Authenticity and the Sharing Economy

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Abstract

Based on a qualitative interview-study as well as on a quantitative survey among users of the room sharing platform Airbnb, we show that situational closeness between sharing economy consumers and providers may prompt instances of interpersonal contamination which in turn negatively impact reviewer behaviour and intention to engage in room sharing in the future. However, we also show that authenticity plays a significant alleviating role in shaping such closeness perceptions. Users whose sense of authenticity is evoked in their sharing experiences are significantly less bothered by negative instances of interpersonal closeness and are thus more liable to use sharing services. Our results point to the integral nature of both authenticity and the invocation of notions of authenticity for sharing business models who are reliant, by their very nature, on alleviating the imperfections of amateur production.

Authenticity and the Sharing Economy

INTRODUCTION

The great success stories of the sharing economy, namely Airbnb and Uber, owe their triumphs to their peer-based business models. They enable individuals to become micro-entrepreneurs, earning money from their idle property or spare time. The disruptive potential of the sharing economy is especially striking in the hospitality industry where staying in a shared room or apartment has now become a viable, even common, alternative to staying in a hotel, hostel, or bed and breakfast. However, we argue that the accommodation sharing experience (a peer-to-peer business model) remains markedly different from the hotel experience (a peer-to-institution business model). Most notably, in accommodation sharing experiences, spaces and objects can be used concurrently by both the host and the guest. A guest in an Airbnb, for example, might sleep on the host's spare bed, prepare food in their kitchen, and take a shower in their bathroom. Consequently, in most sharing settings, guests must expect a certain level of closeness with the host or provider. This closeness may entail several challenges such as dealing with imposed social interactions, the personal objects of another person, such as photographs or clothes, or their physical traces such as hair or smell, as well as dealing with threats to one's privacy, for example when guests and hosts encounter each other in a potentially vulnerable state (e.g., in their pajamas or without make-up).

There are economic, social, and hedonic motivations for individuals to participate as consumers in the sharing economy (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Bucher, Fieseler, & Lutz, 2016; Möhlmann, 2015; Neoh, Chipulu, & Marshall, 2015). In our research, we were interested in consumers' quests for authentic experiences as both a new motivational aspect and as a combination of hedonic and social motives. As outlined above, while sharing an apartment with a stranger through Airbnb may be associated with economic (saving money), social (meeting new people), and hedonic (enjoying the novelty of an experience) benefits,

there may also be risks and detrimental experiential aspects tied to it. The sharing setting creates instances of closeness that are usually only experienced in a closed circle of friends and family (Bialski, 2012a; 2012b; Buchberger, 2012; Lampinen, 2016a; 2016b; Zuev, 2012). For Airbnb and other hospitality facilitators, it is therefore necessary to normalize the meeting of strangers as a desirable, or at least acceptable, scenario (German Molz, 2014; Lampinen, 2014; Richardson, 2015).

Accordingly, we postulate that in the context of online room-sharing services (1) the situational closeness to the host (in the form of social interactions, personal objects, and environmental conditions) may put a strain on guests' overall perceptions of the sharing experience. We further posit that (2) this strain may be markedly less pronounced for guests who perceive the overall experience to be highly authentic. This hypothesized relationship between authenticity (does sharing facilitate real (local) experiences?) and closeness-perceptions (am I bothered by the physical proximity of the host?) is expected to have profound implications not just for sharing economy business models but also for the growing number of secondary services, such as key-services or cleaning services, which are "piggybacking" on the core models of online sharing platforms. Furthermore, it sheds new light on the growing prevalence of authenticity-narratives employed by platforms which mediate peer-based or amateur services.

Below, we will *first* provide a literature overview of the sharing economy and the attitudes towards (authentic) experiences and access. *Second*, based on a qualitative interview-study, we will explore how individuals perceive instances of guest-host closeness. Here, we are particularly interested in the challenges associated with the highly personal or amateur character of sharing experiences. *Third*, we propose a quantitative model to show that guests who approach sharing services with an authenticity frame may be more tolerant of challenging instances of closeness (such as social intrusion and interpersonal contamination). *Fourth*, in our discussion we reconcile our findings with the current literature and point towards implications for further

research as well as business model and organizational implications in the sharing economy. Furthermore, we discuss the common narrative of authenticity currently employed by sharing platforms as a way to cultivate favorable attitudes towards imperfect and sometimes flawed experiences that are inherent in the sharing business model.

LITERATURE: AUTHENTICITY IN THE SHARING ECONOMY

From Ownership to Access: A New Culture of Sharing

Digital platforms have facilitated the rise of a new sharing culture where people make their personal belongings available to virtual strangers online and where more and more products are shared rather than privately owned (Grassmuck, 2012). Often dubbed 'the sharing economy', this new culture empowers consumers to both borrow and lend (sometimes also rent or lease), blurring the boundaries between consumption and production. Former consumers now grant each other temporary access to their under-utilized physical assets, either for free or in exchange for money (Böcker & Meelen, 2016; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015; Stephany, 2015). People share a wide range of goods from their tools, bikes, and other household items, to their cars, their money, and even their own homes (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Gansky, 2010). The ongoing advancement of social technologies, as well as shifting societal attitudes, have created a fertile environment for the growth of sharing platforms (Benkler, 2004; Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014; Gansky, 2010; Kathan, Matzler, & Veider, 2016). The prevailing extent and rapid growth of the sharing phenomenon goes hand-in-hand with a shift in consumer preferences from owning towards accessing and experiencing assets (e.g., Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Belk, 2013; 2014b; John, 2013a).

Sharing as a Mode of Access

Multiple authors have directed their efforts towards disentangling and classifying the term sharing's various manifestations (Arnould & Rose, 2016; Belk, 1985, 2010, 2014a; John, 2013a, 2013b; Lamberton & Rose, 2012; Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010). Furthermore, several authors differentiate between the sharing of tangible goods, such as homes, bicycles, or cars, and intangible goods, such as emotions, knowledge, and ideas (e.g., Belk, 2007, 2010; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Gansky, 2010; Giesler, 2006; John, 2013a). The scope of the sharing phenomenon has enabled research into various contexts, such as home sharing, car sharing (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012), toy sharing (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010), and commercial product sharing systems (Lamberton & Rose, 2012). Collective sharing practices are also referred to as access-based consumption (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012), the platform economy (Schor & Atwood-Charles, 2017), collaborative commons (Rifkin, 2014), the moral economy (Germann Molz, 2013), or collaborative consumption (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2015). However, as Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) have noted, the boundaries between sharing and these other contexts of access are blurred. In this paper we follow Belk's (2007: 127) frequently cited two-dimensional definition of sharing as the *act and process of distributing what is ours to others* [provider/host perspective] *and/or the act or process of receiving or taking something from others for our use* [consumer/guest perspective]. In particular, we are interested in the perception of authenticity and contamination on the consumer/guest side.

Sharing as an Authentic Experience

Authenticity as a concept has been applied in a variety of contexts such as psychology, sociology and organizational science (Bosch & Taris, 2014; Peterson, 2005), management and leadership (e.g., Schultz, 2015; Ibarra, 2015), brand management and marketing (e.g., Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006) as well as tourism (e.g., MacCannell, 1973, 1976; Coen, 1979; Boorstin, 1961; Wang 1999).

Recently, authenticity has become a relevant construct in the context of various sharing practices (Liang, Choi, & Joppe, 2017; Oskam & Boswijk, 2016; Paulauskaite, Powell, Coca-Stefaniak, & Morrison, 2017).

