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In the potter's hand: tourism and the everyday practices of authentic intangible cultural heritage in a pottery village

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ABSTRACT

Whilst widely recognised as important, the concept of authenticity remains highly contested, particularly in relation to sustainable intangible cultural heritage (ICH) tourism. Using the empirical case of the pottery village of Margarites, Crete, the conceptual goal of this paper is to explore from the host community perspective the question of what authentic ICH *is*, as well as what this *means* in everyday practices of ceramic crafting in the context of increasing tourism demand for authentic pottery products and experiences. Empirically, we explore how tourism impacts the perceptions and practices of Margarites community members regarding the authenticity of their ceramic crafting ICH. On the basis of interviews and observations, our findings provide three main contributions to the literature. Firstly, based on our findings, we conceptualise authenticity in relation to ICH as constituted by the 3Ps: people-related, place-related and product-related approaches that are the outcome of social relations. Secondly, we provide a host community perspective on the perceptions of authenticity as influenced by tourism in relation to ICH of ceramic crafting. Finally, our empirical case of a Cretan pottery village affirms existing insights about understanding the sustainability challenges of authentic ICH tourism.

Introduction

Pottery is one of humanity's most enduring crafts. For thousands of years pottery has been seen as possessing functional, spiritual, artistic, aesthetic, and educational value in the everyday life of society (Moorey, 2020). In the hands of a historian or archaeologist, an old broken piece of pottery provides insights into the lives, times and material heritage of communities of a distant past. For many communities, pottery craftsmanship is therefore imbued with high cultural value and represents an important form of cultural heritage. Yet, the value of any given cultural heritage is neither inherent nor intrinsic but a socially constructed process of selective valuation of the past in light of present meanings in any given place. Wesener (2017) in developing a model of experiential authenticity outlines that the value ascribed to heritage and heritage places rests on the two components of material-physical (product-oriented) and socio-cultural (process-oriented). It is these

components that also form the basis for what comes to be classified and contested as authentic heritage, as exemplified by the case of pottery.

Pottery craftsmanship is the form of production and social organisation behind the crafting process. It provides a material basis for symbolism of the traditions, lifestyles, and values of the culture in which the ceramic is produced (Emeafor & Eze-Uzomaka, 2018). This form of cultural expression has been termed as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Conceived by UNESCO in 2003, ICH includes practices as varied as languages, performing arts, sports, festive events, rituals and crafts (UNESCO, 2003). These practices are constantly recreated and transmitted over generations of a given community through their interactions with each other, their history, and their environment, leading ICH to be seen as having strong cultural authenticity (UNESCO, 2003). While the concept of authenticity and authentic ICH remain highly contested (Rickly, 2022), the idea of authentic ICH has become one of the most important resources in contemporary cultural heritage tourism (Castillo-Villar & Merlo-Simoni, 2022). Whereas Western tourists are increasingly demanding 'authentic' cultural heritage in pursuit of learning opportunities and emotional connections to the places they visit, non-Western tourists have been found to be less concerned about a search for object authenticity (Mkono, 2013; Rickly-Boyd, 2012; Timothy, 2011). Consequently, the process of commodifying ICH into tourism products for tourists add to the contestations around authenticity of ICH (Rickly et al., 2023). How then do communities safeguard their ICH and related sense of authenticity of the ascribed cultural and socio-economic values in the face of increasing tourism?

The conceptual goal of this paper is to explore, from the perspective of a host community, the questions of what counts as authentic ICH, how this is made, and what this means in everyday practices and performances in the context of increasing tourist demand. These questions are explored through a case study of the ceramic village of Margarites, Crete. Tourism scholarship predominantly focuses on understanding the authenticity of ceramic ICH from tourists' perspectives (i.e. how do tourists perceive authentic ceramics, and how are they involved in processes of authentication?) to the exclusion of host communities (Elkasrawy, 2020; Hung et al., 2016; Revilla & Dodd, 2003). However, as the inheritors and interpreters of their ICH, host communities are responsible for defining, reproducing, and adapting ICH authenticity, and the neglect of ICH practitioners in tourism scholarship and decision-making processes thus reduces the effectiveness of resultant management strategies (Zhang et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2015). There is a pressing need to investigate how authenticity is articulated by communities, how it is practiced, and by whom. Empirically, this study addresses the question: *How does tourism impact the perceptions and practices of Margarites community members regarding the authenticity of their ICH of ceramic crafting?*

We make three main contributions to the literature. Firstly, we conceptualise authenticity in relation to ICH as constituted by the 3Ps: *people*-related, *place*-related and *product*-related components. Secondly, we provide a host community perspective on the perceptions of authenticity as influenced by tourism in relation to ICH of ceramic crafting. Finally, our study affirms insights in the literature by providing an empirical case of a Cretan pottery village. In the following sections, we first review the existing literature on authenticity in relation to heritage, ICH, tourism and host communities. Next, we present our case study and methods, followed by our findings, discussion and conclusion.

Variants of authenticity in cultural heritage

Authenticity is one of the most overused terms in cultural heritage and tourism contexts. Riddled with much ambiguity and many perceived limitations, some argue for its abandonment as an academic concept (Cole, 2007; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). Despite criticisms, authenticity continues to be the basis upon which the value of cultural heritage is determined (Moore et al., 2021). In contrast to everyday understanding of authenticity as a personal sense of being 'genuine' or 'true' (Lee et al., 2021), across the social sciences and humanities authenticity is often conceptualised as the process

by which something is confirmed as original (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). This authentication process is complex and highly contested because it involves histories, traditions, practices, and emotions that weave together a cultural narrative difficult to unpick through academic theorisation (Munjeri, 2004). Several attempts to deconstruct the concept of authenticity have tended to take a materialistic and/or constructive perspective. For instance, Selwyn (1996) differentiates between 'cool' and 'hot' authenticity, where 'cool' authentication is carried out by knowledgeable, external 'expert' bodies, whilst 'hot' authentication relates to the emotional felt experience of host communities. Su (2018) instead argues for 'subjective authenticity' that takes seriously the ways ICH practitioners rely on their own subjectivities in the heritage authentication process. These perspectives highlight the challenge of a common approach to authenticity and authentication in relation to (intangible) cultural heritage. Wang's (1999) categorisation of authenticity as *objective*, *constructive*, and *existential* represents a dominant approach adopted as a basis or departure point for most studies on the topic.

Objective approaches to authenticity build on modernist scholarship (Boorstin, 1964; MacCannell, 1973) to argue that authentic heritage is exclusive and cannot be recreated or imitated for consumption, framing 'genuine' and 'fake' authenticity as an essentialist binary (Wesener, 2017). However, objective authenticity is heavily criticised by postmodern scholars (Bruner, 1994; Cohen, 1988; Guerra et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2019; Su, 2018; Wang, 1999), who argue that neither objective reality nor absolute authentic culture exist. Furthermore, the privilege of determining what is genuinely authentic often falls to those in highly institutionalised positions such as national governments or international agencies, entrenching power relations in decision-making processes (Bruner, 1994; Cohen & Cohen, 2012). In this context, a revisionist position of constructivism emerged in relation to authenticity (Wang, 1999).

