2.5 Discussion and Summary
Several authenticity theories from different fields are synthesised and discussed in relation to this study while knowledge gaps in the context of markers of authenticity for Mosuo, Bhutanese kira and Harris Tweed textiles are highlighted to justify the selection of these case studies for research.

2.5.1 Paradigms of Authenticity
Analysing the many theories of authenticity, two major concepts can be employed to understand authenticity. These are Object and Experience. Within the Object framework, authenticity can be further classified as Objective and Subjective, under which various characteristics are discussed (Figure 33).

- **Object: Objective / Material**
  This object/material perspective maintains that the authenticity of an object can be ascertained from its physical characteristics which are well structured, measurable and objective, and defined upon the creation of the object or event (Sagoff, 1978). The
absolute values of these characteristics enable the preserver to ‘know’ that the object in question is authentic, a term coined as Cool Authenticity by Selwyn (1996).

This means of understanding authenticity is useful because it enables one to examine an object physically in order to ascertain its authenticity. In this study, hand-woven textiles are de-constructed in order to examine each of its physical elements – yarns, fibres, colour, size, weight, weave constructions, dyes, etc. Treating each element in isolation can help determine whether it could serve as marker of authenticity. This method will be further elaborated in Chapter Four.

• Object: Objective / Non-Material
Beyond an object’s physical characteristics, non-material characteristics can also be objectified. According to Cohen (1988[b]; 1993), authenticity based Liberal Conception refers to the technique, production, skills, technics, and tools used to make a product. UNESCO Bangkok (n.d.), Wherry (2006) and Felker, et al., (2014) focuses on traditional skills, techniques and tools while Love and Sheldon (1998), Postrel (2003), Revilla and Dodd (2003) and Notar (2006) have advocated the inclusion of geography and site of production.

Looking beyond the physical attributes, this study will also consider the way that the cloth is woven, the tools used, the processes, etc. as possible markers of authenticity.

• Object: Subjective / Abstract
In considering authenticity from this perspective, an object is viewed as more than its physical qualities, a position that has been expounded in by Heidegegger (1971) in The Work Being theory. In Dutton’s (2003) Nominal Theory, an object encompasses ideas and thoughts, including the reason for its genesis by the creator. Beyond knowing the aims of the maker, for the Expressive Authenticity approach (Dutton, 2003) the context and circumstances (including values and belief systems) of where and when the object was created are also an essential part of its characteristics, and in understanding the authenticity of the object (Geertz, 1983). In the Nara Document of Authenticity (1994), it is encapsulated in the setting and spirit of the place.
As these qualities are intangible, many scholars have attributed authenticity in crafts to an ‘X factor’ such as Walter Benjamin’s concept of aura (1936), and Liu’s (n.d.) concept of fundamental authenticity.

Significantly, because of its abstract and contextual nature, the acknowledgement of authenticity can be described in terms of a feeling, rather than of an empirical truth. A similar understanding is encapsulated through the Hot Authenticity theory (Selwyn, 1996).

Reflecting on this theoretical background, and looking beyond the physical characteristics and the method used to weave the cloth, this study will adopt the approaches described above to help make sense of the thoughts, ideas and opinions of the weavers behind the creation of their work. These non-material aspects will be elicited from weavers, through their own narratives and storytelling as a means of understanding the cultural essence of their textiles.

- Object: Subjective - Constructive

Authenticity, as a constructed concept, is a historically, socially and culturally constructed concept (Bruner, 1989; Hughes, 1995; Cohen, 1988[a]; Olsen 2002). It can be seen in the context of a dynamic process in which belief or perception that an object is genuine can change over time and in different spaces (Healy, 1994; Carroll and Wheaton, 2008; Maruyama, et al., 2008).

Using Constructive Authenticity as a framework, this research acknowledges that the markers of authenticity identified during the course of study may only be relevant within context and timeframe of this study. Analysis of the data will also attempt to identify and call to account the stakeholders within each community for their roles in shaping the markers of authenticity of their textiles. However, even though constructive authenticity embraces both the makers’ and observers’ notions of authenticity, this study will only report on the weavers’ voices, giving insights into both the core (weavers) and the macro constitution of the community.