In psychology and sociology, authenticity refers to a state of congruence or fit between the essence of a person and their behavior or representation towards others. Thus, an authentic person's behavior is in line with their true self, with their values and beliefs, and it is not primarily dependent on or motivated by the validation and expectations of others (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). In work psychology and leadership, authenticity may be regarded from an individual perspective (Does my work/work environment allow me to act in accordance with myself/values/beliefs?) (e.g., Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008; Ménard & Brunet, 2011) as well as from a leadership or team-perspective (Do others perceive me/my behavior as being authentic?) (e.g., Ibarra, 2015; Schultz, 2015). In their study about authentic human brands, Moulard, Garrity, and Rice (2015) found that individuals were deemed authentic if their behavior was perceived as real, honest, straightforward, and consistent over time. In contrast, individuals were deemed inauthentic if their behavior was perceived as fake, superficial, or inconsistent. Service employees are considered authentic if their outward behavior (e.g., smiling) matches their inner affective state (e.g., positive emotion) – this practice of deep acting (high authenticity) stands in contrast to superficial acting (low authenticity) where behavior is not congruent with the affective state (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006; Grandey, 2003).

The search for authenticity is one of the core motivational drivers for tourist traveling (Cohen, 1988; MacCannell, 1973; Yeoman, Brass, & McMahon-Beattie, 2007). However, in tourism studies, the concept of authenticity is debated and, to date, there is no unified definition of the term (Wang, 1999). Instead, there are multiple – sometimes contradicting – perspectives on

the phenomenon (Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011). Generally, authenticity may refer to both authentic objects (such as historic artifacts) as well as to authentic experiences (such as the immersion into a local cultural setting) (Liang et al., 2017). In one of the more influential attempts to classify the term, Wang (1999) proposes a distinction between (1) object-related authenticity (which can be either objective or constructed) and (2) activity-related authenticity (or existential authenticity).

In this contribution about authenticity as experienced in the sharing context, we follow the concept of activity-related authenticity proposed by Wang (1999), as followed by Liang et al. (2017) and Guttentag (2015). However, we also include constructivist aspects into our definition: An experience is deemed authentic if it is in line with the individual expectations and beliefs about the essence of said experience. The respective expectations and beliefs may be formed a priori, in situ, or even ex post. Thus, when we speak of authenticity in this contribution, we refer to the congruence of an individual experience with the perceived essence of said experience.

In the context of the sharing economy, authenticity has a special significance (Guttentag, 2015; Liang et al., 2017; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Yannopoulou, Moufahim, & Bian, 2013). According to Belk (1988), our possessions can be seen as part of our extended selves. If we believe that sharing our possessions with others is akin to sharing a part of ourselves, then sharing practices may enable particularly authentic experiences. Through sharing, we can experience (slices of) another culture, another life, or another self. Seeking local living experiences through sharing in the possessions of locals may be what mainly attracts participants of the online home-sharing platform Airbnb (Liang et al. 2017). Similarly, Guttentag (2015) writes that the tourist's quest for authenticity often involves a desire to escape the tourist establishment and have intimate interactions with locals. This is picked up especially well by the rhetoric around the home sharing platform Airbnb which offers the opportunity for travelers to

temporarily live with a local in their own home. This way, Airbnb offers an "allegedly more authentic form of travel" (Steylaerts & O'Dubhghaill, 2011: 261).

Authentic Experiences and Tolerance for Imperfection

Authenticity can improve the perceived quality of an experience or service encounter. This has been shown in quantitative studies where both value rating and repurchasing intention were increased for high authenticity experiences (Kovács, Carroll, & Lehman, 2013; Lehman, Kovács, & Carroll, 2014; Liang et al. 2017). To some extent, this challenges traditional quality standards. Experiences do not have to be flawless in order to capture the perceived essential qualities of real life. Quite the contrary: it may be possible that individuals who are looking for authenticity are not merely willing to tolerate challenging experiential aspects such as bad smells, noise, or instances of social crowding, but even embrace them as part of an authentic experience. This is perhaps best illustrated by MacCannell (1973) in his example of a tourist visiting a local wet market at peak hours who, in the interest of sharing in a slice of local life, will inhale the same often unpleasant smells and squeeze through the same thick throng of people as the locals must. A clean, quiet, and neutral smelling visit to the wet market may not have been congruent with the visitor's formative expectations and therefore perceived as a qualitatively inferior experience. Similarly, in marketing, 'amateur' content has been shown to be perceived by audiences as more real and credible than the smooth perfection of 'professional' content (Banet-Weiser 2012; Duffy 2013; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Taylor, 2001).

QUALIATIVE STUDY: THE DETRIMENTS OF INTERPERSONAL CLOSE-NESS IN SHARING ENCOUNTERS

Methods

In our research, we were primarily interested in understanding how the framing of experiences in the sharing economy as 'authentic' relates to individual perceptions of closeness. To this end, we followed a two-step approach. In a first study, we conducted qualitative in-depth interviews to understand how guests framed their sharing experience and which instances of guest-host closeness they perceived as challenging. In a second study, reported further below, based on a quantitative survey, we investigated the impact of authenticity on challenging closeness perceptions, sharing intentions, and review behavior. Both qualitative and quantitative studies focused exclusively on Airbnb guest experiences.

Qualitative Interviews

In the qualitative interviews, we employed problem centered interviews (Flick, 2014; Witzel, 2000) to investigate fringe cases where instances of closeness were deemed challenging or even problematic. The qualitative part of the study follows an interpretative approach scrutinizing expectations, meanings, and understandings of the sharing experience (Gephart, 1999; 2004 Guba & Lincoln &, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The interviews were structured in such a way that they *first* focused on the individual framing of sharing experiences and *second* dove into the individual perceptions of closeness between guest and host within the sharing experience. Interviewers relied on the following conceptual foundation.

TABLE 1 – Conceptual Framework guiding the Interviews ABOUT HERE

Sample. In total, we conducted 30 qualitative interviews. Participants were contacted through LinkedIn and Facebook. All interview partners had to have used Airbnb at least once. We employed the snowball sampling technique due to its benefits for theory building, as the

audience tends to be homogenous in nature (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). The interview partners were current residents of Switzerland and Germany. Interviews were conducted in English, German, and French. They were conducted in person by four interviewers over the period of two months in September and October 2016.

TABLE 2 – Overview over the Interview Partners ABOUT HERE

Coding procedure. Coding was initially carried out through a descriptive coding approach. As a second step, we used interpretive coding to summarize the descriptive codes and pattern coding to categorize limiting factors of sharing experiences identified in the data (Yin, 2002). The encoding process was carried out in two coding cycles; in the first cycle, basic codes were identified and summarized in a code table. In a second coding cycle, we employed thematic coding (Miles et al., 2013) to group the initial codes into meaningful themes.

TABLE 3 - Structure of Qualitative Data ABOUT HERE

Structure of qualitative data. The qualitative data was structured along four descriptive first order themes of perceived closeness in room-sharing situations (see Table 3). These include (1) environmental hygiene, (2) personal objects, (3) interpersonal contact, and (4) privacy intrusions. For further structuring, second order categories were introduced. Environmental hygiene includes all data pertaining to sensory and physical perceptions of closeness, mainly via smell, sound, or touch. Personal objects as a category encompasses closeness perceptions pertaining to home decor or personal items placed at the venue. Interpersonal contact pertains to instances where guests and hosts meet in person, for instance while using shared facilities such as a kitchen or living room. The perceived obligation to interact socially with either the host or

other guests also falls into the interpersonal contact theme. Perceptions of privacy intrusion entail both actual or potential violations of individual privacy or personal space. Table 3 provides an overview of first and second order constructs.

Results: Individual Perceptions of Interpersonal Contamination in Sharing Experiences

Environmental Hygiene. Interview partners perceived dirt, dust, mold, or other hygiene issues as detrimental to the perceived quality of the overall sharing experience. Among the things that participants 'absolutely would not tolerate' were, unclean kitchens, bathrooms, and bedrooms. Most problematic, however, were any traces of organic or bodily residue left by the host such as hair (human or animal), smell, or left-over food. Similarly, cigarette smoke and other unpleasant smells such as bleach or ammonia were perceived as harmful to the overall quality of the sharing experience.

