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Authentication: Hot and cool

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Abstract

Seeking to shift the discussion of the concept of authenticity in tourism scholarship from the dominant concern with tourist experiences to the more sociological problem of the processes of authentication of tourist attractions, we conceptualize two analytically distinct, but practically often intersecting, modes of authentication of attractions, ‘cool’ and ‘hot’. Through a range of examples, we demonstrate the implications of the two modes for the dynamics of the constitution of tourist attractions, examine their interaction, and illustrate how ‘cool’ and ‘hot’ authentication can be conducive to different types of personal experiences of authenticity. We furthermore explore the crucial question of who is authorized to authenticate tourist attractions, and thereby uncover issues of power and contestation in the politics of authentication.

Highlights

Shifts focus from concept of authenticity to processes of authentication.
Conceptualizes two modes of authentication of tourist attractions, ‘cool’ and

â€œhotâ€. â–º Distinguishes how cool and hot authentication interact and constitute attractions. â–º Links processes of authentication with personal experiences of authenticity. â–º Unpacks issues of power and contestation bound up in the politics of authentication.



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Keywords

authentication; authenticity; performativity; power; tourist attractions

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