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EDITORIAL

The Potential of/for 'Slow': Slow Tourists and Slow Destinations

Slow tourism practices are nothing new; in fact, they were once the norm and still are for millions of people whose annual holiday is spent camping, staying in caravans, rented accommodation, with friends and relations or perhaps in a second home, who immerse themselves in their holiday environment, eat local food, drink local wine and walk or cycle around the area. So why a special edition about slow tourism? Like many aspects of life once considered normal (such as organic farming or free-range eggs), the emergence of new practices has highlighted differences and prompted a re-evaluation of once accepted practices and values. In this way, the concept of 'slow tourism' has recently appeared as a type of tourism that contrasts with many contemporary mainstream tourism practices. It has also been associated with similar trends already 'branded' slow: slow food and *cittaslow* (slow towns) and concepts such as mindfulness, savouring and well-being.

Being a relatively young term, the exact definition of slow tourism is still being debated. Firstly, the distinction between slow tourism and slow travel is often unclear. The term 'slow travel' is sometimes used to denote travel to and from the destination, but may also encompass activities while at the destination (e.g. see Gardner 2009; Germann Molz, 2009). McGrath and Sharpley (forthcoming) suggest that slow travel refers to the tourists' actions, while slow tourism applies to the supply side at the destination.

One disputed aspect of slow travel and tourism is whether the tourist has to consciously choose the activity and label to qualify as a slow tourist. The Mintel Report (2009: 1) defines slow travel as 'a trip made using non-aviation methods', while Gardner (2009) insists it is the conscious choice which makes it slow travel/tourism. Our contributors address this issue with Larsen (2016) finding aspects of slow tourism in otherwise conventional holidaying, while Lannoy (2016), a self-confessed slow tourist,

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admits his slow holidays include activities which would not be classed as slow tourism by purists.

This special issue was initiated by a meeting of the International Tourism Masters Network - ITMN (in Heilbronn, November 2014) when it was noted that there was a lack of literature about destinations offering slow tourism. Interestingly, the case studies we received focus on slow tourism *potential*, rather than established slow destinations, possibly indicating that, as yet, few slow destinations exist, perhaps the topic of another special edition in a few years! However, an exciting discovery of the current issue is that not only are many tourists unwittingly practising slow tourism, but many providers are unwittingly offering holidays and attractions which include many aspects of 'slow', and it is the researchers (see Bagnoli, 2016; Fraga and Botelho, 2016; Fuentes *et al.*, 2016; Pecsek, 2016, this issue) who see the potential of using 'slow' in the branding.

The relationship between slow tourism and sustainability is also ambiguous. Some studies (Dickinson *et al.*, 2010; Yurtseven and Kaya, 2011) have found motives among slow tourists include endeavouring to reduce negative impacts and to enhance the quality of experience. Caffyn (2012) suggests slow tourism, with its offer of conviviality, even hedonism, is an easier 'sell' than green or eco-holidays, but may also result in more sustainable local tourism. Guiver and McGrath (2016) concur that sustainability can be a benign by-product of slow tourism, but is not promoted as a motive. What seems evident though is that slow tourism encourages a deep respect for the place visited, an appreciation of its uniqueness and a willingness to adapt to the place, rather than it adapting to the tourists.

This issue brings together a number of papers with different perspectives to examine how slow tourism is constructed, represented and performed. A variety of theoretical and methodological approaches (including quantitative surveys, interviews, discourse analysis and self-reflection) grounded in different disciplines (geography, tourism studies, sociology) present their findings from a wide range of locations (Brazil, Spain, Hungary, France, Italy, Denmark).

The issue begins with three conceptual papers all with a focus on representations of slow tourism, but from different perspectives. These papers contribute to developing an understanding of what slow tourism entails, both in terms of individual tourist behaviour as well as engagement in a more collective set of principles and practices that

might simultaneously distinguish slow tourism from other, more 'mainstream' types of tourism and, perhaps, allow slow tourism to be somehow integrated into other forms of travel and tourism behaviour.

The first paper, by Jo Guiver and Peter McGrath, compares discourses from academia and websites relating to slow tourism and travel. It concludes that whilst there is some overlap (in particular relating to investing and savouring time in the destination place), academic texts tend to focus more on the perspective of destinations and how the slow movement might benefit them in terms of sustainable tourism development, whilst the 'real world' texts collected from websites stress the benefits to tourists and travellers themselves. The paper also questions whether 'unwitting' slow tourists, those who take on some of the behaviours associated with slow travel and tourism without actually calling themselves 'slow tourists', can be considered as practising slow tourism, a point taken up in the following paper by Gunvor Larsen.

Larsen employs discourse analysis to examine what people say about their trips without consciously talking about slow travel, or without having consciously engaged in slow tourism practices. However, it emerges that many of the respondents in this study place high value on their 'unintended slow travel behaviour', relishing this aspect of their holiday experience. Larsen suggests that these findings are encouraging for the promotion of slow travel, and indeed for destinations concerned with integrating these types of practices into their tourism strategies in order to develop a more sustainable form of tourism.

Sociologist Pierre Lannoy takes a more focused approach to the same kind of question. Through a frank and fascinating self-analysis, drawing on a range of social and geographical theoretical perspectives on the nature of socio-spatial relations, Lannoy takes us on a slow journey through his reflections on some of his personal holiday experiences (hiking in the mountains and taking a boat along the canals of France), and concludes that what brings him so much pleasure from these journeys is a complex interweaving of material, embodied, and symbolic conditions. He then goes on to speculate that his own form of 'slowness' has little to do with the structures upon which the slow tourism philosophy appear to be based. He even goes so far as to suggest that the mindfulness of slowness that characterises the individual pleasure and satisfaction he takes from the practices described is incompatible with the necessarily heavily

mediated practices that a ‘fully fledged’ form of slow tourism, with its ethical underpinnings, advocates. However, his reflective analysis provides a useful insight into how a framework for evaluating slow tourism experiences might be developed for future research. Once again, it might be argued that rather than attempting to define slow tourism as a ‘stand-alone’ type of niche tourism, it might well be more fruitful to consider how ‘slowness’, as both philosophy and practice, can be integrated into other types of tourism from the perspectives of other tourists themselves and destination managers.

This is in fact the focus of the four case studies which follow. In the first, Laura Fuentes, Ana Muñoz Mazón and Cristina de Vierna Fernández describe their research into a farm in Galicia, Spain which offers horse-riding tuition and holidays. Their interviews with the owner and manager and survey of customers demonstrate how many ‘slow’ principles are already in place and they go on to discuss the potential to use the term in future marketing.

Brigitta Pecsek takes us to a small spa town in Hungary – Mezőkövesd – in the heart of the Matyó land where her research into tourists’ activities again shows that slow tourism is already happening, but could be developed further, for example by encouraging longer stays. She highlights the potential revitalisation that slow tourism can offer small towns, particularly those faced with declining and aging populations. She also reflects on how folklore and traditional handicrafts connect with slow tourism’s ideas of savouring time and enhancing creativity.

Lorenzo Bagnoli also explores the potential of slow tourism to help sympathetic development of a cross-border mountainous region located between well developed tourism areas in France and Italy. His systematic audit of the region’s assets reveals numerous attractions including the restored railway, destroyed in the Second World War, which could act as both an attraction in its own right and a means of access. The region has a fascinating history, including the transfer of territory between the countries.

Railways and history also feature in the final case study, based in Brazil, by Carla Fraga and Eloise Botelho, who explore the potential for slow tourism in a region which has a series of historic but still operational steam railways. The region is also characterised by an abundance of protected areas, through which many of these

railways pass. The authors therefore posit that the active development of ‘slow rail travel’, involving a multitude of stakeholders including the railway operators, the managers of the protected areas, and local agents who can provide an array of products and services grounded in folklore and gastronomy, could provide a unique way of experiencing a combination of landscape, locality and nostalgia, for both domestic and international tourists in Brazil.

This diverse collection of papers adds to the small body of academic literature on slow tourism and we hope contributes to the continuing debate about how it should be defined and practised.

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Slow Tourism: Exploring the discourses

Slow Tourism: Exploração de discursos

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Abstract

'Slow travel' and 'slow tourism' are relatively new, but contested, concepts. This paper examines the meanings ascribed to them in the academic literature and websites targeted at potential tourists. It finds concurrence on aspects of savouring time at the destination and investing time to appreciate the locality, its people, history, culture and products, but detects different emphases. The academic literature stresses the benefits to the destination and global sustainability, while the websites focus on the personal benefits and ways of becoming a 'slow tourist'. Food and drink epitomise the immersion in and absorption of the destination and the multi-dimensional tourism experience, contrasted with the superficiality of mainstream tourism. The paper discusses whether tourists practising slow tourism without using the label are slow tourists or not.

Keywords: slow travel; slow tourism; discourse.

Resumo

Slow travel e *slow tourism* são conceitos relativamente recentes, embora contestados. Este artigo examina os sentidos conferidos aos conceitos na literatura académica e *websites* dirigidos a potenciais turistas. Encontram-se consistências em aspetos como saborear o tempo no destino e investir tempo para usufruir do local, das pessoas, da história, da cultura e dos produtos, mas detetam-se ênfases diferentes. A literatura académica realça os benefícios para os destinos e sustentabilidade global, enquanto os *websites* se dedicam aos benefícios pessoais e formas de se ser um *slow tourist*. Comidas e bebidas representam a imersão em e a absorção do destino e a experiência turística multidimensional, contrastando com a superficialidade do turismo de massas. O artigo discute se os turistas que praticam *slow tourism* sem recorrer ao rótulo são ou não turistas *slow*.

Palavras-chave: *slow travel*; *slow tourism*; discurso.



1. Introduction

The terms 'slow travel' and 'slow tourism' are now recognised as denoting forms of holiday that differ from the mainstream. Whilst still being contested in the academic literature, the terms are freely used in the media, despite the lack of consensus about what they signify. This makes it an appropriate and interesting time to examine their usage in documents which will contribute to 'fixing' the meanings for the future, namely the academic literature and websites promoting slow travel/tourism. The findings reported in this paper identify the similarities and differences between the two types of writing and will contribute to understanding the collection of activities, motivations and benefits which inform the notion of slow tourism.