At the same time, interview partners also reported that they opted for a shared experience precisely because it was not as sterile and clean as a hotel environment. Some travelers even went as far as stating that spotless and impersonal apartments, which looked as if they were solely inhabited by tourists, were not authentic and thus less attractive than others which emanated a more real and personal feeling. While instances of environmental hygiene were universally perceived as 'uncomfortable', many users conceded to accepting lesser standards in terms of cleanness and hygiene than they would in a hotel.

Personal Objects. Personal objects such as décor and personal items have a potential influence on the guest's sharing experience. Guests felt disturbed by items that were either ugly, exceedingly personal, or morally objectionable. For example, respondents were irritated by prepared/mounted animals which they thought were 'a bit disgusting' or by the presence of items with overtly sexual or intimate connotations such as bras or handcuffs which were described as 'too personal and intimate'. In one case, the presence of a child's wheelchair was deemed potentially disturbing. This seems to indicate that sharing experiences may, in some

cases, be *too authentic*. Aside from a few problematic objects, however, there seems to be a general tolerance towards the individual tastes and styles of home decor. Moreover, the presence of personal objects such as books, posters, or pictures was regarded as an essential part of the sharing experience. Interviewees went as far as to state that, for them, the sharing experience entailed a certain voyeuristic component as well.

Interpersonal Contact. In general, guests considered social interaction with the host and other guests to be an essential part of the sharing experience. Instances where hosts take extra time to give advice and cultural insights, or even little presents, were widely appreciated and perceived as enriching the overall sharing experience. Furthermore, interviewees who could recount positive social encounters with their host generally felt less touristy and more like a local. However, guests also felt uncomfortable when the social interaction with the host was perceived either as forced or intrusive. This included instances where hosts revealed too much personal information too quickly, where they spoke too much of themselves, or where they stretched conversations longer than was considered pleasant for the guests. This *too much* of interpersonal contact was considered 'emotionally stressful' and detrimental to the overall guest experience. In extreme instances of interpersonal contact, for example when hosts just 'did not leave' participants felt a diminished sense of safety. Further, guests felt uncomfortable if hosts were inconsiderate and felt still 'too much at home' without being respectful towards their guest. Moreover, due to their social status as guests, several participants felt uncomfortable complaining to their hosts about issues in service quality. This indicates that despite the situational closeness created through the sharing of an apartment, the fact that host and guest are strangers cannot be overcome through the sharing experience.

Privacy Intrusion. In most instances, the interviewees accepted the somewhat diminished sense of privacy as a characteristic of the sharing experience. However, Airbnb guests still

reported some instances where the closeness with the host resulted in a perceived privacy intrusion. This was the case mostly when the host intruded in their bedroom or personal space. Host behavior was deemed especially intrusive when it was being perceived as flirtatious. Here, female guests felt especially violated in their privacy or even 'a little scared', since they had no immediate way of evading the situation. It may be noteworthy that, in general, guests seemed to be less tolerant of intrusive behavior when they were tired – for example shortly after their arrival. Individual sensitivity to privacy intrusion and interpersonal contact varied greatly depending on individual expectations and conceptualizations of the self. Individuals who sought hotel-like experiences were much more liable to be disturbed by instances of interpersonal closeness then individuals who sought family-like experiences.

QUANTITATIVE STUDY: THE ALLEVIATING ROLE OF AUTHENTICITY

Methods

Questionnaire and Sample. Based on the results of the qualitative study, we conducted a quantitative survey among 673 Airbnb guests. The survey was distributed via Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) in December 2016 and the survey administration was handled through TurkPrime. In the survey title and in the introduction, we stated explicitly that only individuals with experience as guests on Airbnb were eligible to take part in the study.

The survey consisted of a series of open and closed questions. We included two open questions. One served as an icebreaker and contextualizing element at the beginning of the survey. The wording was: *"In your opinion what makes an Airbnb experience authentic?"* The wording of the second open question was: *"Please explain why Airbnb has become more authentic, less authentic, or stayed the same."* Except for some demographic questions, the remainder of the survey consisted of closed questions where respondents could state their agreement to a

statement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree, with 2-somewhat disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, and 4-somewhat agree as the middle categories.

The survey took slightly more than 11 minutes to fill out on average and the mean number of seconds to complete it was 675 (median 550 seconds, with a standard deviation of 707 seconds). The respondents received a monetary reward of 1.5 US Dollars with an additional 0.5 US Dollar bonus for completion.

We included an attention check question in the middle of the survey, with the wording, *"The purpose of this question is to assess your attentiveness to question wording. For this question, please mark the 'Somewhat disagree' option."* 35 participants (5 percent) failed the attention check and were excluded from the data analysis. This left us with a sample of 638 respondents.

In an exploratory analysis of the data set, we found that respondents who frequently stay in a shared room differ substantially from those staying in a private room and those renting an entire apartment.[1] Respondents who stayed in shared rooms (not just shared apartments) tended to score lower on authenticity perceptions and higher tolerance of interpersonal contamination, heavily distorting the analysis. It seems that this type of Airbnb experience corresponds with a strictly functional and low-price budget accommodation, lacking many of the typical characteristics of Airbnb. Because the group who often uses Airbnb to stay in shared rooms is relatively small but skews the results substantially, we decided to exclude it from further analysis. 99 respondents stayed in a shared room either "half of the time" (45 individuals), "most of the time" (42), or "always" (12) and were thus removed from the sample. This corresponds to 15.6 percent of the remaining data set. The remaining final sample consists of 539 cases.

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[1] This is in line with an analysis of 4798 Airbnb listings in San Francisco (Said, 2014). "Dozens of shared spaces were in communal "hacker hostels" that offer crash space and a place to make tech industry connections."

Of the 539 respondents, 47.1 percent were female and 52.9 percent were male. The average age was 33.5 years and the median 31 years (standard deviation 9.6 years, with a range of 52 years from 19-71 years). In terms of education, 19 percent had some college education, 47 percent had a 4-year bachelor's degree, and 12 percent had a 2-year bachelor's degree. On the lower end of the spectrum, 9 percent had a high school diploma as their highest qualification and, on the higher end, 1 percent had a doctorate. Thus, the sample includes a broad range of educational backgrounds. The median annual income in the dataset is 6, which corresponds to the category 50,000-59,999 US Dollars. The arithmetic mean is 5.67, indicating an average income of around 50,000 US Dollars. All the respondents were residents of the United States.

Measures. We measured the perceived authenticity of the Airbnb experience with five items, derived and adapted from Ramkissoon and Uysal (2011): *Staying at an Airbnb allows me to experience the local culture*; *Staying at an Airbnb allows me to engage with the local community*; *Staying at an Airbnb offers a feeling of a real home for my trip*; *Staying at an Airbnb allows me to experience a non-touristy neighborhood*; and *Staying at an Airbnb allows me to see the destination in a new light*. Interpersonal contamination as a negative framing of closeness was measured on the four dimensions derived from the qualitative analysis (see Figure 1) and with 18 self-developed (but partly adapted) items: environmental hygiene (6 items), personal objects (4 items), interpersonal contact (4 items), and privacy intrusion (4 items). Finally, we included behavioral intention and negative feedback as dependent variables. We measured behavioral intention with three items and negative feedback with two items. Appendix A displays the wording of the questions and the references if the items were adapted. All constructs had sufficient reliability as well as convergent (Appendix B) and discriminant validity (Appendix C), allowing us to interpret the structural model. The average variance extracted for personal objects was slightly below threshold, with 0.47. We decided to retain personal objects as a factor because of its relevance in the Airbnb context

Method. We used structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data. Two main reasons determined our decision to use SEM, rather than ordinary least square regression (OLS) or other explanatory methods. First, by combining regression and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), SEM is more versatile than OLS. The reliance on CFA allows for a robust measurement of complex phenomena. In our case, this was important because we had several complex and rather abstract constructs such as perceived authenticity and behavioral intention. Second, SEM software routinely gives out fit indices such as CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR. This enables the comparison of nested models (e.g., partially mediated models vs. fully mediated models), which seemed like a fruitful strategy in our case. The analyses were conducted with MPlus (v.7) and then visualized with MS PowerPoint. We used the MLR estimator (maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors) to account for possible sources of distortion such as heteroscedasticity and non-normality (Byrne, 2012). The structural equation model revealed good fit values, with a Chi^2 of 1160.50 at 680 degrees of freedom, a RMSEA of 0.04, a CFI and TLI of 0.95, and a SRMR of 0.06.