Constructive approaches to authenticity deconstruct the binaries of objective authenticity to focus on the subjective perspective of the individual (Kim et al., 2019). Under constructivist approaches, authenticity is socially constructed and therefore negotiable, assuming multiple meanings depending on both the contextual situation in which it is considered, and by whom it is observed (Cole, 2007). However, both constructive and objective approaches to authenticity are object-related concepts, as evidenced by Bruner's (1994) influential work defining a four-part typology of authenticity for the outdoor living museum in New Salem, Illinois. Arguing that neither approach can account for intangible cultural experiences, Wang (1999) developed the concept of existential authenticity to address these concerns.

Existential approaches to authenticity draw upon postmodern epistemologies. They extend the pluralistic subjectivity of constructive approaches by placing value on people themselves to consider the identity, experiences, and actions of ICH practitioners rather than the resources that ICH may provide the tourism industry (Kim et al., 2019). From this perspective, the problem of (in)authenticity that so preoccupies modernist scholars is not considered to be an issue. Existential approaches acknowledge that authentication processes are reiterative and performative, so that authenticity is both socially constructed into multiple realities and a temporally fluid choice that people continuously make (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Applied properly, the concept of existential authenticity in tourism may be understood as a feature of the (inter)action between landscapes, artefacts, actors, and tourists at a destination, and can therefore provide insights into the ways in which the authenticity of an individual (i.e. the 'authentic self') results from the negotiation of that individual's connections with others in a given location (Moore et al., 2021).

Tourism, host communities and everyday authenticity of ICH

The needs of host communities often intertwine with authentic ICH preservation. Consequently, sustainable tourism development is widely regarded as an effective solution to preserve, protect, and even revive endangered forms of ICH (Qiu et al., 2022). Although it is difficult to assess the impacts of tourism on ICH authenticity due to the subjective nature of authenticity and the dynamic nature of ICH practices (Ranwa, 2022), scholars have nevertheless investigated the impacts

of tourism on ICH authenticity for a variety of cultural elements including language (Castillo-Villar & Merlo-Simoni, 2022), calligraphy (Zhou et al., 2013), music (Li & Zhou, 2021), dancing (Wall & Xie, 2005), theatre (Hui-Bin et al., 2015), rituals (Su, 2021), crafts (Inanna et al., 2020; Trupp et al., 2023), and in the Cretan context, diet (Pieroni et al., 2022). These studies tend to focus on tourist perspectives with a neglect on exploring those of host communities.

Tourism-related cultural commodification has been shown to protect and enhance local cultural identities by generating demand for and attributing value to ICH, reviving and adapting cultural practices that would otherwise have disappeared (Cohen, 1988; Medina, 2003; Shepherd, 2002). In Crete for example, tourism-related demand has provided social and economic incentives to restore traditional festivities including raki celebrations where the first distillation of the year is sampled (Moorey, 2020). Economic activities relating to ICH are shown to increase host community attachment to ICH, fostering feelings of peace, satisfaction, and pride at authentic cultural offerings, as well as strengthening collective self-determination, agency, and sense of ownership over their culture (Guerra et al., 2022; Khanom et al., 2019). For instance, Panikkaveettil et al. (2020) highlight how tourism has provided pottery communities in India, Fiji and Mexico with opportunities to break free from the cycle of poverty. Furthermore, Emeafor and Eze-Uzomaka's (2018) study of Ushafa pottery centre, Nigeria, concluded that pottery-driven tourism growth has strengthened the local economy and improved basic amenity provision and self-esteem among community members. Despite these benefits, the potential of tourism to negatively impact the authenticity of ICH for host communities is also a concern. The standardisation of tourism destinations is considered to erode the essential meaning and significance of ICH products for locals, in turn diminishing their quality of life and spiritual belonging and potentially destroying ICH entirely (Zhou et al., 2015).

Cultural commodification, it has been argued, entails the creation of 'exotic' culture dressed in a thin veneer of authenticity for tourist consumption (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). This is seen to lead tourists to primarily consume fake authenticity through cultural performances in staged back regions (MacCannell, 1973) of a destination in what Boorstin (1964) dubbed 'pseudo-events'. These pseudo-events are argued to stem from the commodification of culture for tourist consumption, often with the unintended result of standardising and homogenising both cultural elements and tourist experiences (Bardone et al., 2013). In extreme examples, the commodification of cultural heritage through tourism is argued to standardise the world into a single monoculture, a 'Disneyfication' process that transforms everything into a theme park and makes authentic tourism impossible (Shepherd, 2002).

This perceived sacrifice of 'true authenticity' by host communities in pursuit of more inauthentic, manipulated, and alienated ways of mediating culture has been extensively criticised by modernist scholars (MacCannell, 1973; Ranwa, 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). However, criticisms of standardisation assume both an inability of tourists to distinguish authentic from inauthentic cultural heritage and a willingness of tourism providers to provide inauthentic objects and experiences that erode the original cultural and spiritual meaning behind their value (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). For example, Su (2018) found that ICH practitioners do not differentiate between more and less commodified forms of ICH but rather regard both as equally important in realising their subjective needs. Wang (1999) argues that staged authenticity helps to protect fragile cultures by acting as a substitute for the original and hence diverting tourists from consuming it, whilst Handapangoda et al. (2019) found that tourist commodification of Sri Lankan wooden masking crafts has simultaneously contributed to both the revitalisation of tradition and trivialisation of ritual production. Thus, cultural commodification generates intra-community tensions between those community members wishing to use traditional culture for community expression and those seeking economic growth (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993; Trupp et al., 2023). In light of this, there has been a gradual shift in scholarship over the last two decades focussing on empowering host communities involved in authentication processes (Cole, 2007; Montero, 2020; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012), with many efforts concentrating on women in particular for the economic empowerment provided by commodifying authentic crafting practices for tourists (Bakas, 2014; Oueslati & Slimene, 2022).

Host community perspectives and experiences of ICH authenticity have remained understudied, particularly regarding ceramic crafts (Rickly, 2022). A notable study by Maruyama et al. (2008) investigated the perspectives of ceramicists in Santa Fe, New Mexico, as to the authenticity of their craft and the impacts of tourism on it. They found that although artists altered the exterior appearance of their pieces to meet tourist demand, they took care to adhere to traditional manufacturing processes, and viewed their contemporary ceramic production as 'enlargements' of culture rather than erosions of authenticity. In a recent study on crafts and tourism micro-entrepreneurship in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, Trupp et al. (2023) give voice to the underrepresented 'local indigenous voices in the discourse of the handicraft and souvenir sector' and perceived commodification of local culture. They found a broad social acceptance of a certain level of commodification of culture due to the increase in tourism's economic opportunities. This is in a context of ongoing concerns about finding a balance in order to protect traditional knowledge, promote authentic indigenous crafts and reduce misrepresentation and appropriation of local crafts. These findings aligns with an existentialist perspectives that shows how numerous, dynamically shifting authenticities coexist at a destination. Recent research therefore calls for greater emphasis on safeguarding ICH practitioners and their ability to freely express the dynamic meanings and values they associate with their heritage (Ranwa, 2022; Rickly, 2022).