- Object: Open /Closed

In theories from the Object: Objective Material perspective, the physical authentic attributes are considered to be ‘closed’ upon the creation of the object (Trilling, 1972;
Sagoff, 1978; Harbin, 2008). Any physical changes to the object will therefore jeopardize the object’s authenticity. In contrast, in theories from other perspectives such as the Object: Subjective Abstract and Object: Subjective Constructive, authenticity is seen as an evolving concept where new physical traits are included, enhancing, not endangering the object’s authenticity (Harbin 2008).

Therefore, by adopting the premise that authenticity is ‘open’ and constantly evolving, this study acknowledges that the markers of authenticity identified herein could be subject to change.

- **Experience**
  Advocates of this concept state that authenticity is not ‘embedded’ in an object but rather, the object acts as catalyst for the maker or the perceiver to experience authenticity (Honer, 1992; Swanson and Timothy, 2012; Gordon, 1986; Love and Sheldon, 1998). Existential Authenticity (Wang, 1999) could be summed up as an experience where the maker or the perceiver feels ‘good’ about him/herself.

In the concept of Performative Authenticity, the maker’s experience of authenticity is realised through ‘doing’, ‘performing’ or ‘making’ the object itself. Such actions bring together the self (subject), the intangible (their beliefs and memories) and the tangible (the body’s physical action), along with the external world – the physical setting, space and environment (Zhu, 2012) to be expressed in the object. Authenticity may also be realised by the maker through self-reflection and development of one’s deeper consciousness (Felker, et al., 2014; Kettler, n.d).

Relevant to this study, special attention will be paid to understanding of both the meaning of authenticity in terms of being an individual as well as being a part of a community and the feelings evoked when weaving. Personal reflections from the weavers will be incorporated to add clarification of their work, themselves and the community at large.

- **Importance of the Maker’s Perspective**
  This exercise of reflection on what is authentic can be a means of empowerment and self-determination (Cohodas, 1992; Abu-Lughod, 1991). From a socio-economic development viewpoint, understanding authenticity from the community’s perspective
is an important component in the development of policy in support of building its identity (Burner, 1991). From the craft development and policy perspectives, if makers’ opinions are not included, external assistances may alienate them and the policies of agencies charged with helping communities could be counter-productive (Maruyama, et al., 2008; Felker, et al., 2014). However, according to Felker, et al., (2014), there are relatively few studies which have examined this.

In recognizing this gap, this study aims to privilege the voice of the community-based weavers, thereby understanding from their perspective what is means for their culturally-bound textiles to be authentic. The implication is that if markers of authenticity *cannot* be identified by weavers themselves, it will be challenging to promote their hand-woven textiles as a culture product with a Unique Selling Point (USP). This is especially significant for brand development and marketing of their products. From a community development perspective, such an exercise of self-definition is also a means of empowerment and self-determination.

- **Occidental and Non-Occidental Views on Authenticity**

  A divide exists between the perceptions and understanding of authenticity in occidental and non-occidental cultures, with the dominant view on authenticity held by the former stemming from its historical and philosophical roots, as described previously in Section 2.1.1. For example, in Occidental cultures, the canonical perspective on authenticity relates to singular and unique objects that are ‘autographic’ and with no clear notationality system (Goodman 1976). For Non-Occidental cultures, notationality principles allow for multiple copies of an object still to remain authentic (Steiner, 1999; Cant, 2012; UNESCO Bangkok, n.d.).

  The Nara Document of Authenticity (1994) has bridged this divide embracing a diverse concept of authenticity allowing the interpretation and ownership of authenticity by communities themselves. This is the starting point for this study, which will examine authenticity; in relation to Mosuo, Bhutan and Harris Tweed hand-woven textiles. This study will embrace the diversity of voices, views and concepts as communicated by weavers themselves in articulating their meanings of ‘authenticity’, thus gaining insight into how they identify markers of authenticity for their own textiles.
2.5.2 Mosuo

The legal and political entity of the Mosuo is ambiguous. Although they are a homogeneous cultural group, they are labeled under different ethnic groups in their respective provinces. As authenticity is intrinsic to establishing cultural identity, this research aims to understand how Mosuo weavers attribute authenticity in their textiles in such an elusive context. Considering that crafts are reflections of the maker’s culture, are Mosuo hand-woven textiles able to give an insight to the identity of a Mosuo person? From the existential perspective, what is the meaning of being a Mosuo person amidst this identity confusion?