Quantitative Results: The Effect of Authenticity on the Sharing Experience

Through the quantitative survey, we sought to measure the tendencies encountered in the qualitative data analysis. Scales developed for the quantitative survey are rooted in the literature and in the interview responses (see Appendix A1). Before we discuss the SEM, we present some descriptive findings.

The participants felt that staying at an Airbnb enables authentic experiences. The average agreement for the five authenticity statements ranged from 4.07 (*"Staying at an Airbnb allows me to engage with the local community"*) to 4.31 (*"Staying at an Airbnb allows me to experience a non-touristy neighborhood"*) on a five-point Likert scale, with an overall mean value of 4.21. This indicates high levels of perceived authenticity.

In terms of contamination, *environmental hygiene* was perceived as most disturbing and uncomfortable (See Appendix B, last column). *Interpersonal contact* was perceived as the least disturbing and uncomfortable contamination factor. The arithmetic means for environmental hygiene range from 4.26 (*"Sticky surfaces"*) to 4.50 (*"Mould"*), with an overall mean value of 4.37. This indicates a high to very high level of discomfort. The arithmetic means for interpersonal contact range from 2.49 (*"Having to share a kitchen with the host or other guests"*) to 2.91 (*"Feeling obligated to share information about yourself with the host or other guests."*), with an overall mean value of 2.67. This indicates a low to moderate level of discomfort. *Personal objects* were seen as more disturbing or uncomfortable with arithmetic means ranging from 3.09 (*"Objectionable artifacts"*) to 3.54 (*"Intimate items"*) and an overall mean value of 3.26. This indicates a moderate to high level of discomfort. Finally, the arithmetic means for *privacy intrusions* were higher than for *interpersonal contact* but slightly lower than for *personal objects*. The arithmetic means ranged from 3.07 ("The host or other guests damaging my personal belongings") to 3.25 ("The host or other guests snooping through my personal belongings"), with an overall mean value of 3.17. This indicates a moderate level of discomfort.

Finally, the two dependent constructs received different agreement levels. The agreement for *behavioral intentions* was very high, with arithmetic ranging from 4.46 (*"I would encourage my family and friends to use Airbnb as well"*) to 4.54 (*"I will keep using Airbnb when I travel in the future"*), with an overall mean value of 4.49. This indicates high to very high intention to use Airbnb again. By contrast, the arithmetic means for *negative feedback* were substantially lower. *"I would leave a bad comment on the host's page"* had an arithmetic mean of 3.18 and *"I would complain on social media"* had an arithmetic mean of 2.66 (overall mean value of 2.92). This indicates moderate willingness to give negative feedback.

The analytical strategy for testing the interplay of authenticity, contamination, and the outcome variables of behavioral intention and negative reviews was to compare a fully mediated

model with a partly mediated model. To do so, we first investigated how the four contamination dimensions affect the outcome variables when authenticity does not affect the outcome variables directly. This scenario – the fully mediated model – corresponds roughly with a hotel experience where authenticity is not an important quality criterion for consumers. In a second step, we were interested whether authenticity overrides the effects of the contamination dimensions on the outcome variables. This scenario – the partially mediated model – corresponds roughly with a sharing experience where authenticity is an important quality criterion for guests. In less technical terms, by comparing the fully mediated and partially mediated model, we could assess if authenticity removes contamination as a detrimental factor for the sharing experience. In both models, we controlled for a range of factors on contamination perceptions (see Figures 1 and 2 and Table 4). Moreover, we allowed for a direct effect of authenticity on all contamination dimensions. Figure 1 displays the structural model for the fully mediated model.

Figure 1 - Authenticity-Contamination-Experience Model Fully Mediated ABOUT HERE

The more that respondents perceived Airbnb as providing an authentic experience, the less pronounced were their concerns about personal objects (-0.15, $p < 0.01$) and interpersonal contact (-0.13, $p < 0.01$). It seems that guests make a trade-off between authenticity and a hotel-like experience. In other words, Airbnb guests are willing to trade in some of the comforts of a hotel in return for an authentic experience. However, the authenticity perception does not have a significant effect on hygiene and privacy concerns. In conjunction with the very high values for environmental hygiene, this may highlight that there are certain issues where Airbnb users are unwilling or unable to make compromises. This is in line with the qualitative findings which point towards dirt, noise, or smells being highly problematic, regardless of perceived

authenticity, potentially because they may be related to health concerns – for example when a guest cannot sleep due to an allergic reaction to cat hair. Similarly, the qualitative survey showed that instances of privacy intrusions may be tied to larger concerns such as personal safety as well – for example when a guest feels unsafe because her host would not leave (see Table 3 for qualitative excerpts).

Looking at the effect of the four contamination dimensions on the outcomes, we see that each dimension has a distinct effect on the Airbnb experience. Privacy intrusion is the only contamination factor with a significant influence on negative reviews (0.17, $p < 0.01$). Airbnb guests in our sample with higher privacy concerns are also more prone to write negative reviews about the hosts on the Internet. Environmental hygiene (0.11, $p < 0.05$), personal objects (-0.11, $p < 0.1$), and interpersonal contact (-0.12, $p < 0.05$) all have a significant effect on behavioral intention. However, only personal objects and interpersonal contact go in the expected direction: More pronounced concern about personal objects and a more pronounced perception of interpersonal contact as severe led to a lowered behavioral intention. By contrast and somehow unexpectedly, environmental hygiene has a positive effect on behavioral intention. Importantly, environmental hygiene does not describe the experience of such conditions in previous Airbnb stays but rather the general level of concern or discomfort with such conditions. It could be that individuals who perceive these conditions as severe tend to stay in cleaner, more expensive, and better-maintained accommodations in the first place, increasing their behavioral intention to book similarly high-quality accommodation again.

Turning to the control variables (see Table 4), we find that gender is the most important predictor of contamination discomfort. Women are more likely to be concerned about interpersonal contact than men are (-0.09, $p < 0.1$). Moreover, they are more uncomfortable with both personal objects (-0.15, $p < 0.01$) and environmental hygiene (-0.11, $p < 0.05$). However, we did not detect a significant gender effect for privacy intrusion. Age increases the discomfort

with personal objects (0.18, p < 0.001). Older Airbnb guests tend to be less comfortable with intimate and objectionable objects. Guests who have children are more disturbed by personal objects (0.11, p < 0.05) but less bothered by interpersonal contact (-0.09, p < 0.05). By contrast, those who travel with family more frequently are more concerned about interpersonal contact (0.11, p < 0.05). Income and education do not significantly influence the perception of contamination. Finally, shyness has a significant and positive effect on the two social dimensions (interpersonal contact, privacy intrusion) of contamination (0.31, p < 0.001 for interpersonal contact and 0.15, p < 0.01 for privacy intrusions).