Here we focus on slow tourism, i.e. activities at the holiday destination, rather than the travel between the tourists' home and their destination or between destinations, while recognising that the term slow travel is often applied to these activities.

The next section reviews the modest literature about slow tourism and associated ideas and is followed by the methodology, explaining how the documents were chosen and analysed. The findings use the documents' words to explore the themes of time and pace, accommodation and travel at the destination, senses and emotions, depth and people. The discussion relates these themes to those from the academic literature and the conclusions summarise the paper. They suggest that the tourist-centric discourses in both academic and online texts about slow tourism re-enforce the power of the tourist and their right to make decisions in their own interests.

2. Literature review

Slow tourism/travel remains a contested term (Dickinson and Lumsdon 2010; McGrath and Sharpley, 2016), but the 'constellation' of ideas (Fullagar, Wilson and Markwell, 2012: 5) surrounding it is beginning to emerge into a meaningful concept (Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011: 273). Here we focus solely on slow tourism attitudes and practices at the destination, confusingly often called 'slow travel' (McGrath and Sharpley, 2016).

The label 'slow tourism' distinguishes it from other kinds of tourism, such as mass or mainstream tourism with their, often unstated, undesirable attributes and differentiates it from other types of 'unconventional' tourism, such as eco-, pro-poor or responsible tourism (McGrath and Sharpley 2016: 3). It can apply to a trend away from conventional tourism (World Travel Market, 2007), an adopted identity (Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon, 2010; Smith, 2012), conscious ethical decisions (Fullagar, Wilson and Markwell, 2012), motivations for holiday choices (McGrath and Sharpley, 2016; Oh, Assaf and Baloglu, 2014), types of accommodation (Matos, 2004) or destination (Caffyn, 2012; Timms and Conway, 2012) as well as a description of fundamental changes needed in the organisation of tourism for social justice and environmental sustainability (Hall, 2009). Pinning down exactly what it means is difficult and perhaps should not be attempted: "You can kill the thing you love by trying to define it." (Respondent in Lumsdon and McGrath's research, 2011; 273)

Here we explore five themes emerging from the literature: (i) time; (ii) conscious decision-making; (iii) engaging the senses; (iv) holiday duration and location; and (v) anti-commercialism, before discussing the benefits of slow tourism.

2.1 Time

Although 'slow' indicates a relationship with time, the 'slow' in slow tourism derives from the 'slow' used by the slow food movement, *Cittaslow* (slow cities) (Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011) and other terms such as slow consumption (Hall 2009). It opposes 'fast' (as in fast food) and celebrates processes and the time they occupy.

A growing number of authors, both academic (eg. Bertmann, 1998; Odih, 1999) and popular (eg. Honoré, 2005; Jónsson, 1999), implicate modern constructions of time in creating stress and dissatisfaction. Paolucci (1998) attributes feelings of stress to having to choose among so many activities and trying to do too many too quickly without enough time to do them with care, while Simpson (2014: 44) claims the focus on means, including instrumentalism embodied in technology, "makes it impossible to assess the value of any given thing or value." The rejection of this goal-orientated, linear time is symbolised by the spiral motif for the slow travel movement (Figure 1), representing a circular and more abundant vision of time (Germann Molz, 2009).

Figure 1: An illustration of the spiral motif, used for slow tourism



Source: Slow Travel Company, 2015.

While holidays should be escapes from such models of time (Howard, 2012), Woehler (2004) believes that the institutionalisation of employment time has permeated vacations, causing time-scarcity even for self-fulfilment. The demands of employment greatly influence the time available for, and activities chosen for, holidays (Dickinson and Peeters, 2014).

Slow tourism reduces the pace of activity, by savouring each activity in its own right (Germann Molz, 2009; Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011), rather than seeing it as the means to an end (see Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon, 2010). It is contrasted with 'fast tourism' which involves packing in multiple stops and activities (World Travel Market, 2007).

2.2 Conscious decision-making

For several authors (e.g. Germann Molz, 2009; Caffyn, 2012), the conscious choice of 'slow' is an essential attribute of being a slow tourist, echoing the words of Gardner (2009): "Slow travel is about making conscious choices." Many assume altruistic motives: "Slow travellers consider the impact of their holidays on the local community they visit" (World Travel Market, 2007: 14). For these authors, it would appear that unwittingly practising aspects of slow tourism, perhaps through economic necessity, disqualifies one from being a slow tourist. Others grade the degree of conscious choice or motivation for slow tourism. Yurtseven and Kaya (2011) identify three clusters of tourists visiting a tourist *CittaSlow* destination: 'dedicated', 'interested' and 'accidental' slow tourists, while Smith (2012) and Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon (2010) call dedicated and environmentally motivated tourists 'hard slow' and others who enjoy aspects of slow tourism as 'soft slow'. While environmental convictions may play a role in choosing slow tourism, the experiential benefits appear to be the over-

riding motivation (Caffyn, 2012; Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon, 2010; Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011, McGrath and Sharpley, 2016).

2.3 Engaging the senses

With its antecedents in the slow food movement, many writers find enjoying local food and drink an essential aspect of slow tourism (Caffyn, 2012). This benefits the destination (employing local people, maintaining traditions) and offers opportunities to mix with local people. Many research respondents (see Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon, 2011; Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011; Robbins and Cho, 2012) refer to smells, tastes, meeting people and being 'within' a place, associated with a deeper sense of experience (Germann Molz, 2009). This contrasts with the superficiality of purely visual consumption (Larsen, 2001, Urry, 2002).

2.4 Holiday duration and location

One of the advocated ways of experiencing a place more deeply is to stay longer (Caffyn, 2012), countering current trends for more and shorter holidays, largely facilitated by cheaper airfares (Buckley, 2010). Slow tourism favours rural areas (Matos, 2004) with a slower pace of life and opportunities to walk, cycle and enjoy the countryside, although savouring city life is also advocated (Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011).

2.5 Anti-commercialism

Slow tourism offers an alternative to the homogenisation of the holiday experience, destinations and their tourism provision by conventional (mass) tourism and package holidays (Conway and Timms, 2010). Holiday-makers' time pressures have led to the growth of tourism intermediaries exerting commercial pressure on destinations to provide their interpretation of tourists' needs, including presenting overwhelming choices of activity (Woehler, 2004). Instead, slow tourism offers "making real and meaningful connections with people, places, food, heritage and the

environment” (Caffyn, 2012: 78), where tourists may even attempt to be part of the community, rather than remaining outsiders (Robinson and Cho, 2012), suggesting that relationships between visitors and residents can be deeper than commercial transactions.

As well as celebrating the differentness of places, slow tourists can signify their rejection of the sameness of package holidays: “Considering their travels superior to those of others, many portrayed their identities as alternative and their travels as following a more fulfilling and worthwhile way of life.” (Smith, 2012: 39).

2.6 Benefits of slow tourism

Although many authors focus on the environmental motivations and benefits of slow tourism, most of these are from reducing long-haul flights rather than activities at the destination. However, destinations adopting principles of slow tourism may reduce the financial leakage to foreign suppliers and so generate more income and employment for local people (Caffyn, 2012; Conway and Timms, 2010). The emphasis on quality, rather than quantity, and on spending longer in a destination may attract different market segments, often the growing group of time- and cash-rich retirees. Other benefits to the destination include enhancing its sense of identity and pride in local food, agriculture and occupations. There may also be disbenefits, with the power imbalance between tourists and destination creating pressures to ‘fix’ local identities and activities in an imagined exercise of slow tourism (Germann Molz, 2009).

Most of the claimed benefits for slow tourism accrue to the tourists themselves, including: relaxation, escape from home and work time pressures, more fulfilling holiday experiences and a greater, deeper knowledge and insight into the places they visit and their residents with possibly a cleaner conscience about their environmental and social impacts.