The major economic drive for the Mosuo today is the tourist industry. This is largely driven by marketing of Mosuo’s ‘exotic’ matriarchal culture. A byproduct of tourism is a vibrant souvenir trade with tourists purchasing ‘authentic’ souvenirs to remind them of their visit. The main product that the Mosuo people produce is hand-woven textile. This study, therefore, seeks to understand what are the markers of authenticity of these hand-woven textiles that renders them as authentic, as different from other forms of hand-woven textiles.

Tourism today has brought about many changes in the lives of the Mosuo community. Nonetheless, tourism is also a double-edged sword. The very reason tourists come to this region is also the same factor that is eroding the foundation on which Mosuo prosperity is built. As the mode of production changes, the matriarchal society and its unique practices are also changing into one that is modelled after mainstream Han Chinese culture.

However, it could be said that because of tourism, Mosuo culture is also being strengthened. It is in this tide of positivity that development projects have been conceived to assist Mosuo people in transforming and redefining themselves in the present context. Yeh (2001) has suggested a key insight: the challenge is to identify the core values in the system that defines the essence of being a Mosuo. As a response to Yeh’s challenge, the objectives of this study are to identify the markers of authenticity for the Mosuo, with the practical follow through, so that by helping weavers articulate the cultural boundaries in their hand-woven textiles they will be able to innovate and adapt their traditional textiles for non-traditional markets more confidently and credibly. Also, identification of markers of authenticity of Mosuo hand-woven textiles could help
the community establish a brand to increase visibility while protecting their material heritage in the commercial marketplace.

In review of the literature on Mosuo, only Judson’s work (2009) was found to focus on Mosuo weaving. During her ethnographic field work, she lived with the Mosuo community, describing her experiences with the community, her attempts at weaving and describing the local weaving industry.

While the method employed in this research has parallels to Judson’s work (2009), this study examines the conceptual framework of Mosuo weavers in relation to their personal identification, social and political framework amidst changes.

2.5.3 Bhutan

Bhutan’s unique and distinctive cultural identity could be attributed to its historical context, geo-political position, and demography. The establishment of Driglam Namzha institutionalised Bhutanese identity by prescribing all aspects of Bhutanese appearances and behavior so as to regulate social propriety, governing all rules of social behavior and cultural expression. Significantly, Bhutanese culture permeates through all aspects of life including the country’s economic sphere, through the concept of GNH.

The manifestation of culture in the economic realm is in the form of cultural industry. Handicrafts, especially the hand-weaving sector, are a significant contributor because of readily available cultural resources (including skills and knowledge) and an ongoing demand, while echoing the principles of GNH, addressing multiple issues such as income generation for women and minimisation of rural-to-urban migration.

The Bhutan SEAL and the SEAL of Origin are programmes set up for the government to support this sector. While these programmes are set up to assist in the development of Bhutanese crafts, the definitions of ‘authenticity’ and ‘origin’ for both programmes are vague and unclear. Therefore, when innovating traditional crafts into contemporary products, the path to transformation and interpretation of traditional crafts and handwoven textiles is ambiguous.
More importantly, interventions such as the introduction of foreign looms need to be examined and analysed in order to ensure that these do not jeopardize the integrity and dignity of Bhutanese hand-woven textiles.

This research is timely because of the macro transformations of the country through the establishment of parliamentary democracy by the fourth King. Until 2008, the national identity of Bhutan along with its cultural norms, traditions and resources had been protected and defended by its custodian – the Monarchy. However, in an elected democracy, custodianship will be in the hands of the Bhutanese citizens who will decide how and what aspects of cultural heritage, tradition, norms and resources to preserve, even though the Constitution spells out an overall context for culture preservation.

Works by experts on Bhutanese textiles such as Adams (1984), Bartholomew (1985) and Myers and Bean (1994) have focused mainly on the cloth itself with only minimal input from the weavers. Thus, this research will be the first formal study to privilege the perspectives of Bhutanese weavers and their understanding of their textiles.