Table 4 - Influence of Control Variables on Contamination and Experience Variables
ABOUT HERE

In a second step, we looked at a partially mediated model (Figure 2). Here, we allowed for direct effects of authenticity on the outcome variables of behavioral intention and negative reviews. As explained in more depth above, this served to test whether the perception of authenticity might override the negative contamination effects. The direct effect of authenticity on behavioral intention is very strong and significant (0.55, p < 0.001). However, authenticity does not influence negative reviews significantly. Including authenticity makes the effects of environmental hygiene, personal objects, and interpersonal contact insignificant. This supports our expectation that perceiving Airbnb experiences as authentic overrides negative contamination factors. Interestingly, authenticity also overrides the counter-intuitive positive effect of environmental hygiene on behavioral intention. Overall, the partially mediated model performs substantially better than the fully mediated model (Chi-Square=1040.099/df=678, CFI =0.97, TLI=0.96, RMSEA=0.032, SRMR=0.045 for the partially mediated model; Chi-Square=1160.459/df=680, CFI=0.95, TLI=0.95, RMSEA=0.036, SRMR=0.061 for the fully mediated model, with lower AIC and BIC values for the partially mediated model as well). We

thus conclude that authenticity and contamination experiences interact in a way that Airbnb guests balance these factors against each other and are willing to accept some forms of contamination if the experience is seen as authentic. However, they are not willing to accept all forms, as the still strong and significant effect of privacy intrusion on negative reviews in the partially mediated model indicates.

Figure 2 – Authenticity-Contamination-Experience Model Partially Mediated ABOUT HERE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Contamination Sensitivity in the Sharing Economy

During the quantitative investigation, we were able to confirm the presence of all four contamination dimensions, as derived from the qualitative survey: Environmental hygiene, personal objects, interpersonal contact, and privacy intrusions. We also showed that the degree to which instances of guest-host closeness are perceived as challenging may depend on gender, personality, or age. Women, older guests, and guests with a shy personality were more sensitive to (some) challenging instances of closeness. Building on this finding, it would be interesting to further expand the set of control variables with cultural, political, and lifestyle attributes. This would enrich the current findings by two new interpretive frameworks: (1) individuals of different cultures, lifestyles, or political affiliations may have entirely different closeness-perceptions and thus also have a different contamination-sensitivity (cultural perspective) and (2) one could assume that closeness-induced perceptions of boundary infarctions may be less pronounced, with increased familiarity of the sharing parties (homophily perspective). The latter

is in line with Hodson and Costello (2007) who, in their work on emotion, prejudice, and negative intergroup attitudes, maintain that negative attitudes towards closeness in the form of interpersonal disgust (e.g., not wanting to wear clean used clothes or sitting on a warm seat vacated by another person) may be increased towards strangers and in particular towards individuals of different cultural or social backgrounds such as 'immigrants' or 'foreigners'[2]. Similarly, Belk (2010) argues that whether or not an act is deemed invasive or contaminating may not so much depend on the act itself, but on the familiarity with the other person. He illustrates this using the example of sharing a beverage with another person: "we may more comfortably taste our friend's smoothie than a stranger's" (p. 726).

With respect to the sharing economy, this is especially intriguing as there are conflicting narratives surrounding room sharing practices. While sharing platforms themselves claim to offer diverse cultural experiences (e.g., Airbnb, 2014), thus promoting heterogeneous encounters with individuals from other cultures, critics argue that international sharing networks such as Airbnb do not in fact promote real culturally diverse experiences but instead offer a largely homogenous westernized experience: "More than a platform for the intimate encounter with the exotic Other, Airbnb appears as a field for the 'Cosmopolitan consuming class' (Sans & Quaglieri, 2016: 220).

Markers of Authenticity in a Mass-Produced World

Our quantitative analysis further confirmed a correlation between perceived authenticity, concerns about problematic instances of closeness, and the perceived quality of a sharing experience, as expressed through the behavioral intention to use the sharing platform again (positive experience) and the likelihood of leaving a negative review (negative experience).

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[2] Put in quotation marks as these are highly problematic generalizations that should be regarded strictly in the context of Hodson and Costello's (2007) study on ideological orientations and prejudice.

The relationships uncovered suggest that Airbnb guests who perceive sharing experiences to be authentic are in fact willing to lower their concerns and accept a certain amount of inter-personal contamination. Accordingly, they are less bothered by imposed interpersonal contact or disturbing personal objects. This could be explained by the notion that instances of closeness – even negative ones – may up to a certain point be seen as markers of authenticity that ulti-mately enrich the overall sharing experience. This resonates with MacCannell (1973) and his observation that contaminating facets such as noise, smell, and crowding may be welcome in the context of a local setting as markers of authenticity. Similarly, Banet-Weiser (2012) observe that 'flawed' or 'amateur' characteristics may ultimately make experiences more real and re-latable in the eyes of customers. In light of Rose and Wood (2005: 286), we might further assume that customers attribute a special value to deeply personal and even flawed experiences in a world where "the mass production of artifacts causes them to question the plausibility of value".

Selling Authentic Experiences: Implications for Organizations in the Sharing Economy

Our findings have implications for business-models of (1) individual micro-entrepreneurs who share their living spaces and spare rooms, (2) online sharing platforms which mediate transactions between guests and hosts, and (3) secondary service models which provide a layer of professionalization and standardization in the amateur-based sharing economy.

Authenticity as a core characteristic of the sharing experience is expected to be a powerful means by which peer-to-peer sharing models can differentiate themselves from institutional-ized business models such as hotels or hostels which provide a more generic and therefore more predictable experience (Liu & Mattila, 2016; McNamara, 2015). There is evidence, however, that this differentiator may be eroding as platform mediated services are becoming less novel and more similar to conventional service provision (Schor & Atwood-Charles, 2017). In order to build on this differentiator, online room sharing platforms should encourage hosts not to

eliminate markers of authenticity throughout the sharing experience. On the contrary, the individualization and personalization of the sharing experience through selected personal artifacts such as pictures, books, or decorative items as well as personal contact with the host – either in person or via written message – may be increasing the perceived overall authenticity of the sharing experience.

Whether or not an experience is perceived as authentic depends on whether it is in line with guests' expectations about the essence of the experience. These expectations and beliefs are formed not just beforehand but also during an experience. Online sharing platforms support this formation of expectations by embedding the sharing experience in a preconceived narrative of authenticity. The carefully constructed Airbnb narrative, for example, consistently highlights belonging, community, and family: "We celebrate the spirit of belonging through which we care for our guests and embrace them as part of our family" (Airbnb, 2016; Dredge & Gyimothy, 2017). Similarly, a vision statement on the Airbnb blog reads: "Our shared vision of belonging is the thread that weaves through every touchpoint on Airbnb" (Airbnb, 2014). By framing room sharing not as a hotel experience but as a community experience, sharing providers not only lower expectations in terms of general service standard and professionalization, but they also create a narrative framework where flawed aspects are interpreted not as lacking service quality but as markers of authenticity. Thus, nudging guests towards authenticity may alleviate the severity of the effect of interpersonal contamination on the perceived overall quality of the sharing experience.