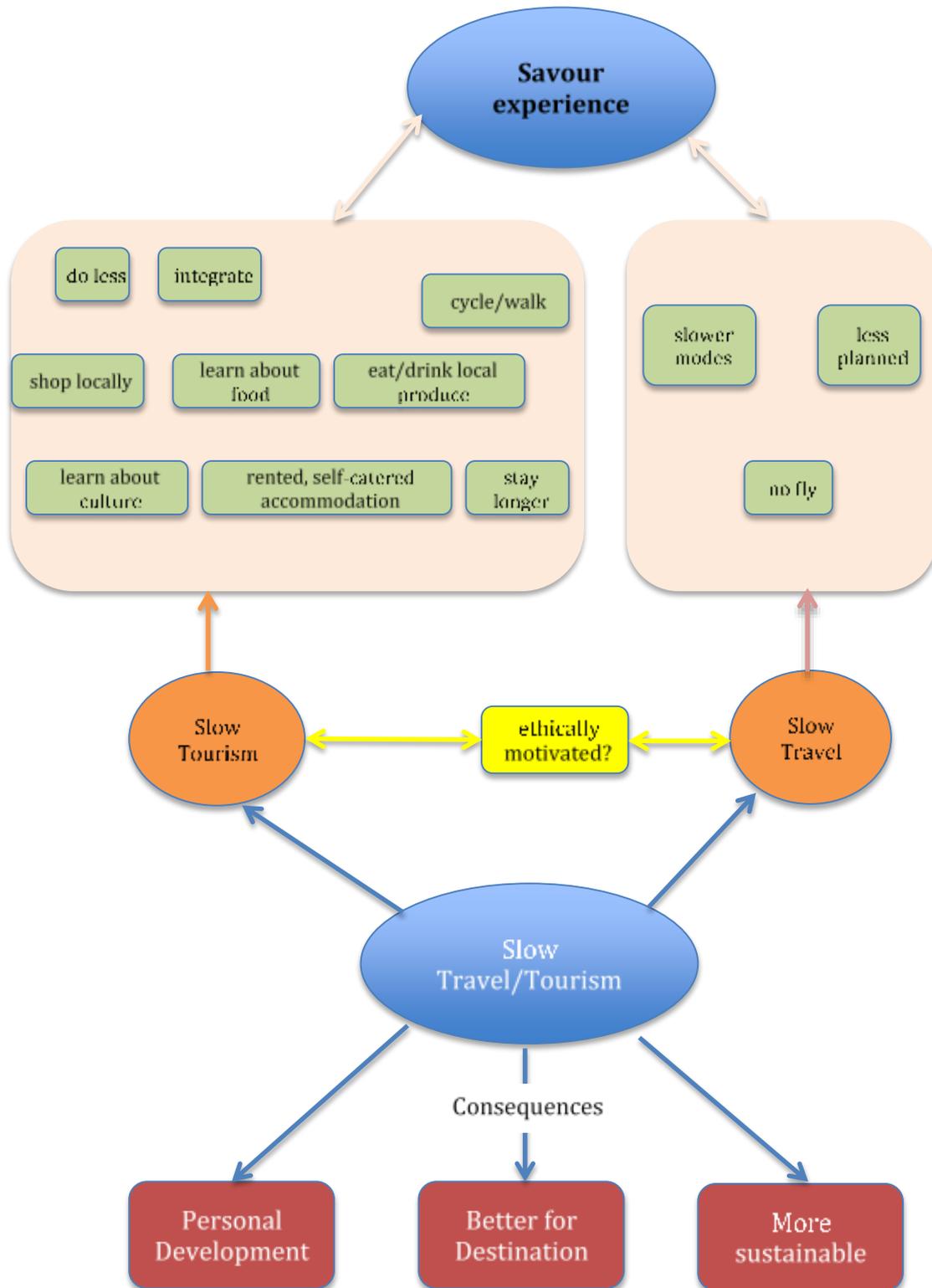
2.7 In summary

From this quick review, it is clear that slow tourism holds different meanings for different writers and actors. The central figure is the tourist, whose motivations and

preferences need to be met for destinations and the planet to benefit from slow tourism. For destinations, social and environmental campaigners, it presents a label to sell the personal, even hedonistic, benefits of more ethical and sustainable forms of tourism (Caffyn, 2012) whilst avoiding the 'greater good' rationale that has so far proved ineffective in changing tourism habits. To really take off (pun intended), it will probably have to be embraced by commercial interests, with a track record of destroying the very thing they are promoting. Another trajectory would be that it became the norm, so that destinations deviating from the norm might be seen as 'fast'. This would take away a selling point from providers and destinations, but no doubt there would still be a market for 'deeper' and more sustainable tourism with new labels such as 'ultra-slow'.

Each use of the terms slow travel and slow tourism helps shape their meaning. It is likely that tourism providers, destinations, travel writers and self-professed slow tourists have different motives for promoting and using the terms. While this review has focused on the academic literature, we now turn to texts created by other actors to examine how they are helping to mould the meanings of the terms.

Figure 2: Motivations, actions for and consequences of slow travel and tourism



Source: Authors.

3. Methodology

Discourses are present in texts and speech which help construct ‘realities’ that are created, ordered and transmitted by language and other representations (Burr, 1997; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2000). Communication requires mutually understood words, grammar and meanings about topics, often using cultural references which are not explicitly explained by the author, but are nevertheless understood by the audience (Guiver, 2007). Texts thus both reflect and create common meanings and knowledge, which can be identified through their analysis.

This research set out to explore similarities and differences in the use of the terms *slow travel* and *slow tourism* by different actors in the tourism system. The original plan proposed to use samples of text created by different types of people/organisations. However, the search for materials revealed that the boundaries between different roles are more blurred than anticipated. Eventually sixteen texts were selected; they had to fulfil the following requirements:

- be available on the internet and come up on a search for combinations of *slow* and one of the following terms: *travel*, *tourism*, *tourist destination*;
- be within 150 and 3000 words;
- together represent a variety of actors within the tourism system, e.g. tour providers, destinations, travel writers, bloggers.

Table 1 lists the documents and their identifying number.

Table 1: Sources of texts

		Document	Description	Purpose	Words	Website
Accommodation	1A	Slow Travel	Explanation about what Slow Travel is. Aimed at Americans. Picture of detail of old architecture in Umbria, Italy	Convert people to Slow Travel. Encourage holiday rentals	1622	http://www.slowtrav.com/vr/index.htm
	2A	Chalikeri Hotel	Short description of Chalikeri in Kefalonia	Attract customers,	171	http://www.kefalonias.com/accommodation/ http://www.kefalonias.com/accommodation/
Blogger	3B	Never Ending Voyage	Accounts of Travels of Simon and Erin	Recount pleasures of own travels?	999	http://www.neverendingvoyage.com/slow-travel-manifesto/
	4B	The Way of Slow Travel	The Stated Ten Principles of Slow Travel	Uncertain	143	http://www.thewayofslowtravel.com/principles/
Destination	5D	Exmoor National Park	Website advertising Activities in National Park Includes picture of hills, heather and May blossom	Attract more visitors	331	http://www.visitbritain.com/en/Destinations-and-Maps/National-parks-and-scenic-areas/Exmoor-National-Park.html
	6D	Slow Travel Thailand	Leaflet about Slow Tourism Offers in Thailand, listing accommodation and holiday providers	Attract people to visit Thailand, give information about where to find Slow Tourism Offers	81 pages	http://www.tourismthailand.at/fileadmin/downloads/12/Slow_Travel.pdf
	7D	Tuscany Walking Festival	Advertising a Slow Walking Event	Attract attendees	911	http://www.easier.com/131641-walk-for-enjoyment-exercise-and-empathy-at-slow-travel-fest-tuscany.html
Tour Provider	8TP	Slow Travel Tours	Advertising for an affiliation of providers of slow tourism. Lots of pictures of countryside and 'Slow holidays'	Attract people to book the tours	1,700	http://slowtraveltours.com/
	9TP	InnTravel	Explanation of Slow Travel with examples from their holidays	Encouraging people to book holidays with them	430	https://www.inntravel.co.uk/slow-holidays
	10TP	Indiegogo The Italian Dream - Slow Travel	Why Slow Travel? website, headed by Youtube video and picture of Italian countryside at dawn/dusk	Explanation of Slow Travel, attract customers, crowd funders	2026	https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/the-italian-dream-slow-travel#/
Travel Writer	11TW	Slow Travel for People in a Hurry: Ed Gillespie	Description of round-the-world Slow Travel journey	Entertainment, information	781	http://www.theguardian.com/travel/blog/2008/apr/04/slowtravelforpeopleinahu
	12TW	Slow Travel Europe	Background to Manifesto	Entertainment, information	524	http://www.slowtraveurope.eu/

		Document	Description	Purpose	Words	Website
	13TW	A manifesto for slow travel: Nicky Gardner	Much quoted Manifesto for Slow Travel	Entertainment, information	1923	http://www.hiddeneurope.co.uk/a-manifesto-for-slow-travel
	14TW	The Art of Slow Travel Sarah Schlichter	Explanation of what Slow Travel entails.	Entertainment, Information, leading to adverts	1385	http://www.independenttraveler.com/travel-tips/none/the-art-of-slow-travel
	15TW	Take the slow lane in Slovenia Paul Richardson	Article in Financial Times about a Slow Holiday package in Slovenia	Entertainment, recruit customers	907	http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/bbfc5a14-f1bd-11e1-bba3-00144feabdc0.html
Website	16WS	What is Slow Travel	Slow Movement linked to Footprint Choices	uncertain	671	http://www.slowmovement.com/slow_travel.php

Source: Authors.

The texts were analysed using Atlas TI software, which allows the analyst to code the text, compose memos, group and comment on documents, codes, memos and quotations. The themes which emerged from this process are:

- contrasts;
- time and pace;
- accommodation and travel at the destination;
- senses and emotions;
- people.

4. Findings

4.1 Contrasts

Contrasts often clarify meanings. Holidays were contrasted with working life: "too fast, when deadlines have to be met, obligations attended to" (9TP), "hectic stressful lives" (14TW), although one document equated home and holidays in vacation rentals "that are home away from home – you shop and cook just as you would at home" (WS16).

Mainstream holidays are characterised as rushed, packing in a number of sights, exhausting, often associated with a compulsion to maximise the experience of the trip. "The trap of trying to see everything" (3B), "holiday tours where you flit from one 'must see' to another, and arrive home feeling like you need a holiday" (WS16), "whirlwind tour" (13TW), "manic sightseeing" (14TW), "the stress of attempting to knock out every site in your guidebook" (14TW). An American audience is often assumed, reflecting on their home and holiday behaviour: "Few societies move as quickly as Americans do" (14TW).

A related theme is the superficiality of conventional holidays, contrasted with slow tourism: "living as opposed to 'staying' at your destination" (16WS), "breezing through the major tourist sites" (14TW). Economy and sustainability provide secondary justifications for slow tourism: "vacation rentals are often more cost efficient than

hotels” (14WT), “... the negative effects of mass tourism... exploitation of local resources... global pollution” (10TP).

Among the people possibly not suited to slow tourism are: those who feel “excited and energised by lots of sightseeing” (14TW), “afraid to muck in and make friends” (15TW), or the “more cash and time strapped traveller” (11TW). People with “fast lives” which “demand confirmed arrival times” might be “disquiet[ed]” (13TW), unlike the slow traveller for whom “[d]elayed trains or missed bus connections create new opportunities” (13TW).

Other characteristics of conventional holidays are implied by the texts. Descriptions such as “authentic, family run accommodation where you receive the friendliest of welcomes: leisurely meals of good regional cuisine”, “a very personal and individual experience” (9TP), and “you'll see new places and explore new cultures in a way that is less stressful to you, more respectful of the locals and easier on the environment” (14TW) suggest inauthentic, unfriendly, depersonalized, stressful and unsustainable conventional holidays without respect for the local people.

4.1. Time and pace

The emphasis is on savouring activities, often very ordinary activities in the local context, instead of doing too much. A holiday is an “opportunity to take time out to gain a better perspective to re-energise, to create a balance: a time to pause, slow down and savour things for what they really are” (9TP), “it's about taking the time to observe, to be in the moment and take pleasure from simple things” (3B), “take time to wander around a small town, chat to people you meet, enjoy a drink at a local café and just watch the world go by” (9TP), “buying fresh vegetables from the farmers market every morning, sipping *café au lait* on your favourite sidewalk terrace, and taking leisurely trips to neighbouring villages and Châteaux” (14TW).

