, proposing as the objective the analysis of authenticity based on the Theory of Complexity of the French philosopher Edgar Morin (2010), who argues that in order to better understand the modern world, one must abandon simplifying paradigms and thought and adhere to a more holistic form of worldview, that is able to understand the complexity of phenomena as they occur.

## 2 THE ORIGIN OF CONCEPTS OF AUTHENTICITY IN TOURIST EXPERIENCES

Authenticity in tourist experiences is, according to Cohen (1979b), one of the main subjects to be discussed when studying tourism sociology. However, it is possible to find scholars of anthropology (Bruner, 1994; Robinson, 1997; Santana, 2009), geography (Delignières, 2015; Waitt, 2000; Rickly-Boyd, 2013), and architecture (Jokilehto, 2006; Stovel, 2007) who also study the phenomenon. In regards to authenticity as an independent construct from tourism, it is further studied by administrators who advocate for authenticity as a tool for leadership (Gilmore, 2007), linguists (Macdonald; Badler, Dasli, 2006; Pietik; Kelly-Holmes, 2011), historians (Richman, 2008), food and chemical engineers.

The definitions for the term, as can be expected, vary according to the approach taken and scientific area in which authenticity is being studied. Taylor (2001) states that there are as many definitions of authenticity as people who write on the subject. In general, the meaning of authenticity is "the cha-

racter of what is genuine, true" (Houaiss, 2004, p. 77). In the context of tourism experiences there is also discussion about the concept of the term, and Cohen (1988) states that this is a problem in research on authenticity. This author comments that most of the tourists who are surveyed do not even know the meaning of what is being questioned, which weakens the searches. Bruner (1994) corroborates with the aforementioned author and asserts that authenticity is an issue that is much more present in the minds of Western researchers than in the minds of tourists and natives of tourism regions. There are still disagreements about the concept among researchers themselves, another fact that hinders the evolution of studies in authenticity.

Given these disagreements and too many concepts for the same phenomenon, Ning Wang (1999) organized and established patterns in the concepts discussed by other authors. He organized the existing concepts of authenticity and developed and matured the concept of existential authenticity, which contributed to the advancement of knowledge in the area.

Wang (1999) presents several previous concepts adopted and, finally, organizes the definitions. He states that there are three types of authenticity: objective, constructive, and existential (of postmodernity). Objective authenticity uses concepts that originate in museology studies, that is, in physical characteristics, to the originality of artifacts, for example. There are publications that aim to analyze questions of objective authenticity in tourism: research on souvenirs (Littrel; Anderson; Brown, 1993); research that seeks to understand the relationship between tou-

rists and the locality through objective and physical analyses (Wheatman, 1987), among others. Physical geography researchers, specifically, use this type of authenticity to analyze the relationship between tourists and locals (Baudrillard, 1986; Waitt, 2000).

Constructive authenticity stands for the studies and authors who claim that the perception of authenticity is a social construction and is something negotiable. It happens when there is social consensus, through a group of people, for example, that that fact, experience, or phenomenon are authentic (Moscardo; Pearce, 1986; Cohen 1988; Ehrentraut, 1993; Bruner 1994).

Finally, existential authenticity is, for Wang (1999), the one that takes personal questions of each tourist/individual into account, such as their feelings and perceptions to analyze the experience. Before Wang (1999), authors gave their contributions to get to the term 'existential authenticity'. Cohen (1979b) has contributed to the claim that each tourist has a different experience and that these particularities influence the perception of authenticity, and Gottlieb (1982) has sparked reflection on the individuality of each tourist. This author comments that the origin of tourists and their characteristics (social class, lifestyle) influence what each tourist seeks and how he or she feels. For Gottlieb (1982), for example, tourists who are rich at home are more inclined to seek simple experiences, whereas tourists who are from lower social classes would seek more luxurious experiences, since they all seek what is different and exotic. He calls this phenomenon "queen/king for a day and/or beggar for a day." Harkin (1995) agrees, but only in terms of the transition to a higher social class – he

states that tourists can, in a trip, occupy a position that they cannot sustain in their everyday life. Thus, tourism in the third world expresses, according to the author, a nostalgia for colonialism (Harkin, 1995, p. 652).