Furthermore, since the contamination dimensions have a negative impact on both sharing intention and review behavior, hosts and, to some degree, online platforms should strive to reduce instances of contamination. This opens a fast-growing market for secondary service providers, such as key exchange facilitators (reducing interpersonal contact) and cleaning services (ensuring environmental hygiene). However, from the perspective of primary sharing

businesses such as mediating platforms, the recent and continuous rise of secondary services is not without a downside: While they are likely to increase the number of hosts in the network due to more convenience and more efficient processes, secondary services may replace hosts as a primary "face to the guest". As private or amateur hosts become increasingly redundant in a professionalized sharing process, the perceived authenticity of the overall experience may decrease. At this point, secondary service providers may want to work closely with hosts to provide a holistic experience which encompasses all customer touchpoints, for example by including authenticity markers such as personal notes or additional information from the host in their services.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Our study comes with several limitations, opening up opportunities for further research on the topic. Importantly, the survey design was restricted in several regards. By only surveying Airbnb guests in one cultural context, the findings may lack generalizability. This shortcoming was somehow alleviated through the qualitative study, which was conducted in a different setting. Nevertheless, future research should use comparative methods and systematically account for cultural factors in the authenticity and contamination experience. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of the survey did not allow for strong causal claims. While we ran and compared competing models, we could not assess how the effects hold up in a longitudinal framework. Future research should use longitudinal research designs, at best combining different data sources from self-reported to behavioral information, to assess the temporal dimension of authenticity and contamination in the sharing economy. It should also validate the measurement of the key constructs of authenticity and contamination developed here.

This study is a first exploration of the interplay between authenticity perceptions, contamination concerns and outcomes in the sharing economy. While our data is derived from the room-sharing context, we expect the uncovered basic relationships to be valid in other sharing

contexts such as ride-sharing, food-sharing and goods-sharing as well. Here it would be interesting to see where the sharing contexts differ with respect to the individual contamination concerns. For example, we might expect hygiene concerns to be more prevalent in the context of food sharing, while concerns about interpersonal contact might be more prevalent in the confined space of a ride-sharing situation.

Besides venturing into other sharing contexts, we would encourage future work to look more closely into the interdependencies between consumer (guest, passenger, borrower), provider (host, driver, lender) and platform. Here a triadic framework rooted in Stabell & Fieldstad's (1998) as well as Fjeldstad & Snow's (2017) notion of value networks would be a good starting point to systematically approach how authenticity perceptions and contamination concerns in the sharing economy are formed and how they are influenced – not just by the mediating platform, but by providers and (fellow) consumers as well.

Table 1
Conceptual Framework Guiding the Interviews

	Talking points	**Literature**
Usage	Knowledge about sharing services and questions about usage.	Belk, 1985, 2010, 2014b
Satisfaction	General satisfaction with sharing services. Particular question on good or bad experiences.	Gurven, 2006
Motivation	Motivation for using sharing services, i.e. financial, social, hedonistic	Belk, 2010; Benkler, 2004
Perfect sharing experience	Description of perfect sharing experience. Either from personal experience, or envisioning.	Belk, 2010; Benkler, 2004 Botsman & Rogers, 2010
Interpersonal Contact (person)	Questions about social contact from the host – personal focus.	Belk, 1988
Contamination (place)	Questions about contaminations at the venue –focus on object or place.	Goffman, 1971
Change of perspective	What objects would be shared/ not to be the Interviewee.	Kleine, Kleine & Allen 1995; Belk, 2010

Table 2
Overview over the Interview partners

#	Sex	Born in	Job	Platform
1	M	1984	Senior Director Finance	Airbnb / Uber
2	F	1992	Masters student	Airbnb
3	F	1994	Bachelors student	Airbnb / Uber
4	F	1980	PhD-candidate	Airbnb
5	M	1987	Product Manager	Airbnb
6	M	1987	Brand Manager	Airbnb / Uber
7	F	1984	Management Assistant	Airbnb / Uber
8	M	1981	Engineer	Airbnb
9	F	1953	Retiree	Airbnb
10	M	1985	Manager	Airbnb / Uber
11	M	1981	Consultant	Airbnb / Sharoo
12	M	1985	Manager	Airbnb / Uber
13	F	1990	Department head	Airbnb
14	F	1986	Manager	Airbnb / Uber
15	M	1989	Masters student	Airbnb
16	F	1986	Masters student	Airbnb / Uber
17	F	1991	Communications Coordinator	Airbnb / Uber
18	M	1988	Director	Airbnb / Uber
19	M	1984	Coiffeur	Airbnb
20	M	1991	Engineer	Airbnb / Uber
21	F	1991	Masters student	Airbnb
22	M	1992	Bachelors student	Airbnb
23	F	1991	Bachelors student	Airbnb / Uber
24	M	1993	Bachelors student)	Airbnb / Uber
25	F	1960	Nurse	Airbnb
26	F	1988	Manager	Airbnb / Sharoo
27	M	1981	Entrepreneur	Airbnb / Uber
28	F	1971	Head of Department	Airbnb / Uber
29	F	1988	Manager	Airbnb / Uber
30	M	1990	Administrator	Airbnb / Uber

Table 3
Structure of the Qualitative Data

First Order Themes	Second Order Themes	Illustrative Vignettes
Environmental Contamination		
Environmental Hygiene	▪ Noise or Smell ▪ Leftover Food ▪ Organic Residue ▪ Dirt or Stickiness	"In one apartment, there was not a bath mat. I had to step with my wet feet on floor tiles I did not clean myself." "The cat came to my room all night. I could not sleep and my nose itched. In the same apartment people also smoked in the kitchen. I was annoyed by that." "Cigarette smoke would bother me greatly." "Several times I experienced dirty rooms and hair in the bath room, [I] felt uncomfortable with that." "The one thing I would absolutely not tolerate: if [the apartment] is not clean."
Personal Objects	▪ Intimate Personal Items ▪ Disturbing or Objectionable Interior Décor	"Everything was full of stuff from the owner, including underwear and bras. That was too personal and intimate to me." "I was once in an apartment with prepared animals – I think it was in Amsterdam. I found that a bit disgusting." "In Hamburg, we found handcuffs in and similar things by the bed. I would have put that away." "There were just too many throw pillows and other dust catchers!" "I would be uncomfortable with extremely dark furniture. […] A ticking grandfather clock would be annoying, too."
Behavioral Contamination		
Interpersonal Contact	▪ Annoying Behavior ▪ Inappropriate Social Behavior ▪ Crowding, Creepiness	"When we arrived, [the host] showed us Kick-Box Videos all the time and did not stop. When we went to the apartment, he did not leave. Especially when he did not leave I was scared."

"It's annoying when hosts feel too 'at home' and forget that they have guests."

"Sometimes I am happy to be on my own, because the hosts don't always share the same 'vibe'."

"[Interacting with the host] was emotionally stressful. In the end I just wanted to leave the apartment."

"The host barely talked. She just reminded us, when to use the kitchen. That was odd."

"I tried to speak with the host but he answered only with single words."

|		
Privacy Intrusion	▪ Pushy Behavior ▪ Insensitive Behavior	"In the beginning [the host] explained everything to us. Then he became very pushy and sought for interaction and conversation. He always explained how smart and important he was. That was quite uncomfortable for us." "My friend's host hit on her during her stay in a very crude manner. She was a little scared of the guy. As a man I have never had this problem." "It would be annoying to me if the hosts want to talk to me in a moment I seek privacy" "There was no shower curtain and no window curtain either. So neighbors could see me naked." "Sometimes the apartments are really small and you cannot always hide." "The host's husband kept showing up in our apartment. But since we were never actually introduced to him, this felt very weird – he could have been anyone."