Potential ‘slow’ destinations are often rural: “tranquil heart of Brittany” (8TP), “sleepy” (5D, 6D), operating “slowly in accordance with the time and with the seasons, the true speed of life”(6D), especially Italy, the starting point of the slow food and *Cittaslow* movements: “live at an Italian pace” (8TP), “where time seems to have stopped centuries ago” (10TP). Remote places are particularly favoured: “untouched”

(6D), “unknown destinations, and unstepped routes, and out of season scenarios, far from the madding crowd” (10TP), “under-explored” (15TW), “places that will be impossible with the normal road vehicle” (8TP). “[T]he slow travel philosophy” stresses the importance of getting “to know one small area well” rather than seeing “only a little bit of many different areas”(14TW). “It's about getting to know one place well, focusing on quality rather than quantity, and connecting with the place and its people” (3B).

The benefits include: “a stronger connection to the place you are visiting” (14TW), “returning re-energised and relaxed” (3B), “rejuvenated and changed” (1A), “you'll become a more confident person” with more “meaningful memories”, “better able to challenge stereotypes”(3B). There may be incidental environmental or economic benefits: slow tourism is “generally much easier on the environment than other types of travel. ... often kinder on your budget as well.” (14TW). However, almost all the benefits accrue to the tourist, whether it be in the quality of the holiday experience, or character-forming events which deepen understanding of the host culture or oneself.

Although spontaneity is lauded, planning is needed. Absence of time pressures mean “you can stop when you want, head off to explore something that interests you along the way” (9TP), but naturally tour providers stress their preparation, “our Sojourns are impeccably planned, but we intentionally keep the dynamics of the painting workshop and group relaxed” (8TP). Booking self-catered accommodation requires forward planning and can be less flexible than staying in hotels (1A, 14TW).

Learning local history is encouraged, favouring historical places: “a country with a history thousands years old (*sic*)” (10TP), “hundred–years old paths” (10TP), “experience the good life in the mediaeval perched village of Bonnieux” (8TP). “[T]he site is believed to be around 500 years old. It is a place to learn about the ... interesting past of the people of this region” (6T).

4.2. Accommodation and travel at the destination

The most common duration of holiday mentioned is one week (1A, 3B, 13TW, 14TW, 15TW, 16WS), although the bloggers (3B, 4B) emphasise that their travels, and often stays in one location, lasted months rather than weeks.

Slow tourists are urged to choose self-catering over catered accommodation (1A, 3B, 14TW, 16WS), largely because they “tend to be more cost-efficient than hotels for longer stays” (TW14). It also means “the slow traveller has to go out into the community to shop. This is an important part of ‘living’ in your travel destination” (16WS). However, tour providers offer more varied accommodation including: “a range of selected hotels, guest houses, and castles”, canal boats (8TP), “authentic, family-run accommodation” (9TP) and one destination (6D) offers homestays. House exchange (14TW) and couchsurfing (3B) offer potential introductions to local people.

Walking or cycling are recommended at the destination: "the best way to slow down and get off the beaten track is to walk or cycle" (9TP), "By exploring on foot and by bike there are opportunities to talk to people and find out the points of interest from their perspective" (16WS). Even slower walking is advocated for greater ‘immersion’: “strolling through a vegetable market in Rome or wandering down a random sidestreet in Paris” (3B), "walking solo, all [or?] with partners, friends and children, perhaps stopping to sketch, take photos enjoy local food and drink and watch and listen to the entertainment ... as they stroll." (7D), "slow travellers explore communities along the way, dawdle and pause as the mood takes them and check out spots recommended by the locals" (12TW). Slow driving may be classed as Slow (13TW, 16WS): “driving along back roads instead of taking the highway” (13TW) or just convenient: “only a short drive from Fiskardo...” (2A). Alternative modes of travel include canal cruises (8TP) and elephant rides (6D) and white water kayaking/rafting (5D, 6D), “to get the adrenaline pumping”(5D).

4.3. Senses and emotions

Despite the claim that slow tourism "engages all your senses" (8TP, 10TP), two senses predominate: sight and taste. A major advantage of slow tourism is “seeing what's around you ” (8TP), "you'll see new places" (14TW) and destinations are described in terms of their visual appeal: "picture-perfect coastal towns" (5D), "beautiful scenery", "scenic stroll" (9TP), “a widescreen view of mighty Mount Triglav” (15TW), “some of the most beautiful and iconic scenes on earth” (9TP). These sights also include the night sky (5D, 7D, 10TP). However, slow tourism differs from the

'must-sees' of conventional tourism: "slow travel is about experiences over sights" (3B), "You want to see less, but deeper" (10TP).

Food and/or drink feature in every document but one, sometimes linking slow tourism and the slow food movement. Local food is encouraged: "in a spirit of slow food, try to seek out local ingredients and experience the regional cuisine of the place you're visiting." (14TW). Some dishes are described in detail: "Devon cream tea with locally made clotted cream" (5D), "pan-fried scallops with pancetta, herb gnocchi, truffle buschetta, and tagliatelle with courgette and gorgonzola sauce" (15TW). Being adventurous is recommended: "Seek out at a local restaurant with no English menu, maybe even no menu at all. Order something you don't recognise." (3B).

Not just for eating, food is for learning about, cooking and possibly picking: "take a cooking class and try out the recipes afterwards" (3B), "sit at the kitchen table of a country grandma, who teaches you her cooking secrets"(10TP). "You will taste and cook, make your own olive oil or cheese or gather porcini and chestnuts alongside the locals" (8TP). When eating out, travellers are urged to "patronise locally owned cafes and restaurants" (14TW), "eat at a tiny trattoria one night" and to avoid "chains like Costas and Starbucks, and stick to locally owned cafes" (13TW).

Wine also 'stars' in many of the holidays: "Wine, sea views and amazing holiday" (2A), "spend a week getting to know the wines, local foods and lifestyle" (8TP), "dinners ... are served with ... large quantities of (very decent) Slovenian wines." (15TW). One company specialises in wine tours, including: "excursions to the small wineries of Galicia and the Bierzo region of north-west Spain", "meet producers of local foods and wines ... visit local farms and vineyards and enjoy many meals with small production wines" in Croatia (8TP). There are few allusions to sound (although see Music and Markets Tours' (8TP)) and none to smells.

The earnestness of slow tourism might suggest hard work, with some authors admitting slow tourism may "stretch your comfort zone" (3B, 4B) and be challenging (14TW), although rewarding. Others talk of "celebrating" (4B), "fun" (6D) "the joy of Slow" (11TW) being "comfortable" (16WS), "fulfilling and magic" (10TP) "relaxed" (2A, 8TP, 11TW) "chill[ing] out" (2A) and one holiday may "[u]ncover that inner child alive with the joy of life" (8TP).

4.4. Depth

One of the major benefits of slow Tourism is a deeper understanding of the destination. "Superficial" (11TW, 16WS), conventional holidays are contrasted with "immersion" (3B, 6D, 8TP, 11TW, 16WS): "immerse yourself in the local customs and culture" (6D), "return to the simple pleasures of life as you immerse yourself in the flavours and traditions of one of Tuscany's most distinctive culinary regions" (8TP). "Spend at least one week in one place on your trip to really experience a place at a different level" (16WS). "We want you to experience the difference between looking at a country through a glass window and living it from the inside" (10TP). This three-dimensional experience of slow tourism, being 'in', rather than 'at' a destination, chimes with the desire to 'absorb' it through eating and drinking its produce: "Melt into, feel, and absorb the culture." (8TP).

The history adds another, temporal, dimension. The rewards include finding little-known places missed by other tourists: "Discover the small hidden jewels of the surroundings, led by the local guides" (10TP), "take you to places you've dreamt about and others you've never heard of" (8TP), "a slow holiday is all about exploring the quiet side of the place you are visiting and taking your time to really enjoy its hidden corners traditional ways of life and hospitality" (9TP).

4.5. People

While immersion in the destination is advocated, little is said about the host communities. The texts' protagonists are the travellers, the residents are the backdrop: "the tranquillity and a quarter of a rural society in rude health – the haymakers with their scythes, the neatly kept up Alpine villages" (15 TW). Slow Tourists are encouraged to "watch" (3B) or "talk to" local people (3B, 9TP, 16WS), attend their festivals (3B), live like local people (1A), learn some of their language (3B, 13TW, 16WS) or their cookery (3B, 16WS) and slow tourism is supposedly "more respectful of the locals" (14TW).

The discussion of abstract ideas inevitably leads to portraying the local people generically: "chatting to a local in Bagan, Burma" (3B), "engage with communities at

the right level" (13 TW) or subsuming them as 'culture': "an ideal destination for anyone seeking both greater cultural and environmental awareness" (6D), "exploring food, culture, wine, and artful living" (8TP). Yet slow tourism challenges "stereotypes" (3B, 10TP) and some of the descriptions expand more about the host community and what they offer the traveller: "How people live as a community where everyone is treated like a part of a big family will make one understand how wonderful and simple life can be when a society live(s) in harmony" (6D).

Service providers can be reduced to the service they provide: "authentic, family run accommodation where you receive the friendliest of welcomes; leisurely meals of good regional cuisine ..." (9TP), "famously warm welcome" (5D). However, some of the tour providers personalise accommodation and other service providers: "professional archaeologist Steve will guide and interpret for you" (8TP), "Ian as skipper/tour guide, Jane creating great dishes with a Breton twist" (8TP), " Signora Teresa's famous cooking classes" (10TP).

Tour companions are also important 'ingredients' of the holiday. One company reassures its potential customers that their fellow travellers, "a maximum of only four guests" will share their tastes: "a small group of like-minded travellers" (8TP). One travel writer recounts how "a group of perfect strangers" became "firm friends" during a walking holiday (15TW).

4.6. In summary

As expected, the texts are very 'tourist-centric' focusing on the benefits to the tourist of adopting slow tourism. This is contrasted to exhausting and unfulfilling conventional holidays. Staying in rented accommodation, walking and cycling in the area and connecting with its people, culture, history, food and drink promise a deeper and more relaxing experience. Table 2 cross-references the documents and selected themes.