From a macro perspective, this research aims to contribute to the dialogue on development by identifying markers of authenticity of hand-woven kira textiles set in the context of changes taking place in Bhutanese society. Hand-woven kira textiles have been selected because of the essential link with Bhutanese society as they straddle the practical, commercial and cultural realms. Hence, whilst these textiles are expressions of Bhutanese cultural traditions, they are also subject to the practicalities of change, reflecting social transformation at large. This research aims to understand the elements that contribute to the authenticity of a Bhutanese kira within the dynamics of social and cultural change.

2.5.4 Harris Tweed

In reviewing the earlier discussion on the history and the development of Harris Tweed, The table below (Table 1) summarizes the essential differences in production before and after the 19th Century.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Before 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Century</th>
<th>After 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wool Fibres</td>
<td>Blackface Sheep</td>
<td>Blackface, Cheviot Sheep and Crossbred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarn Production</td>
<td>Hand Processed / Spun Domestic</td>
<td>Mill Processed / Machine Spun Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyes</td>
<td>Natural Dyes</td>
<td>Chemical Dyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width of Cloth</td>
<td>Unregulated</td>
<td>36 inches / 72 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Loom</td>
<td>Wooden Frame Looms (Beart Bheag)</td>
<td>Fly-Shuttle Loom (Beart Mhor) The Domestic Hattersley Mark 1 &amp; 2 The Bonas Griffiths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>Women Family/Community</td>
<td>Men Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of Production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills and Knowledge</td>
<td>Informal Based on experience and experimental Generation to Generation</td>
<td>Formal Training SVQ Certification and Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Mode</td>
<td>Domestic Informal</td>
<td>Commercial Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Output</td>
<td>No Records Informal Limited</td>
<td>Records of cumulative production maintained Formal Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finishing</td>
<td>Community Participation Consecration of Cloth</td>
<td>Mill Executed Packaged and Shipped to Customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage</td>
<td>Domestic Blankets, Clothes</td>
<td>Clothes, High Fashion, Fashion Accessories and Furnishings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Exchange</td>
<td>Bartering Informal</td>
<td>Cash Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Implications</td>
<td>Supplementary</td>
<td>Full-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Status</td>
<td>No Legal Status</td>
<td>Legislated and Protected by Act of Parliament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Evolution of the Characteristics of Harris Tweed Before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Afterwards

Although many of the characteristics of the cloth have changed, some remain the same of which the site of weaving, colour and yarn and characteristic/ functionality of the fabric are noteworthy.

Harris Tweed epitomizes the occidental perspective on authenticity: a physical manifestation together with a legal definition to determine the authenticity of cloth as Harris Tweed. Authentic Harris Tweed is manifested physically through the Orb stamp, enabling buyers to be confident as to its authenticity (Figure 34).
Although a system of notationality serves in the production of the cloth, each piece of textile is autographic in nature as each is woven by a different weaver and thus, each bale is unique. Invoking the concept of aura, the individuality of each bale could also be attributed to the specific mélange of colours; again, no two bales are alike (Platman, 2011).

The appeal of Harris Tweed could also be seen through its nostalgic value; the cloth is steeped in history, tradition, reflecting the way of life of crofters and the romanticism of pre-industrialized societies (Rosaldo, 1989). Thus, an appeal to the sentiment triggers the spirit of authenticity, especially for existential buyers (Honer, 1992; Swanson and Timothy, 2012).

Several theories can be helpful in understanding aspects of authenticity of Harris Tweed: Constructive Authenticity (Olsen, 2002; Cohen 1988[a]) as the criteria have been changed through the course of time; Conspicuous Authenticity (Love and Sheldon, 1998), with the colours of the cloth reflecting the colours of the land and the seascape of the islands; and Liberal Concept of Authenticity (Cohen, 1988[b]; 1993) as there exist many possible variations within the legal constraints. Finally, Harris Tweed is also geographically indicated because it can only be produced in the Outer Hebrides.

However, thus far, the examination of authenticity does not encompass the existential aspect of authenticity, especially from the weavers’ perspective. Others studies such as those of Pirmie (1981), Hunter, (2001), and Craigie (2010) have mostly studied the cloth from an industrial and community perspective. If and when weavers’ views were mentioned, the subject of authenticity was not raised. Thus, this study is ground
breaking because the context, setting and spirit of weaving Harris Tweed will be explored through an understanding of the maker’s interpretation and their concept of what makes their cloth authentic.