After initial reflections on the role of each individual and their particularities in the perception and construction of authenticity, several studies appeared taking these facts into account and attending more to the human in the tourism activity. These include the notion that perception of authenticity would have relation with satisfaction (Moscardo; Pearce, 1986); criticism of mass tourism for isolating tourists from the authentic (Weightman, 1987); the risks of tourism commodification to authenticity (Cohen, 1988); division of tourists into types from their relationship with authenticity (Silver, 1993). Eventually, George Hughes (1995), a geographer at the University of Edinburgh, U.K., came to the term 'existential' by breaking with the idea that authenticity would be a social construction.

The term existential authenticity, according to some authors, comes from the German existentialist philosopher Heidegger (Steiner; Reisinger, 2006; Grunewald, 2007) and did not arise with tourism studies, but rather with the initial ideas of philosophers such as Sartre, Rousseau, and Kant (Steiner; Reisinger, 2006). However, the applications of the concept in tourism have arisen according to what has been explained previously to this paragraph.

It is important to note that originally the three typologies of authenticity were thought of as an evolution; however, the constructivist authors disagree with the objectivists, and both are, in turn, criticized by the

existentialists.

### **3 THE TOPICALITY OF AUTHENTICITY STUDIES**

After the organization of the concepts by Wang (1999), the discussion became more divided between the three types of authenticity (Reisinger; Steiner, 2006; Kim; Jamal, 2007; Lau, 2010) and the authors began to position themselves and defend one or another approach and type of authenticity. Despite the great interest in the subject, some scholars have continued to defend the lack of relevance of the studies of authenticity (Taylor, 2001) because of the numerous variables that involve the perception that something is authentic or not. It is like arguing about what truth is, which enters the individual philosophical and ontological spheres. On the other hand, there is research that proves there are tourists who are interested in the authenticity of experiences – they seek original experiences, approach cultural manifestations not yet explored by tourists, and look for the picturesque, the local. In this way, tourists demonstrate concern with the authenticity of the place they visit (Mkono, 2012). It is believed that along with globalization and the over-homogenization of products and services offered that come to light with contemporary modernity, an opposing force arises through greater local valuation (Santos, 2011). This resistance awakens in people the search for more authentic experiences and, therefore, against this whirlwind that is globalization. Thus, alternative consumption options emerge that have an increasing audience, and authentic experiences are on this path. Examples of this are

collaborative consumer initiatives, including tourism, such as *Dineer*, *Rent a Local Friend*, *Couch Surfing*, among others. Therefore, mass tourism becomes increasingly strong, but against this there is another type of tourist who seeks authenticity in their travels (Belhassen, Caton, 2006; Mkono, 2012). Thus, especially for cultural, ethnic, and historical tourism, authenticity is crucial (Wang, 1999).

In the search for new knowledge and explanations for authenticity, authors propose that only some of the known authenticity types are valid (Reisinger; Steiner, 2006; Kim; Jamal, 2007; Lau, 2010). Reisinger and Steiner (2006) propose the abandonment of objective authenticity and Lau (2010) states that only the objective exists, for example. Following other paths, authors seek to group some types of authenticity in their analyses to better understand it as a whole. This is the case of Belhassen, Caton and Stewart (2008), who set up a theoretical model that seeks to better understand the relationships with the authenticity of religious pilgrims in the Holy Land. The authors come to a concept of authenticity, 'THEOPLACITY', which would be the union of the beliefs of the tourists, with the place, and the activities. These would be the factors so that the experience is authentic in the studied context, and they argue for the merger of what would be the objective authenticity (place), and the existential authenticity (activities).

Chhabra (2010), in turn, proposes the concept of 'negotiated' authenticity, which claims to be the first concept that considers market segmentation to analyze authenticity. It analyzes tourists by age (generation) and lifestyle, trying to understand the rela-

tionship of Generation Y with authenticity. In his study he suggests that negotiated authenticity is a trade-off between objective authenticity and constructive authenticity.

This union of types of authenticity, however, can be challenged because of epistemological problems with the paradigms and modes of thinking upon which they are based (Steiner; Reisinger, 2006). Existential authenticity, for example, is based on existentialism, while constructive authenticity is based on constructivism – they function within different worldviews.