Table 2: Documents and Themes

	Document	don't fly	savour journey	personalised providers	spend time in one place	history	wine	rent accommodation	local people	depth	benefits to traveller	sustainability	contrast with other holidays	rural	walk/cycle	food	sights
1A	Slow Travel	o			x			x			x		x			x	x
2A	Chalikeri Hotel						x	x							x		x
3B	Never Ending Voyage						x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x
4B	The Way of Slow Travel																
5D	Elmoor National Park					x								x	x	x	x
6D	Slow Travel Thailand			x	x			x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x
7D	Tuscan Walking Festival	o		x	x					x	x	x		x	x	x	x
8TP	Slow Travel Tours	o		x	x	x	x		x	x				x		x	x
9TP	InnTravel								x		x			x	x	x	x
10TP	Indiegogo The Italian Dream - Slow Travel			x		x			x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
11TW	Slow Travel for People in a Hurry: Ed Gillespie:	x	x				x					x	x		x		
12TW	A manifesto for slow travel: Nicky Gardner	x	x		x						x					x	
13TW	Slow Travel Europe: Nicky Gardner		x						x				x				
14TW	The Art of Slow Travel: Sarah Schlichter	x			x			x			x	x	x		x	x	x
15TW	Take the Slow Lane in Slovenia: Paul Richardson			x			x							x	x	x	x
16WS	What is Slow Travel				x			x	x	x			x	x	x		
	Number of sources mentioning topic	3	3	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	7	8	11	11	11

Key: x = mentioned, o = flying suggested.

Table 2 shows the topics mentioned by each source, with the most mentioned topics (on the right of the table) being walking/cycling, food and sights. There is no apparent pattern emerging, with different types of source giving emphasis to different topics, however, a larger sample might uncover evidence of underlying differences in emphasis.

5. Discussion

With their different audiences, it is not surprising that the academic literature and the websites have different foci. The websites are primarily aimed at potential tourists with the hope of changing their behaviour: to buy into a specific product or consider a different type of holiday. The academic literature addresses the phenomenon from multiple perspectives: opportunities for destinations and businesses, trends in tourism, motivations and sustainability. The benefits to destinations (more locally

controlled outlets and employment, lower turnover of visitors, support of traditional produce, higher local spending, etc. (Caffyn, 2012; Conway and Timms, 2010)) or the environment (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010) are described.

Among the common themes is the idea of deeper and more meaningful relationships between visitor and people at the destination, through longer stays and more leisurely appreciation of locality. Both types of literature contrast this 'depth' with the superficial contacts and 'seeing' of conventional tourism. Qualitative research with respondents (Smith, 2012, Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011) reveals the importance of different senses to appreciate the destination and the analysed texts refer to using all the senses, despite concentrating on sight and taste. Eating and drinking local produce is recognised as an important element in a slow holiday in the academic literature, but the website texts exemplify the '3D' experience of being 'in', not 'at' a tourist destination, literally 'absorbing' the culture.

Slow tourism is a label which is intimately tied up with identity (Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon, 2010; Smith, 2012). Many people practise aspects of slow tourism without applying the label 'slow tourist' to themselves and much of the academic literature (see Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon, 2010; Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011; Robbins and Cho, 2012; Smith, 2012) confirms that motives for adopting the label are mixed and often ambivalent. The websites offer a vision of gentler, more meaningful holidays and explain how these benefit the traveller in the quality of the holiday and its memory and in developing skills, understanding and empathy. Explanations of why it is also beneficial to destinations and the environment are occasionally presented as benign by-products. Thus, it seems that slow tourism needs to be 'sold' to the traveller as benefitting them, not as an ethically sound way of holidaying. All the texts reinforce the discourse that the tourist is completely justified in seeking the best experience for themselves and that the ethical and environmental benefits of slow tourism are a bonus, rather than a motivation for choosing such holidays. Ultimately consumer choice and experience are sovereign, rather than considerations about the impact of tourism on the destination or environment and the texts about slow tourism reproduce this order as much as texts about more conventional tourism.

Slow tourism certainly appears less exploitative to people at the destination than mainstream tourism as depicted on the websites, yet there are potential dangers to

local people at destinations from slow tourism. The lack of personification and often absence of residents in the texts is a warning that it is the tourist's whim which determines the prosperity of the tourism industry at a destination and their first consideration is the experience the holiday offers them. There remains the risk of 'fixing' local identities (Germann Molz, 2009) as an interpretation of the area's 'authentic' character, to be discovered by discerning slow tourists.

More optimistically, the current interest in slow tourism may be another symptom of disquiet with current trends and possibly signals challenges to concepts such as growth and consumption (Hall, 2009) or re-evaluation of our relationships with time and other people (Bertmann, 1998; Honoré 2005; Jónsson, 1999; Odih, 1999).

6. Conclusions

This paper has explored the shifting meanings of slow tourism through the academic literature and the texts of sixteen websites dedicated to slow tourism. It finds a number of common themes, but notes how the websites take the perspective of the tourists, while academic texts take multiple perspectives, including the potential impact of slow tourism on destinations, travel trends and the environment. However, it seems likely that tourist-centric texts such as those found on the websites, travelogues and blogs will have greater influence in molding the meaning of the term slow tourism and the practices associated with it.

There remains a doubt as to whether unintentional slow tourists, those who practise aspects of slow tourism but who do not recognise or adopt the label, can be classed as slow tourists or whether it can only be applied to people making a conscious choice to be and identify themselves as slow tourists.

When contrasted with, often stereotypical, accounts of conventional tourism, slow tourism means staying longer in a place, engaging with its people, history, culture and attempting to 'live' close to the way that the residents do. There is an emphasis on immersion in the local culture, even absorption of it through consumption of local food and drink, which leads to a more fulfilling and memorable holiday experience. There are potential benefits to the destination and the environment, but these are presented

as side-effects of the tourist's endeavour to savour the differentness of the holiday location.

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The unappreciated slowness of conventional tourism

A subestimada *slowness* do turismo convencional

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Abstract

Most tourists are not consciously engaging in 'slow travel', but a number of travel behaviours displayed by conventional tourists can be interpreted as slow travel behaviour. Based on Danish tourists' engagement with the distances they travel across to reach their holiday destination, this paper explores unintended slow travel behaviours displayed by these tourists. None of the tourists participating in this research were consciously doing 'slow travel', and yet some of their most valued holiday memories are linked to slow travel behaviours. Based on the analysis of these unintended slow travel behaviours, this paper will discuss the potential this insight might hold for promotion of slow travel. If unappreciated and unintentional slow travel behaviours could be utilised in the deliberate effort of encouraging more people to travel slow, 'slow travel' will be in a better position to become integrated into conventional travel behaviour.

Keywords: tourism; environment; transport mode; transit; slowness; travel behaviour.

Resumo

A maior parte dos turistas não pratica *slow tourism* de forma consciente, mas existem alguns comportamentos por parte de turistas convencionais que podem ser interpretados como práticas de *slow travel*. Considerando as distâncias que os turistas dinamarqueses estão dispostos a percorrer para chegar ao seu destino de férias, este artigo explora as práticas de *slow tourism* não-intencionais destes turistas. Nenhum dos turistas que participou neste estudo estava a praticar o *slow tourism* de forma consciente, e contudo algumas das suas mais valiosas memórias de férias estão ligadas a práticas de *slow tourism*. Partindo da análise destes comportamentos não-intencionais, o artigo discute o potencial que esta perspetiva poderá trazer para a promoção do *slow tourism*. Se comportamentos de *slow travel* não-intencionais e não-valorizados puderem ser aplicados a um esforço deliberado para encorajar mais pessoas a viajar devagar, o *slow tourism* ficará numa posição mais vantajosa para ser integrado nas práticas turísticas convencionais.

Palavras-chaves: turismo; ambiente; modo de transporte; trânsito; lentidão; comportamento do viajante.



1. Introduction

Tourism has several environmental problems, related primarily to the freighting of tourists to and from their chosen destinations by the use of transportation modes that burn fossil fuels, particularly by air (Gössling, Hall, Peeters and Scott, 2010; Scott, Hall and Gössling, 2012), but there are also negative effects of tourism on destinations in terms of resource use and impact on the environment (Rutty, Gössling, Scott and Hall, 2015; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Gössling, Hansson, Hörstmeier and Saggel, 2002). Such environmental problems are likely to increase (Peeters, 2007, Dubois, Peeters, Ceron and Gössling, 2011), and there is not currently any viable technological fix to the problems on the horizon (Gössling *et al.*, 2010). Thus, argues Cohen, Higham, Gössling and Peeters (2014), the environmental challenges of tourism have to be met through a behavioural change, partly and preferably, say Ceron and Dubois (2007), through tourists engaging in slow tourism and slow travel behaviours such as taking longer, but fewer holiday breaks (as opposed to the current trend of numerous short breaks annually), and being mindful of the distances travelled. To this list of environmentally friendlier tourism behaviours Dickinson, Lumsdon and Robbins (2011) add avoiding airplanes, cars and other fuel heavy transport modes. The reason for this is that slow tourism is hailed as a tool for making tourism more environmentally friendly, because slow tourism does not result in as many pollutants as conventional tourism, and does not impact the destinations as much in terms of resource use (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010). Further, slow tourism is argued to give the tourist a better holiday experience (Fullagar, Wilson and Markwell, 2012). But efforts to make people travel slowly and engage in slow tourism based on environmental arguments have not to date been successful at a necessary scale (Hares, Dickinson and Wilkes, 2010), partly because of a significant attitude-behaviour gap (Hibbert, Dickinson, Gössling and Curtin, 2013), where people say that they do, or would like to, consider the environment when they plan and conduct their trips, but when it comes to actually performing environmentally friendly tourism, i.e. slow tourism, most people do not (Becken, 2007).

The argument in this paper is that if it could be shown that elements of slow travel already exist in conventional, non-slow tourism, and it could be substantiated that the tourism experiences that tourists value the most are the ones where they engage in

behaviours that are akin to slow travel, this might be a tool that can be utilised in efforts to make contemporary tourism both more environmentally friendly, and provide better holiday experiences at the same time. The new insight to be had from this paper is that slow travel behaviours are more widespread than maybe previously thought. Although not fully deliberate, many tourists do, in fact, engage in activities and performances that fall within the academic understanding of slow travel; they just do not do it consciously, and might not do it throughout their holiday. This insight will in this paper be documented through an analysis of 30 Danish tourists' travel and holiday accounts, given in qualitative semi-structured interviews.