Existential approaches to authenticity are applied to ICH contexts in terms of their potential to facilitate insights into tourist travel motivation and behaviour for use as a strategic guiding resource for tourism destination management (Lengyel, 2022; Mkono, 2020; Serhat & Uzuncan, 2021). However, this focus on tourist experiences neglects host communities, presenting a key oversight in the literature. In the context of existential authenticity, host communities – particularly those involved as ICH practitioners – are key to activating authentic experiences by unlocking an 'authentic self' for tourists, products, practices, and practitioners themselves through ceramic crafting activities (Rickly-Boyd, 2012). The authenticity of ICH should therefore be explored *both* through cultural objects and practices (using objective or constructive approaches) and through their practitioners (using existential approaches) (Ranwa, 2022).

Given the numerous elements of authenticity in relation to cultural heritage, many contemporary studies adopting a constructivist approach have focused on the relationship between authenticity and tourist motivations, behaviours and experiences (Bruner, 1994; Tan & Kusumo, 2021; Wall & Xie, 2005). However, scholars have remained somewhat fixated on categorising the subjective facets of authenticity in an attempt to definitively determine what authenticity *is* (Revilla & Dodd, 2003; Timothy & Boyd, 2003) This fixation restricts the extent to which constructive approaches may help illuminate questions of what authenticity *does*, and how authenticity *evolves* (Rickly et al., 2023), particularly in relation to host community perspectives. Recent scholarship has therefore transitioned from concepts of object-oriented to activity-oriented authenticity (Rickly, 2022).

Case study and method

Crete is the largest Greek island, and the fifth largest in the Mediterranean, boasting a rich history of successive civilisations dating back to the Middle Paleolithic age in 128,000 B.C.E. Crete has attracted travellers for centuries, but prior to World War Two these primarily consisted of archaeologically or classically educated scholars fascinated by the art, history, and mythology of the island. Today, the rich cultural history of the island, coupled with its mountainous and coastal scenery and mild climate, are major tourism drivers to the region (Briassoulis, 2003). International tourist arrivals to Crete rose rapidly from 1.5 million visitors in 1990 to 2.5 million in 1997, and by 2014 Crete welcomed 3.5 million visitors annually (Moorey, 2020). Today, tourism is a leading economic sector of the region, with a record 5.3 million visitors in 2019 directly employing 40,000 people (6.3% of the population) and bringing in 3.6 billion euros (40% of GDP) (Greece Investor Guide, 2023; Statista, 2021; Tsimelas et al., 2021). In 2022, tourism numbers are predicted to have surpassed

pre-pandemic records, indicating a trend of increasing tourism to the region barely slowed by a global pandemic (Piotrek, 2022).

Despite its economic benefits, the Cretan tourism industry has come under increasing criticism regarding its socio-cultural sustainability. Crete is ranked among the top ten most overcrowded EU tourism regions of its size, and Vourdoubas (2020) concluded that current levels of over-tourism will worsen present levels of economic, social, cultural and environmental degradation. The growing awareness of this negative potential has led policy-makers to increase efforts to harness tourism as a means to diminish regional inequalities, improve infrastructure, and preserve tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Moorey, 2020).

Underlined by an interpretivist approach, this study utilises a case study design focussing on the ceramics centre of Margarites in the Psiloritis UNESCO Global Geopark. Margarites is a small village with a permanent population of around 200, located 27 km southeast of Rethymno town in Crete (see Figure 1) (Psiloritis Geopark, 2015). There is evidence of Minoan settlements in the area as early as the fourteenth century B.C.E., but Margarites was founded at the beginning of the thirteenth century C.E. (Psiloritis Geopark, 2015). Nearby clay deposits at the foot of Mount Psiloritis mean that Margarites is uniquely suited for pottery production, and craftspeople began producing ceramics there during the late seventeenth century (Bakas, 2014; Voyatzoglou, 1974). This economic base saw Margarites become a flourishing town, and today Margarites retains its reputation as the most important ceramics centre in Western Crete and a central node of ceramic trading networks across and beyond the island (Bakas, 2014). Margarites is one of only two pottery centres to remain on Crete. The knowledge of where to source and how to produce the clay is traditionally passed down generationally from Master to apprentice, and it takes over a decade to become a Master potter (Voyatzoglou, 1974). Currently there are 23 ceramicists operating 19 workshops in Margarites, and potters primarily work independently to produce smaller-scale pieces such as cups and bowls. Domestic and international tourists flock to the village between April and October, drawn by the village's ceramic craftsmanship as well as its wooded gorge and traditional architecture (Psiloritis Geopark, 2015). Limited accommodation and lack of night-life in the village means that most visitors pass through on day trips from coastal hotels to nearby Eleftherna and Arkadi Monastery, and most pottery shops consequently have relatively short opening hours from 10am-6pm.

Margarites was selected as a case study due to the presence of local 'gatekeepers' – community members known to the authors who could facilitate access to the village by introducing potential study participants, organising informal introductory meetings, and interpreting for participants speaking limited English. Initial gatekeeper introductions to participants resulted in a snowballing sampling approach in which participants referred other participants. The small community size means that every community member involved in ceramic crafts who could be contacted was approached to participate in this research (25 people). 50% of the Margarites ceramics population participated in this research, representing 63% of ceramic workshops and 80% of shops selling ceramics (see Table 1). Participants were predominantly male and of Margaritan origin (53% for both) and varied in age between 25 and 75 years. 18% of participants are at least the second generation of craftspeople in their family. These demographics are broadly representative of the Margarites ceramicist population, although a high proportion of international ceramicists (without family connections to the craft) participated due to their familiarity with speaking English.