Figure 1 -
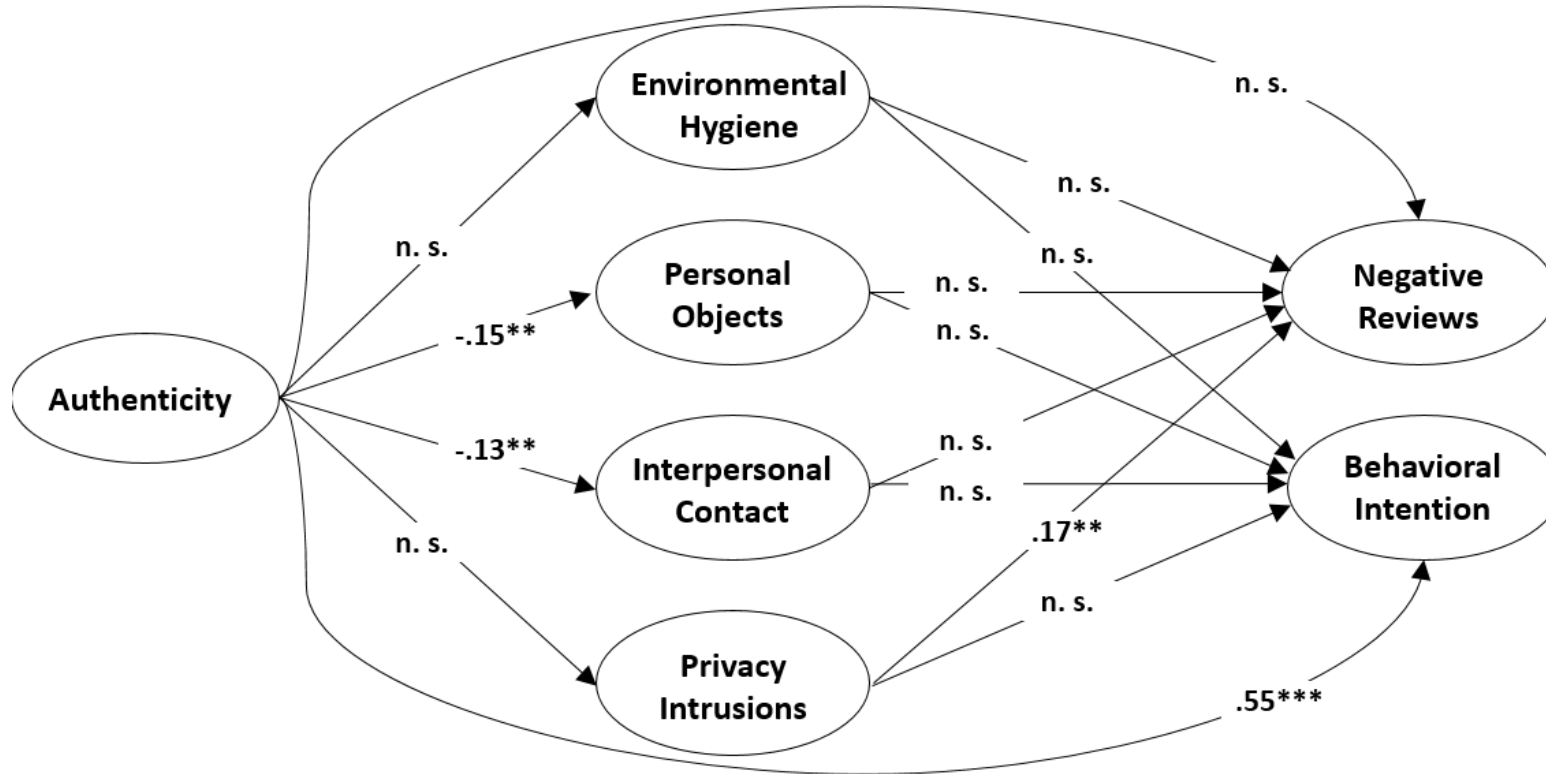Authenticity-Contamination-Experience Model Fully Mediated
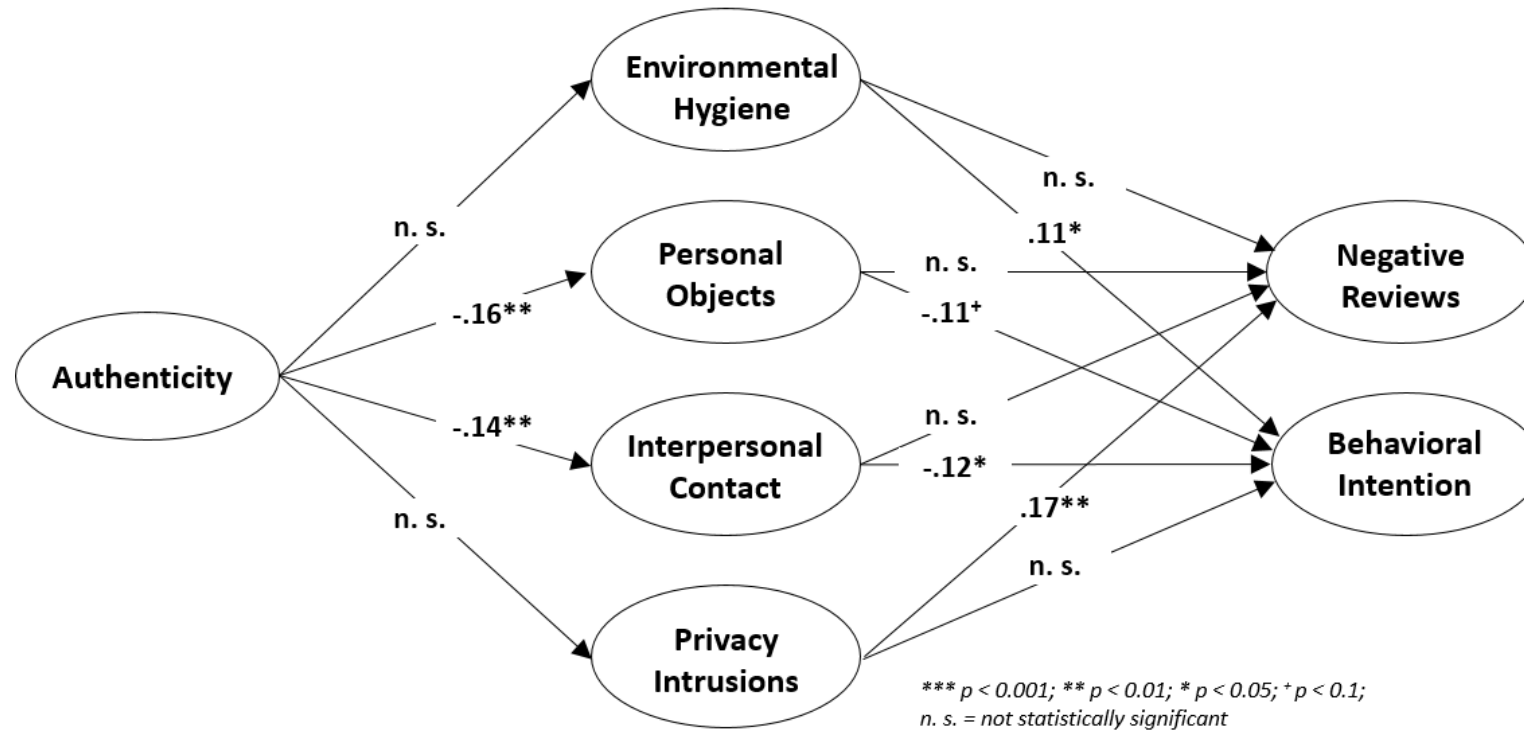
Controls:
age, gender, income, education, shyness, children, travel modality (family) -> environmental hygiene, personal objects, interpersonal contact, privacy intrusion

Excluded as controls because not significant:
area of residence, purpose of using Airbnb (business, leisure, mixed), price sensitivity, travel modality

Figure 2 -
Authenticity-Contamination-Experience Model Partially Mediated

Controls:
age, gender, income, education, shyness, children, travel modality (family) -> environmental hygiene, personal objects, interpersonal contact, privacy intrusions

Excluded as controls because not significant:
area of residence, purpose of using Airbnb (business, leisure, mixed), price sensitivity, travel modality

