

THE REAL WORLD: FRAMES OF AUTHENTICITY IN
FEATURE ARTICLES OF LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINES

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ABSTRACT

Some scholars suggest that contemporary interest in tourism and foreign travel is partially the result of a modern “authenticity crisis.” In other words, a disruption of the relationship between individuals and their sense of authenticity has inspired the pursuit of that lost authenticity through foreign destinations thought to still contain authentic elements. Accordingly, this qualitative frame analysis addressed the question of how the concept of authenticity is framed within three leisure travel magazines: *Travel + Leisure*, *National Geographic Traveler*, and *Condé Nast Traveler*. Briefly, it was found that there are four primary textual frames applying to the concept of authenticity, all of which contain sub-frames that further narrow their usage. For example: one primary frame identified is that of “authenticity as a way of life”, which often manifests through the sub-frame of “authenticity as a *rural* way of life”. These identified frames and sub-frames bore many important similarities and differences to past literature on authenticity and destination representation in tourism and travel literature, particularly that of MacCannell (1973, 1976), Cohen (1979, 1988), Chang and Holt (1991), Lutz and Collins (1993), Hall (1994) and Santos (2004). On a broader scale, this analysis also shows that these travel magazines primarily frame authenticity as being located within destinations and ways of life that reflect fewer aspects of the modern, urban or commercially developed world. The implication of this being that these travel magazines are, discursively, discouraging further development in the toured destination as it suits the needs of their audience—those seeking a lost authenticity.