The researcher Rickly-Boyd (2012) bases herself on the theory of Walter Benjamin, sociologist of the Frankfurt School, who defends that authenticity is a construct that must be studied in a global context. She argues that object, place, and experience must be united in a framework of authenticity. From this, the author seeks in Benjamin's theory, regarding aura and authenticity, support for her arguments. The aura, at first, is a quality perceived by people from contact with an object, city, or place. And this feeling is capable of being felt even after the moment of contact happens, as is the case with souvenirs and photographs. From this, the author states that authenticity is relational: it occurs from the relationship between two things, especially traditions, rituals, and aura. She further states that authenticity can be at the same time measured, felt, and experienced.

Rickly-Boyd's (2012) study mainly contributes as a return to the much-needed concern for the object, since tourism depends on the physical environment to happen, and not just on someone feeling a sense of authenticity from an individual action.

However, it is believed that it is possible to go beyond this concept. The next section presents our proposal.

#### 4 TOWARD THE COMPLEXITY OF AUTHENTICITY IN TOURIST EXPERIENCES

As shown in the previous section, the tendency of the latter authors is to combine 'types' of authenticity by looking at more than one characteristic of the experience (Belhassen; Caton; Stewart, 2008; Chhabra, 2010; Rickly-Boyd, 2012). What is proposed in this essay is to advance a little more in the reflections on authenticity and to study it in a more contextualized manner, proposing that the object, the social environment, the individual questions of the tourists and all the environment in which the tourist experience happens must be interpreted in a holistic way, as in practice, and not in a simplified and fragmented way as it has been since the beginning of studies of authenticity.

It is important to clarify that this paper does not attempt to propose new concepts of authenticity to further increase the list of subtypes and variations and to make the debate on the subject even more complicated as Taylor (2001) lamented. The aim is to propose an advance in the debate, starting from the search for the understanding of authenticity in tourist experiences via adopting a form of research that can unite the already established theories, but also to allow different reflections. Thus, it is believed that researchers can be offered a way of approaching the phenomenon to better understand the experiences of tourists.

In the sense of an alternative proposition to the current thinking about authentic-

ty, we have considered reflections of authors who have been discussing the topic, such as Mkono (2012), who considers that studies of authenticity should be more situational so that the concepts diverge from Eurocentrism. Similarly, Grunewald (2004) argues that fixed criteria are incapable of analyzing authenticity, since authenticity occurs in a specific social environment. Thus, it is proposed a way of thinking capable of analyzing specific questions, without establishing fixed parameters, according to the context of each tourism experience.

Hence, this study advocates looking at authenticity based on the Complex Thinking Theory. This way of thinking allows us to combine the elements of existing theories and to engender new questions from the contextualized analysis of the phenomenon. The Complexity Theory was developed by the French philosopher Edgar Morin (2011) who states that in order to better understand the modern world, fragmented and hyper-simplified thought must be abandoned, since it reduces the world to small parts that are unable to present coherent answers.

From this, Morin (2011) states that complexity does not see man as a noise (as in positivism), nor ignores the object and looks only at the man apart from the context (as in humanism). It considers, however, the system/ecosystem interdependence, and states that "the world is present inside our minds, which are inside the world" (2011, p. 43).

Thus, Complexity Theory is based on open systems and the author argues that man must understand that subjects and objects that are considered absolute fail to see a huge rift of knowledge between them; however, from the moment they recognize

this 'abyss,' they become open to new possibilities that can lead to new knowledge, thus making progress in science.

It is possible to draw a parallel of these reflections of Morin (2011) with the existing theory of authenticity. From the moment one gives up the supremacy of 'existential authenticity' (of man) or the superiority of 'objective authenticity', it is possible to recognize that between these two elements of the tourist experience, man and object, there is a multitude of possibilities for the analysis and evolution of knowledge in the area, as some authors of authenticity have already argued, which seek to combine concepts in tourism experiences (Grunewald, 2007; Belhassen; Cato n, 2006; Chhabra, 2010; Mkono, 2012).