Table 4

Influence of Control Variables on Contamination and Experience variables

Control Variable	Effect on four Contamination Dimensions			
	Hygiene	Objects	Contact	Privacy
Age	0.01	0.18***	0.08^{+}	-0.02
Gender	-0.11*	-0.15**	-0.09*	-0.04
Income	0.08	-0.00	0.06	0.01
Education	0.00	-0.06	-0.04	-0.07
Children	-0.03	0.11*	-0.09*	0.03
Traveling with family	0.05	0.06	0.11*	0.07
Shyness	0.02	0.00	0.31***	0.15**

Standardized path coefficients are shown; N=539; *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$; no star/$^{+}$ = not statistically significant

APPENDICES

Appendix A1:
Questionnaire

Authenticity	Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. (1–strongly disagree, 2–somewhat disagree, 3–neither agree nor disagree, 4–somewhat agree, 5–strongly agree)
Ramkissoon & Uysal (2011)	*Staying at an Airbnb allows me to experience the local culture.*
	Staying at an Airbnb allows me to engage with the local community.
	Staying at an Airbnb offers a feeling of a real home for my trip.
	Staying at an Airbnb allows me to experience a non-touristy neighborhood.
	Staying at an Airbnb allows me to see the destination in a new light.
Environmental Hygiene (Own scale)	When staying at an Airbnb, how comfortable or uncomfortable would you feel by the following ambient conditions? (1–extremely comfortable, 2–somewhat comfortable, 3–neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, 4–somewhat uncomfortable, 5–extremely uncomfortable)
	Mould
	Insects or traces of insects
	Sticky surfaces
	Human hair
	Unpleasant or unfamiliar biological odor (from human or animal)
	Unpleasant or unfamiliar non-biological odor (cigarette, bleach etc.
Personal Objects (Own scale)	When staying at an Airbnb, how comfortable or uncomfortable would you feel by the following signs, symbols, and artifacts? (1–extremely comfortable, 2–somewhat comfortable, 3–neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, 4–somewhat uncomfortable, 5–extremely uncomfortable)
	Intimate items of the host or other guests present (prescription medicines, contraceptives etc.)
	Personal hygiene products of the host or other guests present (razors, soap, sanitary products etc.)
	Objectionable artifacts (explicit art, disturbing motifs, controversial books etc.)
	Exceedingly valuable artifacts of the host or other guests present (jewelry, cash, electronics etc.)
Interpersonal Contact (Own scale)	When staying at an Airbnb, how severe would you perceive the following instances of social intrusion to be? (1–not at all, 2–a little bit, 3–a moderate amount, 4–a lot, 5–a great deal)
	Feeling obligated to engage in small-talk with the host or other guests.
	Feeling obligated to share information about yourself with the host or other guests.
	Being provided with unprompted information about the host or other guests.
	Having to share a kitchen with the host or other guests.

Privacy (adapted from Stutzman et al., 2011)	Please indicate your level of concern about the following potential privacy risks that arise when you stay in an Airbnb. (1–no concern at all, 2–little concern, 3–moderate concern, 4–high concern, 5–very high concern)
	The host or other guests damaging my personal belongings (clothes, electronics etc.)
	The host or other guests snooping through my personal belongings (luggage, laptop etc.)
	The host or other guests entering my personal space (bedroom, private bathroom etc.)
	The host or other guests using items they should not (bedclothes, pillows, personal hygiene products etc.)
Negative Reviews (Own scale)	Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. If I didn't enjoy an Airbnb…
	I would leave a bad comment on the host's page.
	I would complain on social media.
Behavioral Intention (Own scale)	Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. (1–strongly disagree, 2–somewhat disagree, 3–neither agree nor disagree, 4–somewhat agree, 5–strongly agree)
	I will keep using Airbnb when I travel in the future.
	I generally give good references to the Airbnb places I have stayed at.
	I would encourage my family and friends to use Airbnb as well.
Shyness (Cheek & Buss, 1981)	Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. (1–strongly disagree, 2–somewhat disagree, 3–neither agree nor disagree, 4–somewhat agree, 5–strongly agree)
	I am socially somewhat awkward.
	I feel tense when I am with people I do not know well.
	When conversing, I worry about saying something dumb.
	I feel nervous when speaking to someone in authority.
	I am often uncomfortable at parties and other social functions.
	I feel inhibited in social situations.

Appendix A2:
Measurement Model

Construct	Item	Stand-ardized loading	t-values	R^2	α	C.R.	AVE	Descriptive statistics
Authentic-ity (AUT)	aut1	0.777	28.772***	0.604	0.83	0.83	0.51	Mean: 4.21
	aut2	0.821	34.361***	0.675				Median: 4.00
	aut3	0.603	15.241***	0.364				Std. deviation:
	aut4	0.561	11.945***	0.315				0.78
	aut5	0.765	26.668***	0.585				
Environ-mental Hygiene (EHY)	ehy1	0.892	43.106***	0.795	0.92	0.92	0.66	Mean: 4.37
	ehy2	0.857	33.954***	0.734				Median: 4.80
	ehy3	0.794	28.813***	0.631				Std. deviation:
	ehy4	0.796	30.925***	0.633				0.98
	ehy5	0.773	22.297***	0.598				
	ehy6	0.740	20.386***	0.548				
Personal Objects (POB)	pob1	0.824	29.574***	0.679	0.76	0.77	0.47	Mean: 3.26
	pob2	0.771	25.484***	0.594				Median: 3.50
	pob3	0.572	13.698***	0.327				Std. deviation:
	pob4	0.513	11.050***	0.264				1.14
Interper-sonal Con-tact (ICO)	ico1	0.902	54.492***	0.814	0.87	0.87	0.63	Mean: 2.57
	ico2	0.870	45.114***	0.757				Median: 2.50
	ico3	0.741	27.458***	0.550				Std. deviation:
	ico4	0.643	18.361***	0.414				1.30
Privacy (PRI)	pri1	0.837	42.564***	0.701	0.94	0.93	0.78	Mean: 3.17
	pri2	0.872	50.121***	0.761				Median: 3.00
	pri3	0.901	70.950***	0.812				Std. deviation:
	pri4	0.913	61.799***	0.834				1.31
Negative Reviews (REV)	rev1	0.723	4.882***	0.522	0.71	0.71	0.55	Mean: 2.92
	rev2	0.763	4.697***	0.582				Median: 2.50
								Std. deviation:
								1.22
Behavioral Intention (BI)	bi1	0.842	26.887***	0.710	0.84	0.84	0.64	Mean: 4.49
	bi2	0.749	21.322***	0.562				Median: 5.00
	bi3	0.804	26.100***	0.646				Std. deviation:
								0.70
Shyness (SHY)	shy1	0.862	55.572***	0.743	0.93	0.94	0.69	Mean: 2.65
	shy2	0.894	72.141***	0.800				Median: 2.17
	shy3	0.752	31.470***	0.566				Std. deviation:
	shy4	0.710	24.872***	0.503				1.30
	shy5	0.872	56.036***	0.761				
	shy6	0.888	65.640***	0.788				
Criterion		≥ 0.5	min*	≥ 0.4 < 0.9	≥ 0.7	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.5	

α = Cronbach's Alpha; C.R. = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted. Average, median and standard deviation calculated per item and then averaged across items for each construct; N=539.

Appendix A3:
Discriminant Validity Test

	AVE	AUT	EHY	POB	ICO	PRI	REV	BI
AUT	0.51							
EHY	0.66	0.00						
POB	0.47	0.01	0.09					
ICO	0.63	0.02	0.01	0.06				
PRI	0.78	0.00	0.03	0.08	0.13			
REV	0.55	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.03		
BI	0.64	0.31	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00	
SHY	0.69	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.03	0.00	0.02

Discriminant validity test according to Fornell Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981); Squared correlations between the latent constructs are displayed. They should not exceed the AVE value.

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