2. Slow travel behaviours

Conventional tourism¹ is often associated with fast travel modes, and is the way of holidaying that constitutes the majority of global tourism (Oh, Assaf and Baloglu, 2014; Peeters, 2012). An on-going discussion, unfolded by Weaver (2012) and Peeters (2012), focuses on the potential for mass tourism to become more environmentally sustainable, and it is into that discussion that this paper is contributing. The analysis and discussion in this paper thus takes its point of departure in slow tourism and travel, as elements of such behaviours could be part of a more sustainable conventional mass tourism.

Slow tourism and slow travel are of course two associated, albeit in certain areas differing concepts (Conway and Timms, 2012). Definitions of each of the two concepts are, as with most concepts in social studies, not universally agreed upon, and seem to vary depending on the context and purpose for which they are employed. Generally, however, slow tourism has a focus on both the demand and supply side of the tourism industry, while slow travel primarily focuses on the tourists and their journeys to, from and within tourist destinations (Fullagar *et al.*, 2012; Hall, 2012). Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) identify three academic starting points for the current discussions of slow tourism: the attempt to define some core elements of the phenomenon; the discussion of tourism's nature and the need for better tourism experiences, especially for urban dwellers; and, lastly, the discussion of to what extent the actual transport between

¹ In this paper conventional tourism is defined as the type of tourism and holidaying that does not result from a conscious decision by the tourist to travel in an environmentally sustainable manner.

places constitutes a tourism experience. Based on these observations in the literature, Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) proceed to suggest four defining characteristics of slow travel:

- *Low carbon:* as also illustrated by Peeters (2007), tourism has a significant impact on the environment, and the majority of the greenhouse gas emissions from tourism come from the transport element, with accommodation and holiday activities emitting far less greenhouse gasses. Low carbon tourism is thus a result of slow travel, because slower transportation modes cause fewer emissions. Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010), with reference to Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon (2010) and Guiver, Lumsdon and Morris (2007), group slow travellers into two groups: the “hard” slow travellers, who choose their holiday destinations and travel modes based on an environmental concern, and the “soft” slow travellers, who happen to enjoy travelling slowly, and thereby by default become slow travellers who cause fewer greenhouse gas emissions.
- *Mode of transport:* Car and air travel are not compatible with slow travel, as they are too carbon intensive in use. Rail and coach travel is less carbon intensive, and cycling and walking are carbon neutral. However, many tourists use one mode of transport to reach their holiday destination, and another at the destination, and a theoretical question remains as to whether a tourist who flies to the destination, but while at the destination only walks, can be labelled a slow traveller. From a destination point of view, yes, but from an overall holiday point of view, no (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010). The different transport modes also allow different scales of engagement with the local community and landscape, where the slower and shared transport modes yield high interaction, while fast and more independent modes do not facilitate interaction to the same degree.
- *The travel and destination experience:* Within slow travel, the journey to and from the destination is an integrated part of the overall holiday experience, and thus cannot be separated from the experiences at the destination. This is partly due to the better opportunity for engaging with the scenery and travel

companions during the journey when you travel slowly (Pine and Gilmore 1999; Larsen, 2001).

- *Environmental concerns:* The level of emissions is a result of both the choice of transport mode, as well as the distances travelled across. The further the distance between home and holiday destination, and the faster this is travelled across, the more greenhouse gasses are emitted in order to transcend that distance. Part of practicing slow travel is to favour slower transportation modes and shorter travel distances when planning and conducting a holiday.

Based on a review of literature on slow tourism and travel, and a subsequent discussion of the viewpoints on slow tourism and travel by practitioners, writers and academics, Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) take Dickinson and Lumsdon's (2010) discussion of what slow travel is a step further, and establish a conceptual framework for slow travel. In this framework they identify three factors that together make up the core components of a slow travel holiday: slowness, the travel experience and environmental consciousness, with slowness having a pivotal role:

The main defining category identified can be described as slowness, a slowing down of the holiday process in relation to travel, distance, and the activities pursued en route and at a destination. Slowness is related to a perception of time and a way of doing things. Respondents, for example, referred to the experience of slow travel as being unhurried, tranquil, serene, chilled out, seeking simplicity and switching off from everyday life. (Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011: 271)

The second core category of the slow travel conceptual framework is the travel experience, described as "travel with meaning rather than travel just because you have to" (*idem*: 272), with a central element being to travel across land instead of being aeromobile, as this enables engagement with the places travelled through. Pace and time here emerge as two important concepts in the discussion of what slow travel is. According to Germann Molz (2009: 273), drawing on reflections on mobilities made by Cresswell (2006), pace, in a mobilities context, "is made meaningful in much the same way that mobility is made meaningful, through practices, discourses and representational strategies that imbue it with ideological, ethical and political significance". The travel experience is important, and it is through its pacing that it facilitates and yields different types of experiences, and the argument is that the slower

the pace, the better the travel experience. The third core component of a slow travel conceptual framework, as suggested by Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) is environmental consciousness, where emphasis is placed on low energy consumption for the purpose of travelling and holidaying. There were, however, differing views among the experts interviewed by Lumsdon and McGrath, on whether environmental concerns should be a primary motivation for slow travellers, or 'just' an added environmental benefit resulting from a preferred way of travelling, echoing the above distinction between hard and soft slow travellers.

Based on the conceptual framework for slow travel developed by Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) and the similar discussion of core elements of slow travel by Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010), this paper will explore to what extent the interviewed tourists, who all are conventional, or mass, tourists, do, in fact, display slow travel behaviours, without consciously meaning to do so. Combining what Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) and Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) have found to be the core elements of slow travel, the following analysis of the slowness of conventional travel will thus be structured around four categories: low carbon and environmental consciousness, travel mode, travel experience and slowness.

3. Methodology

The data that forms the empirical basis for this exploration of unappreciated slowness of conventional tourism was collected in 2010-2011, as part of an exploration of tourists' perception of distance (see Larsen, 2013). Qualitative interviews were conducted with thirty Danish tourists aged between 26 and 67, based on their international holiday travels. Because of the lack of previous studies into tourists' perception of the distances they travel across, an abductive (Reichert, 2007) research approach was adopted, which yielded information on a wide range of factors affecting the tourists' travel behaviour, including the tourists' reflection upon their own travel behaviour. The Danish tourists participating in the research were chosen through theoretical sampling (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), with each tourist being chosen based on an assessment of whether they would be able to bring any new knowledge to the inquiry. The sample was not chosen in an attempt to make it a statistically representative study, but rather in order to scope the topic of tourist distance

perceptions for themes. The recruitment of participants was organised through snowballing, and a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds were represented in the sample. Each interview lasted between one and two hours, and was recorded and transcribed.

For the purpose of the analysis of the unappreciated slowness of conventional tourism *a priori* themes of slow tourism behaviours were established through the review of literature, and thus the analysis is structured around the four categories of slow travel identified above. The data was analysed according to these themes, in order to explore to what degree each type of behaviour was present in the data. This was done through the process of open coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) of the data, in order to identify and organise the relevant data into various concepts, while “at the same time qualifying those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: 195).

4. Findings and discussion

This section presents the findings from the analysis of the interviews with thirty Danish tourists. The analysis was, as stated above, conducted within the theoretical framework of four slow travel categories: low carbon and environmental concerns, transport mode, travel experience, and slowness.

4.1 Low carbon and environmental consciousness

Highlighted as an important element of slow travel by both Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) and Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010), environmental considerations and the deliberate choice of low carbon activities and transport modes based on emissions concerns does not feature in the interviews with the Danish tourists, and none of them can rightfully be said to be ‘hard’ slow travellers. During the reflections upon their travel behaviours and motivations, concerns for the environmental impact of their holidays are not mentioned by a single traveller, and only when prompted during the interviews about the potential environmental consequences of their holidaying, do the interviewees consider this matter:

I have to be honest and say that I don't really know much about what actually pollutes the most...I mean, it would probably be more polluting if everybody on a plane were to drive the same distance. So no [she does not consider the environment when she flies]...but maybe that is also because I choose not to consider it, because if you start to think about it, it is polluting, just for your pleasure. So I deliberately close my eyes (female, 30).

Overwhelmingly they reach the conclusion that environmentally friendly behaviours are a feature of their everyday lifestyle, but not when they travel on holiday. The following quote is representative of the views expressed in the interviews:

[I]n principle I do consider the environment a lot, but when it comes to travel I have double standards. Because I know that it is better to transport myself in other ways [than flying], but my laziness comes first (female, 27).

In terms of furthering environmentally friendly travel, this attitude does not bode well, especially as it appears to echo what other investigations into the matter have also found (for example Hares *et al.*, 2010; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010). However, some optimistic points can be drawn from this. Firstly most of the interviewees acknowledge (when specifically asked about the environment in relation to their holidays) that travelling is not good for the environment: "I think that [my travel behaviour] could be more environmentally friendly" (female, 26), showing that they are not in denial about the issue, and this must be viewed as an important element of eventually altering travel behaviours on the grounds of environmental concerns. Secondly, the analysis also shows that the slow travel behaviour that it is possible to detect in the interviews is a result of intrinsic reasons for conducting slow travel:

Our cycling trip, to move along on a bicycle, it was really good fun. It's not fast, but [the journey] becomes part of the holiday (male, 29).

This means that slow travel behaviours are a positive and voluntary performance, rather than a result of a negative concern that causes the tourists to feel forced to change their behaviour. So while it might not be possible to make the tourists change their travel behaviour based on an environmental argument, tendencies in their current travel behaviour might suggest that it is possible to convince them through the argument of enhanced holiday experiences through slow travel.