Data collection was conducted by the first author over three weeks in May 2023, between the Easter spike of domestic tourists and summer spike in international tourists. The main data collection methods utilised were (performative) semi-structured interviews and (non-) participant observation which involved carefully making observational notes on tourists and potters at work, their behaviours, interactions and practices. An initial interview guide was pilot-tested with three community members before it was finalised and used to conduct 17 semi-structured interviews with the target community members. Participants choose the site of the interviews, which lasted on average one hour. Upon obtaining informed consent, the interviews were audio recorded and later
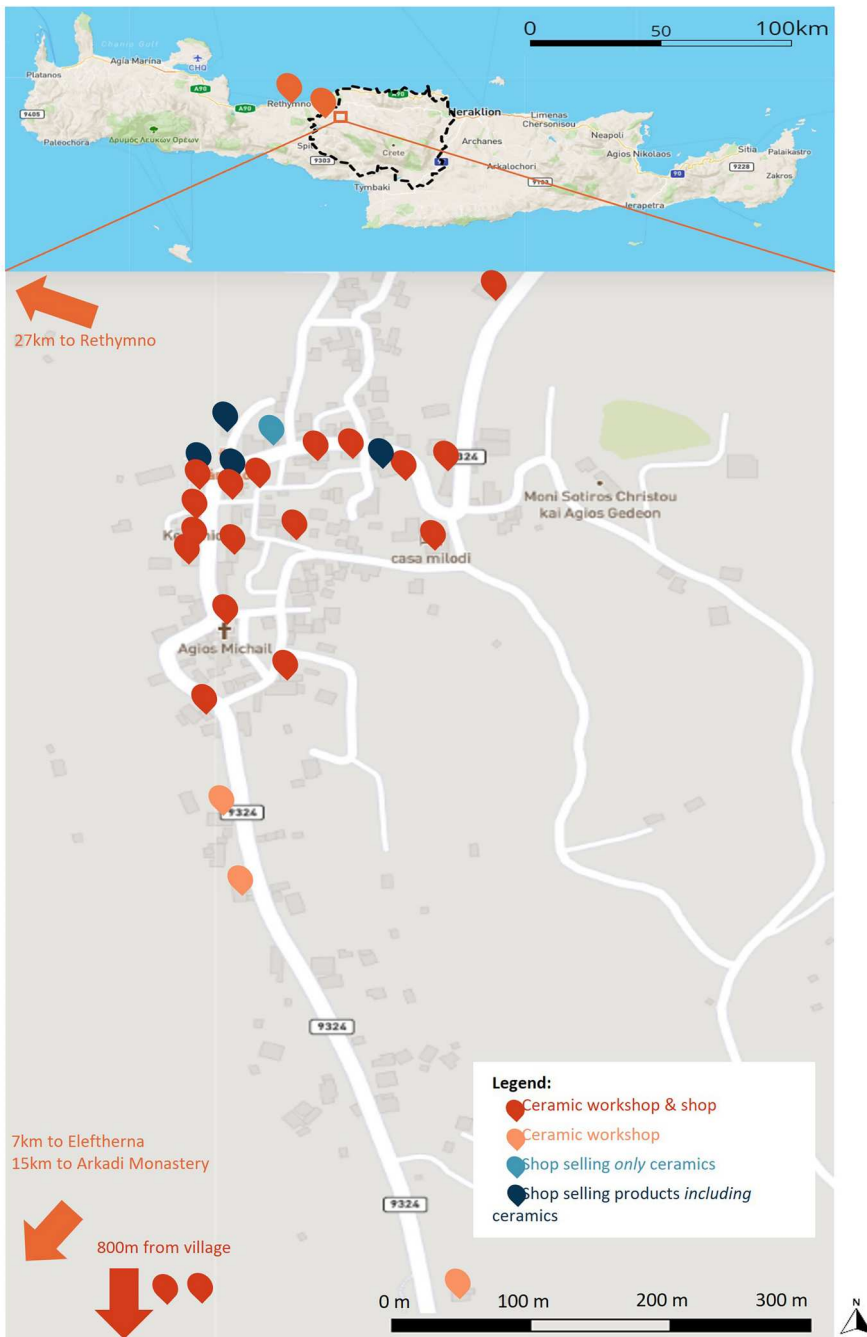
Figure 1. Maps showing the location of Margarites on different scales. (Adapted from Psiloritis Natural Park Maps).

transcribed. The language of the interviews was English, except in three cases where Greek was used with interpreters. There were performative elements to the interviews that were not pre-planned, but emerged organically during some interviews, for example when some participants wanted to teach the author how to throw pottery.

Interviews were analysed in two iterative cycles. First, interview responses were *attribute* coded to note essential descriptive information including participant demographics and interview time

Table 1. Participant demographics and ceramic backgrounds.

Pseudonym	Age (approx.)/ Sex	Origin	Relationship with Ceramic Craft
Mateo	35/male	Margarites	Ceramicist (3rd generation)
Kairos	60/female	Margarites	Ceramicist (3rd generation)
Gregor	55/male	Margarites	Ceramicist (2nd generation)
Stelios	50/male	Margarites	Ceramicist
Dureau	70/male	France	Ceramicist
Melecio	50/male	Athens	Ceramicist
Emilija	40/female	Lithuania	Ceramicist
Kalogeros	65/male	Margarites	Ceramicist
Mikhail	75/male	Margarites	Ceramicist (Retired)
Dumont	45/male	Switzerland	Student (Trains in Margarites annually)
Eva	55/female	Germany	Student (Trains in Margarites annually)
Merete	25/female	The Netherlands	Student (2-month programme)
Ofemija	25/female	Poland	Student (2-month programme)
Iliana	55/female	Margarites	Shopkeeper (Sells only ceramics)
Elissa	40/female	Margarites	Shopkeeper (Sells ceramics & other products)
Iakovos	60/male	Athens	Shopkeeper (Sells ceramics & other products)
Teresa	40/female	Margarites	Shopkeeper (Sells ceramics & other products)

and location (Saldaña, 2009). Passages were then *descriptively* coded to indicate their broad topics, often using *in vivo* codes (phrases appearing directly in the text). Finally, passages were coded with a thematic statement to identify what the passage *means*. Descriptive and thematic codes were not pre-decided, but emerged during, and because of, the coding process in recognition of the role of participants as co-producers of the knowledge emerging from this research (Saldaña, 2009).

Research findings

In this section we present the findings of the study and discuss these in relation to the extant literature. We first explore how community members define and explain their understanding of authenticity in relation to ICH. Then, we show the extent to which the community members of Margarites perceive how tourism impacts the authenticity of their ICH of ceramic crafting.

Community definitions of authentic ICH

Given that authenticity is socially constructed, negotiated and assigned, we expected to find a diversity of interpretations from participants. However, during the interviews many participants expressed reluctance to use the term *authenticity*, since its implicit binary could mean that by defining their work as authentic, they could inadvertently refer to another's work as *in*authentic. Consequently, participants were asked to describe the various elements they consider to be constitutive of authentic ICH. Reflecting the multifaceted and contested nature of authenticity, each participant identified between two and six of these elements. Participants did not view Margaritan ICH as an enforced binary of in/authentic, but instead recognised a multiplicity of authenticities simultaneously existing depending on the context of the community member defining it. This finding aligns with earlier work (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Rickly, 2022; Wang, 1999; Wherry, 2006).

We identify three main categories in the elements of authenticity offered by participants: (i) elements relating to the *place* where ICH is practiced, (ii) elements relating to the *people* who practice it, and (iii) elements relating to the *products* of such practices. The three are often inferred to be closely intertwined. For instance, shopkeeper Iakovos views the site of production as a foundation upon which other people- and product-related elements of authenticity including being 'handmade' are layered. He stressed that 'for a product to be authentic in Margarites, it shouldn't just be handmade, it should be handmade *here*.' Furthermore, student ceramicist Ofemija described how authentic ceramic crafts practiced in Margarites are 'basically a testament to what this place is, and what it represents'. This indicates understandings that authentic ICH extends beyond the physical

location of production to encapsulate how authentic essence may be imbued in tangible craft products (Qiu et al., 2022). Thus, site of production may therefore be seen to underlie all other definitions of authenticity.

Participant definitions of authentic crafting practices (see Table 2) as honouring tradition or history constitute a quarter of all definitions, reflecting a wealth of heritage and tourism literature that conceptualises authentic and traditional crafts as the same (Davis, 2007; Handapangoda et al., 2019; Wesener, 2017). Participant definitions of ICH as linked with tradition may refer to both the traditional identity of the village as a pottery ceramic centre and/or the personal identity and experiences of individual practitioners as being members of crafting families. For instance, ceramicist Mateo displays this photograph (Figure 2) of himself as a young boy with his grandfather on his business website to depict his family history of internationally-famous potters, which is central to his identity as a craftsperson, and increases his perceived authenticity as an ICH practitioner.