In order to do so, it is important to clarify that Morin's Complex Thinking Theory (2011) is not intended to be the only possible paradigm, nor superior to other developed knowledge, but rather able to aggregate previous knowledge, without its limitations and blindness, and allows the possibility of observing the whole with broader and coherent perspectives to the immensity of factors in which the realities are inserted. In the author's words:

The 'scienza nuova' does not destroy the classical alternatives, it does not bring a monist solution that would be like the essence of truth. But the alternative terms become antagonistic, contradictory, and at the same time complementary at the heart of a more ample vision, a vision that, in turn, will have to meet and confront new alternatives. (Morin, 2011, p. 53)

It is necessary to clarify that in the process followed by Morin (2011), the classical theories lose their absolute character and cease to be reductionist. However, it is important to emphasize that what is sought is not holism, which may want to aggregate the totality, that the fuller it is, the emptier it becomes. What is sought is the complex unity, to unify analytical/reductionist thinking to globality, in a dialectic that is capable of understanding that the part is in the whole and that the whole exists only for the part.

Thus, this study proposes the adoption of the complexity paradigm as a means capable of understanding the authenticity of tourist experiences. What is sought is to get rid of the bonds that fragment the previously used philosophies for the development of knowledge in authenticity of tourist experiences (existentialism, positivism, and constructivism), in order to unite the developed views, while being aware that they are integral parts of a complex whole. As seen, Morin's theory is intended to be an open system that allows the coexistence of different ways of thinking, and that all are parts of the whole. This whole is complexity. Such statements can be observed in the quotation:

Complexity appears where simplifying thought fails, but it integrates in itself everything that puts order, clarity, distinction, and precision in knowledge. Whereas simplifying thought disintegrates the complexity and reality, complex thought integrates the simplifying modes of thought as much as possible; but refuses the mutilating, reductionist, unidimensional, and finally blinding consequences of a simplification that is taken for the reflection of what is real in reality. (Morin, 2011, p. 6)

Thus, it is believed and argued that only the adoption of a new perspective, from an alternative epistemological ground, a deeper reflection will be able to understand and explain some questions still unanswered.

The paradigm allows one to understand the phenomenon in a singular manner by observing it while considering the greatest possible complexity, and not just limiting itself to a sphere or actor (object or social environment or consumer). The paradigm of complexity contributes from the moment it analyzes the various possibilities and views. Cohen (1979b) already argued in his theory that all stakeholders (actors) are important for the authenticity of tourist experiences.

Thus, the philosophy of Morin (2011) allows for not only the point of view of tourists, but also for that of the local population, service providers, and others involved, as well as the observed physical aspects, thus allowing a more effective study of the whole.

Besides the actors, the social environment is also fundamental, since the experience of one tourist influences and is influenced by the experiences of others, according to the theory of experiential marketing (Petr, 2002). Likewise, McIntosh and Prentice (1999), authors of authenticity, emphasize that personal relationships and emotions during the experience influence the perception of authenticity, including the physical authenticity of the place.

It is therefore proposed that not only the authenticity of the artifacts, physical attractions, and objects, nor the isolated social environment, nor the actions and characteristics of individuals (be they the local population or tourists) alone are important – they all need one another to exist and form the

'whole' of experience. This thought also allows the propositions to be put forward be used to understand the experience as researchers (with their particularities for knowing concepts and theories about the subject), as well as to analyze the experiences of others, and to perceive the nuances between different experiences in different places. Thus, it is proposed that the study of authenticity may encompass conception (or non-conception), understanding, and experience of authenticity.

In addition to the concepts and theories already studied by previous authors, it is proposed that some factors of analysis should be treated in the context of tourist experiences, since they can influence the perceptions and experiences of individuals: government initiatives, marketing efforts, tourism destination branding (which generates expectations that influence the experience) and situational and specific issues of each experience.