4.2 Transport mode

As stated above, the travelling to and from the destination represents the largest part of tourism's overall environmental impact by far, with air travel again resulting in the largest proportion of tourism transportation emissions, followed by car travel (Rutty *et al.*, 2015). The Danish tourists in this study add to this statistic, as their most widely used holiday transportation mode is the plane. This is hardly surprising (for a number of reasons, one being that they were asked to reflect on their international holidaying, where flying is likely to be more prominent), and is problematic in relation to furthering more environmentally sustainable travel, given that the slow travel framework specifically states that air travel is not compatible with slow travel. Aeromobility is, however, a central element of contemporary tourism, and therefore also needs to be part of a discussion of possible behaviour change towards slow travel. An analytically interesting finding in the interviews was that when the Danish tourists were asked about their travel habits, the plane always seemed to be the *default* holiday transport mode. In their reflections upon the issue of getting from home to the holiday destination, the plane was the transport mode that they subconsciously used as their reference transport mode. Not that the plane was the *only* transport mode they used in their holiday travels, far from it, but it lies implicitly in the reflections on holiday transit that it is the plane that is used.

This is problematic in relation to the theoretical understanding of slow travel presented above, and in order for slow travel to be promoted, the status of the aeroplane as the default transportation mode needs to change, which will be a challenge if its current status includes it being picked off the shelf as transportation mode of choice without even considering other modes. Such a change of status requires an enquiry into how this status has come about, and the interviews give an answer to this. The plane is the most widely used holiday transport mode by the Danish tourists, but for two reasons only: it is fast and it is cheap, compared to other relevant modes of transport:

My preferred holiday transport mode is probably flying, because it is fast. The price is important too, but it is also speed (female, 29).

A majority of the holiday journeys referred to in the interviews would have been possible with other modes of transport, as many of the destinations were located in continental Europe (cf. Conway and Timms (2012) for a discussion of how Europe is better suited for slow travel and slow tourism than other parts of the world), but still flying was the transportation mode of choice. But at the same time, air travel was also the least favoured or enjoyed, for a number of reasons (“you are tied to your seat” (female, 29), “your co-passengers can be annoying, and you can’t get away from them” (male, 34), “a long air journey will never be a pleasure” (female, 29)) and this is interesting from a slow travel point of view. The major complaint against air travel that surfaces in the interviews with the Danish tourists is that it de-couples the traveller from the context of the lands they travel across and in a way laser-beams the tourist into the destination:

When you fly to a place you don’t really have any sense of where in the world you are. After bicycling for a while, you start to get a sense of a line that you have travelled along. You see how things change along that line (male, 30).

This is an example of how travelling slow enhances the holiday experience, in spite of the slow travel behaviour not being a result of environmental concerns.

Another issue that was frequently raised in the interviews about air travel is the boredom of flying: “There is not really much to do while you fly, you can just sit there and wait” (male, 63). This could be interpreted as the lack of opportunities to equip airtime (see Jain and Lyons (2008) for a discussion of equipping travel time: how to fill the time spent in transit with other activities such as reading, watching films, knitting, socialising, etc.). Flying was recognised as an uncomfortable experience compared to what would have been possible to have had with other transportation modes, and yet it was chosen based on a time and cost benefit analysis. The tourists are well aware of the experiential benefits of using other transport modes: “Ferry rides and cycle trips can become part of the holiday experience” (male, 29), and:

[O]n a plane you are able to look out the window, but can’t really see anything, but on a train you can see the landscape change. So on a train and in a car you get more experiences along the way, changes in nature, other travellers and things like that (female, 34).

From the interviews it is clear that the slower the transport mode used, the more interesting the journey became for the tourist, with cycling holidays and trekking journeys being the journeys that were spoken about most fondly. This gives hope to the idea behind slow travel, and weight to the argument that slower, and thereby less environmentally harmful, to-and-from destination journeys themselves are more valued elements of the overall holiday and a holiday experience in their own right. The challenge for the promotion of slow travel then emerges as one where slower travel modes need to be competitive on cost and time, as the experiential and environmental benefits of travelling slower are already known to many tourists.

4.3 Travel experience

In line with the observation above that even though travelling by air is the most widely used form of holiday transit, slower modes are more desired because of the opportunity to interact with landscape and people(s) along the way, and to equip the travel time, the interviews also reveal that the experience of travelling from home to destination is often valued transition time, that in itself counts as a holiday experience. But again, it is often traded off for the opportunity to arrive at the chosen destination in as little time as possible, as cheaply as possible. However, the transit is framed as a valued necessity by the Danish tourists, and asked if they would like to be able to press a button and magically appear at the destination, most of them reflected that the period of travelling had other purposes than just the corporeal transport, and that the mental transition was also an important part of a holiday. The following quote sums up the majority of the interviewees' reflections on the matter:

My father has always said that he loved it when he had time to adapt, he had time to think those last work related things through, that he had time to readjust his mind and body, so that when we reached the camp site he was in holiday mode. And I understand where he comes from, but when you fly, you spend time on flying and waiting for your luggage and maybe driving afterwards. So I probably don't feel exactly the same [as her father], but I think that if you could just press a button and then you were in Spain that would be too weird. The transition does have a function (female, 29).

The time spent in transit becomes a result of a time prioritisation exercise that most tourists will have to do when they decide on their holiday destination and transportation

mode. There is a yearly annual leave time frame that holidaying must fit within, and there is a desire to stay at a destination for as long as possible, and then there is the time spent in transit between home and destination. Here the transit time is often short changed, because most of the interviewees do actually acknowledge the experience value and the opportunity of a mental transition that the transit period offers, but it is not prioritised to such a degree that it makes a difference in relation to the issues raised in the slow travel discussion (environmental concerns and enhanced travel experience), and thus less time is allocated to the transit, which results in the choice of a fast(er) transportation mode. The implicit argument made by many of the interviewees is that the more time spent on transit, the less 'proper' holiday time is left, as both transit and destination time will have to fit within the time limitations of the annual leave. This also leads to the issue of frequency, where long transit times can be viewed as a problem in relation to how frequent it is possible to go away on holidays and short breaks. If holidays are temporally shorter and relatively frequent, long transit journeys are not viewed as favourable by the interviewees, as transit time somehow has to be justified by the time spent at the destination. What emerges is that the tourists do acknowledge the value of the transit period, and that it itself holds, or has the potential to hold, experiences that qualify as proper and good holiday experiences, but they are traded off for in-destination-time, in a mechanism that almost seems as if they don't dare to gamble with experiences at the destination for the potential of experiences en route.

4.4 Slowness

Slowness is highlighted by Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) as the main category of slow travel: the slowing down of all the activities associated with travel, and a focus on time spent unhurriedly. When the Danish tourists talk about their favoured holiday memories or most enjoyable journeys, as for example this woman: "My best holiday was a bicycle trip twelve years ago, I'd love to do that again" (female, 31), they are primarily linked, in one way or another, to slowness, and especially to occasions where the pace was slowed down, and they actually had time to engage either with the countryside they were passing through, with the people they were travelling with or with the culture and people at their chosen destination. Here it is possible to detect a desire, though

unknown, to be a slow traveller (albeit a soft one), and the insight that it is actually the slow travel behaviours that seem to be the most valued by the tourists holds potential for the advancement of slow travel.

There is, however, an issue with distance. According to slow travel theory, the tourist should be mindful of the distances they travel across in order to reach their holiday destination, and preferably travel across shorter distances. In the interviews a desire can be identified that would suggest that the distance-limitation might not be popular. Asked what influence it would have on their travel habits, if time and money did not place limits on their holidays, most of the tourist participants stated that they would be likely to travel more often, further and for longer time periods: “I would probably travel more often and further away” (female, 28), essentially scaling their holiday up, which, seen from an environmental perspective, is not an ideal scenario. However, one interviewed tourist replies the following to the question of how his travel behaviour would change if he had unlimited time and money funds: “I actually like the idea of moving slowly, so maybe a boat journey, where you are moving, but at the same time have the opportunity to see the surroundings” (male, 29). A furthering of slow travel will need to have more tourists thinking like this.

5. Conclusion

This paper set out to explore the unappreciated slowness of conventional tourism, and for that purpose a theoretical framework was established through the review of literature on slow travel. Four categories were chosen as basis for the analysis: low carbon and environmental concerns, transport mode, travel experience and slowness. Interviews with 30 Danish tourists were analysed for the purpose of identifying examples of slow travel behaviours, based on these categories.

The analysis shows that flying is, for the interviewed tourists, the default holiday travel mode, because it is the fastest and the cheapest way of getting from home to destination. This does not mean they enjoy flying, and they acknowledge that better travel experiences are to be had if slower transportation modes are used. Essentially the choice of the airplane boils down to prioritising fast transit over experience-rich transit, and this leads to a discussion of the role the journey to a destination holds for the

traveller: is it a necessary evil, is it intrinsic and a fully integrated part of the holiday, or is it something in between (Lumsdon and Page 2004)? The findings from this present research suggest, not surprisingly, that the journey to the destination is something in-between, with most of the tourists valuing the experiences in transit, but choosing the mode that facilitates such experiences the least, based on a price and pace argument.

On a brighter note, in the context of identifying slow travel behaviours onto which to pin an effort of promoting slow travel, slow travel is actually performed by the Danish tourists, even if they are not aware of it. Most noticeable is the fact that the holiday memories they seem to value the most are the ones that are results of slow travel behaviours: when they give themselves the time to engage in the place they are holidaying at, the people they are with and when they are not hurried or placed under a time schedule decided upon by others. This corresponds with the core element of slow travel identified by Lumsdon and McGrath (2011): the slowness of the travel and holiday experience. Taking the time to immerse into the experiences as they present themselves is valued by the tourists as well as being theoretically important for slow travel, and this convergence should be used actively in efforts to make more tourists deliberately engage in slow tourism.

Table 1 below sums up the analysis findings in relation to the four slow travel categories condensed from the literature:

Table 1: Slow travel behaviours in the interviews

<i>Slow travel category</i>	<i>Slow travel behaviours in the interviews.</i>
Low carbon and environmental consciousness	None unless prompted. Acknowledgement of the environmental issues relating to tourism.
Transport mode	Aeromobile by default. Enjoy other modes of transport more, but choose to travel by air because it is faster and cheaper.
Travel experience	Value the transition. Place importance on the transition period from home to destination, but do not prioritise it.
Slowness	The most valued holiday experiences result from slowing down and taking the time to engage.

Source: Author.