The form, function, and material composition of the product as well as the techniques, tools, and skills behind its creation are some of the multiple layers that are considered in defining authentic ICH (Ranwa, 2022). Given the variance at each stage of the crafting process it is impossible to neatly categorise authentic crafts into a binary of being traditionally practiced – or even practiced in Margarites, since the vast majority of clay is imported from overseas – or not (Schilar & Keskitalo, 2018). Until the 1970s, Margaritan ceramics were utilitarian: unglazed pots made from local clay, fired once in wood kilns, and decorated simply with a leaf motif to signify their site of production. Today, the aspects of this traditional craftsmanship upheld vary by Margaritan practitioner. For instance, Figure 3 indicates how authenticity is the pluralistic result of each individual's interpretation of a place and its tradition continuously invented and constructed by practitioners (Rickly et al., 2023). Such conceptualisations highlight the challenges of strictly confining authentic ICH to history, as some participants argued:

> Authentic is the ancient, is authentic. [...] Look, we are not traditional potters. Traditional potters are gone, died. Traditional pottery, it was the pottery you did because someone needed it, to buy it, to use it technically. Now, this does not happen. [Gregor, ceramicist]

Participants also discussed authenticity in relation to the removed production demand for *pithoi* (large ceramic containers traditionally used for bulk storage of fluids and grains). For some participants, this lack of demand due to modernisation (most notably the availability of plastic, which is cheaper, harder-wearing, and easier to mass produce than ceramics) has also compromised the authenticity of Margaritan ceramic production. However, widespread perceptions that authentic crafts must be 'produced individually', (i.e. hand-crafted) indicates that ICH practitioners recognise their responsibility to (re)produce authentic crafts, even in the face of modernisation. Ceramicists

Table 2. Summary of community definitions of authenticity.

| Approach	Element	Characteristics
Place-related	Practiced in Margarites	• Site of practice determines ICH authenticity, and may vary between stages of crafting
Product-related	Linked with local tradition	• Tradition, authenticity, and ICH are fluid concepts dependent on the community members' personal context and family history
	Limited to historic context	• Authentic ICH is temporally restricted to the past, since traditional forms and functions have been rendered inaccessible by processes of modernisation
People-related	Produced individually	• Authentic ICH (and states of authentic Being) involve unique hand-crafting practices, meaning that authentic crafting practices differ for and between practitioners
	Interpreted in original way	• Authentic ICH is a constantly evolving concept
	Practiced with emotion	• Authentic ICH (and states of authentic Being) must be practiced with emotion, transforming tangible ceramics into vessels of meaning
	Shared morally	• Authentic ICH depends on the personal integrity of the practitioner, meaning authenticity is a conscious choice that ceramicists must continuously make
		• Perceptions of authenticity simultaneously divide and strengthen intra-community connections dependent on shared moral values
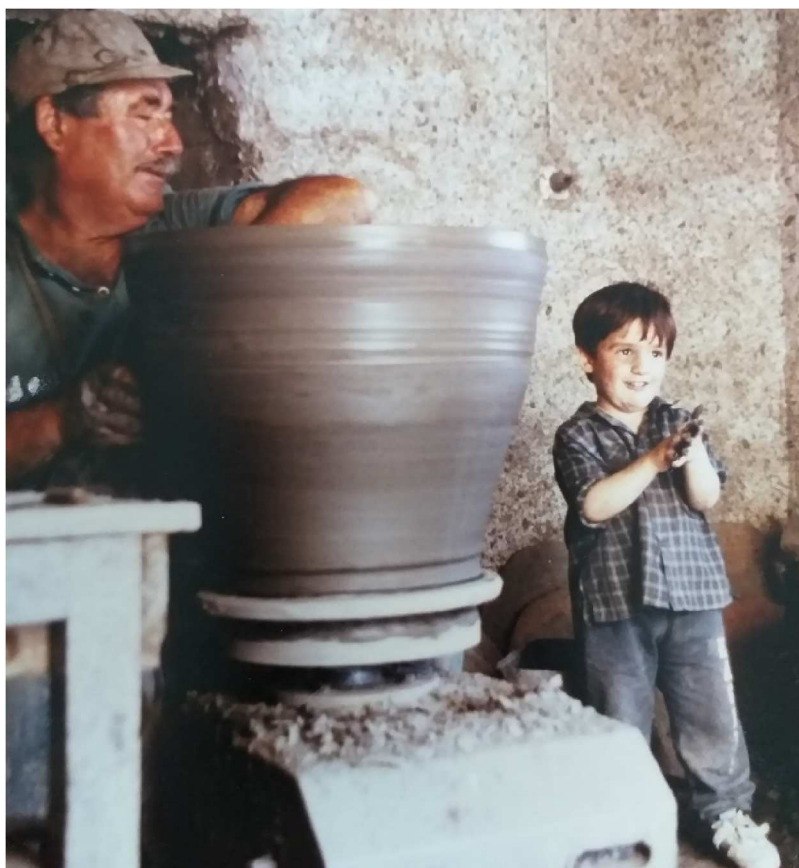
Figure 2. Ceramicist Mateo stands as a young boy next to his grandfather, a famous pithoi-maker (Source: Mateo).

expressed indignation that their work (and by extension, themselves) may be considered inauthentic in this way, with Mateo exclaiming 'Of course my work is authentic! Of course! […] Both traditional and modern ceramics are authentic, it's authentic because it's *handmade*'. Mateo therefore

Figure 3. (a) A copy of a Minoan bird-shaped pot, made by Gregor by hand in the ancient Minoan style predating the pottery wheel. (b) Gregor's interpretation of a bird-shaped, Minoan-inspired jug. The materials, technique, form, and decoration are all the traditional Margarites style. It is made using the wheel. (c) A copy of a traditional Minoan bird-shaped teapot by Dumont, inspired by Gregor's work. (Source: Dumont).

authenticates ICH through personalised and unique hand-crafting processes rather than tangible ceramic products. Similarly, some ceramicists maintain authenticity by continuously reinterpreting their craft as a means of 'original' creative expression. For instance, although Emilija seeks inspiration from ancient Greek styles, she seeks authenticity by 'taking the ancient shape, and making it useful for nowadays.' Thus, authenticity is framed as a dynamic activity continuously (re)formed through handcrafting acts.