Government initiatives and all issues pertaining to each situation are relevant to understanding the whole. Marketing efforts and government had already been cited by Steiner and Reisinger (2006) as relevant in attracting tourists. It is believed that they are also important for the perception of authenticity by the tourist, and through the Tourist Destination Brand theory it is possible to state that tourists' destination image before the trip influences their experience since it generates some type of expectation (positive or negative). Likewise, promotional efforts and the identity of destinations (such as population and government) are also important in the perception of tourist experience (Molanen; Rainisto, 2009). Bruner (1991), an an-

thropologist who researches authenticity as early as the 1990s, argued that service promises could often be very different from tourist experiences, and Pocock (1992) describes in his work that a book romanticizing a locality can influence and distort the perception that tourists have of a place. Chhabra, Hearly, and Sills (2003) also address the importance of marketing in their studies. They report that the perception of authenticity is controlled by the media and by word of mouth.

In addition to these issues of promotion, marketing, and government, which promotes, funds, and supports many activities linked to tourism, other situational issues of the locality (being more or less related with government, isolated geographically, among others) or particularities of a tourist's experience (which may suffer an accident, or have a special relationship with the locality, may lose a flight, a reservation, among others) may emerge (Grunewald, 2004; Mkono, 2010) during the process of experience or understanding of an experience. Thus, according to Morin's theory (2011), a system of open interaction between the mentioned characteristics and situations is proposed. Therefore, through the way of thinking conceived by Morin (2011), it is proposed the search for the comprehension of the whole, but also of the parts that form it, in order to better understand the importance, the relationships, and the conception of authenticity in tourist experiences.

## 6 FINAL REMARKS

Through the presented, it is possible to perceive that from the beginning of the first discussions about authenticity, in the

1960s, diverse lines of thought appeared with respect to this construct. Anthropologists, sociologists, architects, geographers, and scholars from other areas also study the phenomenon, always according to their research objects. Thus, with more emphasis on sociology and tourism, currents of thought were presented that gave rise to three main types of authenticity: objective, constructive, and existential (of postmodernity).

From the late 1990s, however, authors have been seeking to combine or defend the supremacy of some aspects in the detriments of others within the authenticity panorama. However, this study proposes different epistemological grounds in order to obtain a new look of authenticity in tourist experiences. This ground is Edgar Morin's Theory of Complex Thought.

In this way, the classical theories used to support discussions based on positivism, constructivism, and existentialism lose their absolute character and what is sought is a more complex understanding of the realities studied. Thus, a more thorough look at different aspects and realities can be directed to the phenomenon, so that one can get closer to the experiences as they are experienced by tourists, local population, service providers, and all those involved in the studied reality.

Thus, we encompass a great variety of and peculiarities of all the actors and elements of the experience (physical, social, environmental, narratives, perspectives, from the positions of each service provider, among others). All make up the environment in which experiences occur, influence and are influenced by each other.

The Complexity Theory and the de-

fragmentation of knowledge provide, therefore, appropriate epistemological grounds for the study of a complex phenomenon such as tourism and especially for the in-depth study of authenticity in this context.

In this way, and based on the arguments developed in this study, we elaborate some propositions that can be studied or deepened in future studies. They are:

1. The study of authenticity is relevant as the new forms of consumption and the new behavior that tourists are developing with tourist destinations increasingly demonstrate the search for experiences close to what is meant by original cultural issues, visits to less touristy places and greater relationship with locals and their day-to-day life. This is exemplified by new forms of collaborative consumption, creative tourism, and the emergence of platforms such as *Couch Surfing*, *Rent a Local Friend*, among others.
2. For the understanding of authenticity to be coherent and relevant with what occurs in tourist experiences, one cannot isolate physical aspects, social aspects, individual consumer issues, individual service provider issues, and individual issues of the local population.
3. Marketing, in particular the efforts to promote tourist destination brands or tourism products, influence the perception of authenticity in tourist experiences. This occurs as the image that the

consumer constructs even before the experience generates expectations that influence their perceptions.

4. The authenticity of an experience is built throughout the consumer's contact with the receiving community, being negotiated at all times throughout the experience.

In this way, it is understood that these propositions are effective for generating reflections capable of directing future researches and, in turn, were elaborated and reflected on the understanding that the Complexity Thinking Theory allowed us to have of the phenomenon studied. Thus, this paper fulfills its objective of providing an alternative lens for construct interpretation of authenticity in the context of tourist experiences, from the moment it demonstrates the possibility of construct analysis based on Edgar Morin's Complexity Theory.

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