Self-expression through crafting practices is largely driven by passionate emotional connections between craftspeople and their craft. For Dureau, emotion is so important to his crafting process that he attributes working with the 'emotions all around ceramics' to having 'saved me'. Stelios also describes how the emotions of love and joy foster authentic ICH practices and products. He noted, 'I think authentic pottery makes good my soul. I live every piece … '. The performativity of practitioners 'living' the crafting process implies that ceramicists infuse meaning into their tangible ceramics to produce an intangible, emotional aura that enhances the authenticity of both the ceramic and the ceramicist. These strong emotional connections lead older ceramicists to frame personal integrity and authentic ICH as the responsibility of the practitioner – i.e. a conscious choice that ceramicists must continuously make – as expressed in the following quote:

> If somebody wants only to take the money of a tourist, and doesn't give him the best he can, at the price it was, and to be honest with himself and the tourist, then this is bad. This changes everything in the authenticity, which is based on this kind of personality that is honest with himself and with the other. [Makhail, retired ceramicist]

This perception of authenticity simultaneously strengthens connections between community members who share moral values, and divides community members with differing opinions, indicating that tourism activities in Margarites could have significant long-term effects on its community relationships and structure.

Impacts of tourism on perceptions of ICH authenticity

In recent years, growing tourist demand for traditional-inspired ceramics has led craftspeople to perceive these products as increasingly valuable assets to meet tourist expectations. As Stelios notes: 'People visiting know that this village … in its history was a traditional ceramic centre, so they have to see something from the history to see how we came to this moment.' These sentiments correspond to Wesener's (2017) model of experiential authenticity in terms of the experience of origins and the experience of continuity. Practicing traditional ICH is also widely shown to strengthen self-identity, sense of the authentic self, and appreciation for authentic ICH among practitioners (Medina, 2003; Zhou et al., 2015). Ceramicist Melecio notes that this perceived *importance* of traditional ICH goes hand-in-hand with perceived *threats* to traditional ICH by the encroachment of 'modern' crafts for tourist consumption, which therefore simultaneously revitalises and handicaps traditional crafting practices (Handapangoda et al., 2019; Revilla & Dodd, 2003). By helping communities stay aware of the dangers of losing traditions and providing economic incentives to keep those traditions alive, tourism prevents authentic ICH from being eroded as it otherwise might (Gordon, 2022; Rickly et al., 2023). Tourism developments provide one such means of educating community members about traditional crafts, because they expose local people to new knowledge and encourage them to shift their perceptions of how authentic crafts relate to their history. Emilija describes how, upon a visit to the new Museum of Ancient Eleftherna, she 'realised, we don't do anything new today. Cups made 4,000 years ago, it's the same cup today,' invoking an epiphanic understanding of how the knowledge, skills and techniques involved in pottery production have remained consistent across millennia. In reflection of existential scholarship (Rickly, 2022), she consequently dismantled the divide she had previously imposed between authentic historic craft and inauthentic modern craft to argue that both are equally authentic.

Participants unanimously agree that practicing ICH in Margarites drives in-bound tourism. This in turn creates greater economic demand for authentic ICH, thereby strengthening community

pride in the authenticity of local crafting practices (Handapangoda et al., 2019). This activating role positions tourism as an important tool for sustainable local socio-economic development that benefits the wider village beyond its ceramic industry. Thus, the economic welfare, local self-reliance, and strengthened emotional connections between practitioners and their craft becomes facilitated by tourism activities (Briassoulis, 2003; Zhou et al., 2015). The renovation of formerly derelict properties indicates that community members change the physical architecture of the village to align with their expectations of, and tourist perceptions of, what an authentic ceramic centre 'should be'. This further improves community attitudes to traditional culture and support for tourism development (Andereck et al., 2005).

One step further, the advent of the tourism industry in Margarites during the 1970s not only *shaped* community perceptions regarding the importance of tradition and originality in authentic ICH practices but *formed* them. Prior to tourism, local ceramic ICH was limited to the homogenous knowledges and skills required for *pithoi* production. Community perceptions of diminishing authenticity (see Table 3 for a summary) due to an increasing standardisation of crafting practices to meet tourist demand therefore stem – rather paradoxically – from variety in tourist demand, which helps foster innovative, self-expressive, and thus authentic practices (Hughes, 1995). Although some ceramicists stress that a lack of originality expressed through ceramic craft is not inherently bad, divides between craftspeople with differing perceptions have resulted in deeply entrenched intra-community frictions (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993). About 46% of participants claim to be 'the black sheep' of Margarites, perceiving their work as some of the *only* original (and thus authentic) available. Exclusive identities have formed amongst sub-groups of 'real potters'

Table 3. Summary of impacts of tourism on ICH authenticity.

Approach	Element	Impact
Place-related	Practiced in Margarites	• Tourist demand facilitates the continuation of Margaritan ceramic production, however authentic, and makes the village synonymous with its ICH • ICH practitioners authenticate crafting practices and products by signifying their local site of production • Imported ceramics increasingly erode Margarites' authenticity as a crafting centre • Community members shift the burden of practicing authentic crafts to a few practitioners, potentially reducing long-term community resilience • Local ICH production attracts international ceramicists who temporarily engage in authentic ICH practices
Product-related	Linked with local tradition	• Tourism stimulates a revival of community interest in traditional culture, which in turn strengthens community identity, attachment to ICH, and perceptions of tradition as authentic • Tourist demand for modern-style ceramics increases the perceived importance of tradition as a determinant of authenticity but means few practitioners practice crafts using traditional forms and techniques
	Limited to historic context	• Tourism developments expose residents to new ICH knowledge which challenge binaries between historic authenticity and modern inauthenticity • Tourist income allows ceramicists to engage in archaeological projects that (re)create ancient ICH knowledge
People-related	Produced individually	• Ceramicists attempt to maintain authentic hand-crafting practices whilst meeting growing tourist demand, a balance that reduces the time available to train students and so safeguard ICH authenticity long-term
	Interpreted in original way	• Tourist demand simultaneously encourages a standardisation of crafting practices that erodes ICH authenticity and inspires innovation and creative expression that strengthen it • Differing values of originality as authenticity create tensions between practitioners
	Practiced with emotion	• Differing perceptions of how to balance authentic emotional expression and *in*authentic income foster intra-community tensions
	Shared morally	• Practitioners authenticate themselves, their practices, and their products through tourist interactions • Tourism-related commodification creates tensions between practitioners with different perspectives on how to balance economic and social benefits of engaging morally with ICH

who imply a sense of superiority over those producing standardised pottery and blame them for eroding the authenticity of Margarites into a 'poor' ceramics centre.

Tensions also arise between ceramicists motivated by emotional connections, and those motivated by financial gain. Some ceramicists describe how tourist demand for unique handmade products fosters a sense of emotional satisfaction that validates their perceptions of their ICH practices as authentic. Kairos describes how she experiences a boost in self-worth when tourists 'come and say to me, "oh, it's so cool, so authentic, it's so beautiful, you make it?"', which 'makes us feel appreciated'. This effect fosters greater pride in authentic ICH and encourage practitioners to share their knowledge and experiences with tourists in a positive feedback (Cole, 2007; Elkasrawy, 2020; Emeafor & Eze-Uzomaka, 2018; Schilar & Keskitalo, 2018; Zhou et al., 2015). However, some ceramicists including Kalogeros criticise others for their prioritisation of economic crafting motivations over emotional ones: 'They don't do it because they love this job, but they do it because they have some type of benefit. Financial. Only for that. […] They don't love the art within them, they love themselves through the art.' This somewhat one-sided tension is particularly apparent regarding imported products, which due to their lack of inherent emotional value are perceived to lose their authenticity as objects representing local culture, thus diminishing the overall authenticity of Margarites as a pottery village and threaten its sustainability as a tourism destination (Panikkaveettil et al., 2020). For Kalogeros, practitioners who forsake craft as a form of emotional expression may achieve existentially *in*authentic experiences that utilise ICH as a tool to project distorted and self-obsessed reflections of themselves (Rickly, 2022).

Impacts of tourism on ICH authenticity practices

Participants largely agreed that tourism is intrinsic to any discussion of ICH practiced in Margarites, because, as Gregor explains, 'where the tourists didn't go, the pottery died.' Not only does tourism demand makes ceramic production in Margarites economically viable, but ceramicists Stelios and Melecio capitalise on the perceived authenticity of Margarites as a ceramics centre by charging more for their locally-crafted products. The implication is that some portrayal of local craft, however authentic, is better than none at all. Tourist demand also allows local non-ceramicists to strengthen their attachment to Margarites and their ICH by living there and selling imported products, even if they do not possess the technical knowledge required to craft pottery (Medina, 2003). Additionally, Margarites' reputation as a pottery centre encourages international ceramicists to move there. This process is especially important because intergenerational knowledge-sharing processes which are historically central to ICH transmission are widely reported as diminishing as local children are presented with alternative professional opportunities (Maruyama et al., 2008; Oueslati & Slimene, 2022; Pham Hong et al., 2021). In Margarites, Melecio was recently the youngest ceramicist practicing at 46 years old.

Despite the importance that ceramicists assign to sites of authentic crafting, a growing minority of ceramic products sold in Margaritan tourist shops are produced outside the village:

> That's not ceramics. It's not. It's made from white clay, but it's not from the village. And many shops here have ceramics not from the village. Look, I don't know where the producer is. […] They are popular with the tourists compared to my other products. My customers know that it's not authentic, okay. If they go to the next shop, they know that they are the producers (of their products). They still enjoy buying them, of course, (because of) the colours, maybe, the blue, the eyes, the cat. [Teresa, shopkeeper]

For Teresa, place-bound elements to authenticity are so important that she de-authenticates her imported products as neither ceramics nor ICH. Regardless, she sells these products to meet tourist demand for stereotypical symbolic representations of Greek culture. Teresa shifts the burden of consuming authentic crafts from herself to tourists and ceramicists in 'the next shop' in an example of *in*authentic Being (Mkono, 2020). Although recent studies (Lee et al., 2021) conclude that educating tourists about local culture helps enhance the authenticity of destinations and reduce cultural

erosion, a growing body of existential scholarship notes that when tourists lack knowledge of local culture, the responsibility of upholding authentic culture falls to community members. However, in Margarites many ceramicists rely on other practitioners, most commonly Gregor (one of the only ceramicists to traditionally dig his own clay), to uphold authentic ICH practices in their craft by 'keeping the tradition in the modern time'. This potentially reduces the ability of the community to preserve its authentic ICH practices should those few practitioners retire (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993).

This possibility is of particular concern considering that one of the most widely reported impacts of tourism on Margaritan ICH practices (see Table 3 for a summary) is a recent shift by most ceramicists away from producing traditional-style pottery to favour more modern forms. Most ceramicists refer to Gregor's work as a rare and exemplary example of authentic 'traditional' ICH due to the knowledge and techniques he practices, despite the additional time, economic cost, and physical labour required to produce ceramics this way. This finding challenges Davis (2007) and Maruyama et al.'s (2008) conclusions that craftspeople intentionally adhere to traditional manufacturing techniques even as they alter the exterior appearance of the piece to appeal to tourist demand. For those few ceramicists still engaging in traditional ceramic practices, tourism-related income allows them to accept less well-paid archaeological projects that further academic understandings of historic ICH practices. For instance, Gregor and Dureau recently collaborated on a project that involved reproducing a Minoan sarcophagi in a revival of ancient crafting practices.

Ceramicists experience pressure to meet high levels of tourist demand for authentically handcrafted products. These are often time-consuming to produce without losing their authentic uniqueness and economic value (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993). Although interactions with tourists encourage practitioners to share their craft on a superficial level through brief demonstrations, high levels of demand limit opportunities for practitioners to share their craft with potential students, hindering knowledge-sharing processes and potentially weakening the long-term resilience of the Margarites crafting community (Pham Hong et al., 2021). Many ceramicists favour maintaining the authenticity of their own production (and thus their personal identities as authentic craftspeople) over training the next generation of practitioners. This individualistic attitude could offer a short-term measure of protection against the erosion of authenticity, since widespread dedication to handcrafting practices limits the encroachment of mass-produced products into the market (Wherry, 2006), but could introduce longer-term challenges as to the inheritance of authentic crafting practices in Margarites.

Interactions with tourists provide external inspirations for practitioners to innovate their crafting practices. Gesturing to ceramic masks in his shop, Stelios notes how a young tourist couple suggested that he '"try to make something like this, it's very nice", and they showed me, and then with time I make it. So sometimes I like to hear people who give me ideas'. Interactions between ceramicists and tourists therefore contribute to the creative (re)production of traditional Cretan ceramic lifestyles which consciously construct authentic identity (Bardone et al., 2013). The resultant transformation of meanings associated with cultural experiences and products may also drive internal motivations for ceramicists to innovate crafting practices and so activate novel states of their authentic selves (Handapangoda et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2021). For Emilija, crafting practices are 'like a sport interest to make something different every year'.

Furthermore, interactions between community members and tourists facilitate knowledge-sharing processes and provides a means of self-authentication for ICH practitioners. As Kairos joyfully expressed, 'contact with clay gives joy, peace, and happiness! We see it from the eyes of children as well as adults!!'. This process is particularly effective when tourists are ceramicists. Melecio describes how 'potters from everywhere in the world' visit Margarites to learn from local craftspeople, validating their ceramic expertise and allowing both parties to unlock existentially authentic experiences by sharing knowledges (Wang, 1999). International student ceramicists in Margarites largely reflect their mentors' perceptions of authenticity. Despite their transitory presence in the village they reinforce the attitudes and practices of more senior, local potters. Furthermore, their

short-term contributions to authentic, place-based ceramic production increase levels of community support for tourism, evidenced by non-practitioners attempting to promote international mobility to Margarites by establishing rental properties exclusively for student ceramicists in an attempt to combat a widespread lack of local youth engagement in crafting, widely reported to pose a potential threat to future tourism developments, (Maruyama et al., 2008; Oueslati & Slimene, 2022; Pham Hong et al., 2021), and could significantly erode the authenticity of local ICH long-term. While internationals based permanently in Margarites place similar weight on place-related authenticity as those with more established, trans-generational roots, they focus more on realising their self-authenticity through people-related practices than product-related practices.

Discussion and conclusion

For many communities, pottery craftsmanship possesses high cultural value and represents an important form of their intangible cultural heritage (ICH) imbued with strong notions of authenticity. In response to both decreasing local demand for ceramic products and increasing visitor demand for 'authentic' cultural heritage tourist experiences in recent years, many pottery communities have shifted the market of their commodified ICH towards tourists. This raises questions as to the threats of changing ICH consumptive practices on ICH authenticity. In this paper, we address the conceptual question of how host communities perceive and practice authentic ICH through an empirical case study of the pottery village of Margarites, Crete.

Margarites community members acknowledge numerous, diverse, and simultaneously operating interpretations of authenticity intricately woven into a tapestry of place-related elements (site of production), product-related (links to tradition and history) and people-related elements (individuality, originality, emotional investment, and morality). People-related elements dominate community definitions of authenticity, with the two most referenced elements being individuality (uniqueness through hand-crafting) and originality (creative expression and innovation). Through moral, emotional and creative intentions, practitioners breathe life and ideological significance into tangible ceramics to imbue them with unique and relative social meaning intrinsically tied to their tradition, identity and authenticity (Hughes, 1995). Authenticity may therefore be framed as a dynamic and ever-changing choice which practitioners must continuously make (Mkono, 2020). In this context, tourist demand for Margaritan ceramics makes the continuation of craftmanship in Margarites economically viable and thus plays a pivotal role in sustaining the local ceramic industry, however authentic. In so doing, tourist demand stimulates a revival of interest in traditional culture, encouraging practitioners to continue crafting in innovative ways which reflect their heritage (Shepherd, 2002).

Tourism impacts how Margarites community members perceive the authenticity of their ICH through a complex interplay between economic, social and psychological factors (Khanom et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2015). From an economic perspective, commodification of ICH for tourist consumption affects how community members perceive the nature of authentic ICH by altering the values they imbue upon their craft (Gordon, 2022). For example, varied tourist demand results in a diversification of crafting practices and products, leading community members to place greater importance on elements of creativity and individuality in defining authenticity. The resultant adaptation of ICH to cater to contemporary tastes challenges traditional binaries between authentic historical and inauthentic modern crafts and highlights the need for ICH practitioners to negotiate tradition, emotion, ethics and economic sustainability as they preserve, protect and promote their authentic ICH (Wesener, 2017). This is in line with Trupp et al. (2023) who in in the context of the handicraft and souvenir sector in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu noted that locals perceive authenticity as relational and that cultural experiences are bound to change. Thus, although ICH commodification strengthens perceptions of authenticity for individual elements (originality), the impact of tourism on the overall strength of authenticity is minimal because some elements (emotional and moral motivations) are perceived as being increasingly weakened as ceramicists pursue financial gain, to the extent that community members are increasingly importing cheap,

mass-produced ceramics from overseas. These community tensions do not clearly align with distinct demographic groups, despite gender roles, for example, contributing to a well-established division of craftmanship tasks (men typically throwing and women, often wives, decorating) in Margarites and beyond (Bakas, 2014). However, all female ceramicists contributing to this study threw their own ceramics, so although no striking differences in perceptions or practices of authenticity by gender are apparent, further research is required to understand whether traditional gender-typical crafting practices translate directly into perceptions of authenticity.

Our main conceptual contribution stems from the conceptualisation of ICH authenticity from the perspective of host communities as consisting of three main approaches (3Ps): (a) *people-related approach*; (b) *place-related approach* and; (c) *product-related approach*. A people-related approach focuses on the very self and person of an ICH practitioner. Once the craftsperson is considered authentic, then whatever they produce is by extension considered authentic as well. Thus, as long as ICH craftspeople are imbued with authenticity through knowledge of traditional practices and techniques, they can adapt the resulting products to new forms that meet tourism demand. A place-related approach denotes the authenticity that is seen as inherent in a given place with a long history of practicing a form of ICH. Thus, the material-physical and symbolic characteristics of a given destination are seen as conferring authenticity to ICH practices. Finally, a product-related approach refers to the ways in which ICH products come to be imputed with authenticity because they are seen as an outcome of traditional practices and techniques in a specific place. In this sense, ceramic products and souvenirs made in a pottery village are considered authentic regardless of their utility. The tripartite approach to ICH authenticity is based on the starting point that authenticity is neither a continuum nor a binary, but a socially constructed process of meaning making arising out of socio-material relations. It is important to note that although the 3Ps are intertwined and mutually affecting (illustrated with blue arrows on the conceptual model in Figure 4), the extent to which each element affects the authenticity of an ICH practice or product depends on the individual defining it. Thus, multiple discrete authenticities operate simultaneously (examples illustrated with green and orange Xs).

This study opens avenues for further research with its empirical and conceptual findings. For instance, further research is needed to map how Margarites community members perceive authenticity onto the 3Ps model and thus uncover community values and priorities. Furthermore, the empirical question remains as to the extent to which the 3Ps of *people-related, place-related* and
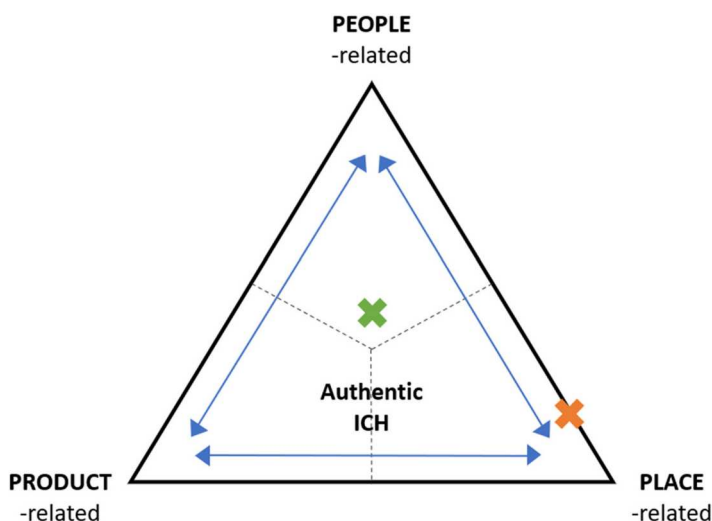

Figure 4. Conceptual model of 3Ps of authentic ICH. Multiple authenticities (e.g. green and orange Xs) operate simultaneously as individuals place differing value on the importance of each P.

product-related approaches to ICH authenticity are present in other communities. Further research is needed to establish the extent to which all elements of the 3Ps need to be present, and in which proportion, to classify an ICH activity such as pottery crafting as authentic. Our initial findings indicate that all community members consider at least two of the 3Ps in their definition of authentic ICH (most commonly people-related elements), but questions remain as to whether these elements are mutually constituted, or if only one element needs to be present to authenticate ICH for the community, for tourists, and for tourism purposes. Additionally, further enquiries into how tourists in Margarites conceptualise authenticity and authenticate ICH (using the 3Ps framework) could provide a valuable complement to the experiences of host community members explored in this study. This research direction could prove especially insightful because tourists approach heritage with unique preconceptions and aims which must be closely aligned with those of community members to avoid the harmful re-interpretation of intended producer messages. In this context, integrating theories of practice or performances could further enhance the theoretical foundation of future research. Utilising the 3Ps framework to examine authenticity through tourist and practitioner lenses simultaneously could facilitate insights into how community members could better align multidimensional representations of their ICH with the often numerous, contradictory, and irreconcilable meanings of authenticity. This can inform tourism planning strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of both ICH and tourism practices.

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