5.1 The speed and cost trade-off: The biggest challenge for slow travel behaviour

So tourists do engage in, and value, slow travel practices, and quite enjoy their holiday memories that are based on slow travel behaviours. The question then is why don't they engage more in slow travel behaviours than statistics suggest they currently

do? The short answer from this piece of research is, that slow travel benefits are traded off for speed and cost, where the urge to get to a desired destination quickly and cheaply overrides the potential slow travel benefits. This mechanism is not an explicit and deliberate one, as the link between positive and desired holiday experiences and slow travel behaviours is probably not fully realised by the tourists. In opposition to this is the very much-realised link between spending as little time as possible in cheap transit and spending more holiday time and money at the destination. It is obvious that the tourists are under temporal restrictions, and in the urge to maximise the experience output in as little time as possible, environmental concerns relating to transport mode choice are not acted upon, even though they are realised by the individual tourist. One way of countering this, suggested by Larsen and Guiver (2013) and Scott and Becken (2010) is to make the annual leave framework more flexible, in order to allow more time for holidaying, and then not holidaying as frequently. But what this piece of research also shows is that, given the chance to be freed from temporal restrictions in relation to their holidays, many tourists envisage themselves utilising this to the maximum, probably resulting in more holidays, to further away destinations – not exactly a desired outcome from an environmental point of view.

Other prominent slow travel behaviours identified in the interviews are in relation to the modal choice and the experiences the tourists get from the journey to and from the destination. The factors that are the most hindering for the interviewed tourists fully engaging in slow travel practices in relation to the two factors, in spite of the interviews showing that ideally they would choose slower transport modes and engage more in the transit experience, are again the time limitations of their holidays, and the price they pay for holiday transit. Time and money are the two factors the Danish tourists say influence their holiday decisions the most, and the desire to get away in a hurry for little money overwrites the manifestation of otherwise enjoyed and valued slow travel behaviours.

5.2 Final remarks

As this paper outlined in the beginning, one of the on-going discussions in relation to the environmental impact of tourism is how to change tourist behaviours towards

more environmentally friendly practices (cf. Peeters, 2007, Hares *et al.*, 2010, Hibbert *et. al.* 2013). Academia is reasonably clear about what needs to happen (fewer kilometres travelled by transportation modes that emit fewer greenhouse gasses), but a behavioural shift is still to be seen, and by the look of it (United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), 2015), is not really on the cards yet.

This analysis is based on the argument that unintended slow travel behaviours by conventional tourists could become a vehicle for more tourists to engage in slow travel, for the benefit of the environment as well as resulting in better tourist experiences. A range of reflections made by the Danish tourists show some of them to already be soft slow travellers, and others having potential to become soft slow travellers, but if we want to encourage slow tourism behaviours in conventional tourists, there are some behaviours that it is more likely that tourists will engage in than others, and some prohibiting factors that need to be addressed.

For the interviewed tourists, engaging in slow travel practices and deliberately choosing slowness is traded off for faster and cheaper air travel. If slower transport modes were cheaper, and preferably cheaper than air fares, it is likely that more tourists would choose such transportation modes. Also the speed with which aeroplanes bring tourists to their destination is valued by the tourists, but at the same time this analysis also shows a potential in making holiday transit intrinsic to the holiday. Therefore it might be possible to persuade some tourists to travel slower, if the journey then becomes integral to their holiday – which is not the case when the journey is undertaken by air. This could be done through the promotion of slow journey narratives, as suggested by Caletrió (2015), and reflects a behaviour change that already has momentum and is performed by a number of the tourists interviewed for this study.

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**The slowness I cherish:
An attempt at sociological and political self-analysis**

**A lentidão que estimo:
Uma autoanálise sociológica e política**

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Abstract

Providing short accounts of personal experiences of slow travelling, the paper analyses the dimensions that, in the eyes of the author, lend these practices a genuine consistency and value. 'Slow travel', however, is not just a personal aspiration; it is also promoted as a fully-fledged policy, under the name of 'slow tourism'. Yet, does the policy's slowness reflect the same type of experiences as those that bring so much personal satisfaction to the author? The paper answers this question through a detailed self-analysis of the conditions for personal enjoyment of slow travel experiences; it demonstrates that 'un-embeddedness', unusual body sensations and techniques, visual anticipation, and symbolic isolation are its main ingredients. These dimensions are then compared with the policy principles of 'slow tourism', arguing that these two forms of slowness share nothing in common but their name, because they prove to be based on radically distinct enjoyment structures.

Keywords: inland navigation; hill-walking; body techniques; symbolic distinction; intermediaries; touristic enjoyment.

Resumo

A partir de narrativas breves de experiências pessoais de *slow travel*, este artigo analisa as dimensões que, aos olhos do autor, se atribuem a estas práticas: consistência e um valor genuíno. *Slow travel*, todavia, não é apenas uma aspiração pessoal; surge também como o critério de pleno valor, sob o nome de *slow tourism*. No entanto, será que este critério de lentidão reflete o tipo de experiências que traz tanta satisfação pessoal ao autor? Este artigo responde a esta pergunta a partir da autoanálise detalhada das condições de satisfação pessoal através de experiências de *slow travel*, e demonstra que a "não imersão", as sensações corporais incomuns e técnicas, a antecipação visual e o isolamento simbólico são os seus principais ingredientes. Estas dimensões serão, depois, comparadas com os princípios de *slow tourism*, argumentando que as duas formas de viajar nada têm em comum, para além do nome, porque estão baseadas em estruturas de apreciação radicalmente distintas.

Palavras-chave: navegação interna; escalada; técnicas corporais; distinção simbólica; intermediários; prazer turístico.



1. Introduction: Praises for slowness

Thursday 8 August. This morning we left the small town of Josselin, snuggled between the majestic castle that dominates the landscape and the canal that flows gently from Nantes to Brest. Navigation is easy-going; all is so calm in this magnificent Breton countryside. We float along peacefully, with the day punctuated by a joyful flurry of activity each time we pass through a lock. We find no commercial barges along this canal, dug at the time of Napoleon, because they have become too large. The only other traffic is tourists like us, coming together when we're moored near a village or waiting to pass a lock. Here all the locks are manual, like they've been for the past two centuries. Around midday, we stop near Saint-Laurent, and reach the small hamlet by bicycle. We stop at the locality's sole bar-tabac across the street from a charming old church graced with ancient salt-eroded statues and order the plat-du-jour, sharing the dining room with a group of three workers on their lunch break. After navigating a few more hours, we decide to stop in the middle of nature, in a delightful country setting. We can't wait to take a dip in the canal and enjoy a good splash full of laughter. When the evening comes we sit around the fire our children have prepared. Never have roasted marshmallows tasted so delicious!

Monday 6 July. We start off at 8:30 on a sunny morning, in the middle of the Mont Avic Natural Park in Italy's Aosta Valley. We are leaving the beautiful mountain range that surrounds the Barbustel hiking refuge and ascending towards three enchanting lakes that dot our trail. The fourth, the "Gran Lac", at an altitude of 2485 m, is much farther than we imagined and we decide to take a short refreshing break in the middle of a mountain cirque, flanked by some patches of snow. The whole valley stretches out below our eyes. We continue at an easy pace to the Mézove Pass, and then descend carefully through a patch of loose stone until we reach Margheron Lake. There we stop for the picnic lunch the Barbustel guardian prepared for us; the locally produced ham and cheese have a particularly delicious aroma in the mountain air. We greet three other hikers who cross our path; they are heading towards the far side of the lake to do some fishing. We resume our trail, a slow ascent towards the Etsely Pass, at 2812 m. The lack of wind is a pleasant surprise, the silence is absolute and we are able to take full advantage of this exceptional balcony offering a view of two parallel valleys on either side of us. What joy! We then trot down a path leading to the tranquil haven that is the Val Clavalité, where automobile traffic is prohibited. In a euphoric mood, 8 hours after we left Barbustel, we reach the 'Egidio Borroz' bivouac, a small building recently built of local stones and wood, with no tap water or electricity. After a quick supper of soup, tea and noodles, we spend the evening outside, the whole family together, seated on a bench and enjoying a stupendous sunset. There are no other visitors, so we have it all to ourselves - the bivouac and the mountain.

These short accounts provide an idea of my emotions during two experiences of slow travelling that occurred during recent family holidays. In the following pages I will propose an analysis intending to update the dimensions and social logics that, in my eyes, lend these practices a genuine consistency and value. The "Good Use of Slowness" (Sansot, 2000), however, is not just a personal aspiration. It is now being promoted as the lever for more eco-friendly forms of tourism, ones that are more respectful of the populations visited and more sustainable economically. In other words, it is promoted as a fully-fledged philosophy, under the name of *slow tourism*

(Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson, 2015). Yet, does the policy's slowness reflect the same type of experiences as those that bring me so much personal satisfaction? This is what I would like to explore in this paper, proposing a detailed analysis of the conditions for my own slow travel experiences and the enjoyment I derived. I will undertake a self-analysis of sorts, modestly and freely drawing on the analyses proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (2004), Torsten Hägerstrand (1996), Mike Crang (2011) or Antoine de Baecque (2014), who each in their own way speak of the relations between social and geographic space that took shape in their own personal biographies. This self-analysis will be a backdrop to my overall reflection, which will be divided into four sections: the first part presents the conditions that transform my tourism practice into a parenthesis in relation to daily life; in a second section I will discuss the ingredients that turn these instances of slowness into gratifying experiences from the symbolic point of view; then in the third section I will attempt to evaluate the differences between my slow tourism practices and the ideals of *slow tourism*. Lastly in my conclusion I shall attempt to characterise the two types of slowness based on their respective enjoyment structure.

2. Slow movement as a pleasant parenthesis: Becoming *un-embedded* and *re-embedded*

A closer look shows that to ensure the practical and emotional success of my slow travels I must become *un-embedded*, or extract myself from various aspects of my daily life (obviously in a limited manner for a multitude of ties remain in place). This also entails an equal and concomitant *re-embedding* in the new situations that emerge. There is thus always a back and forth between detachment from certain situations (those of everyday life) and re-attachment to others (those linked to tourism). The way this comes about conditions the outcome of my slow travel. But what exactly are these un-embedding and re-embedding processes?

To begin with, slow travel implies a suspension (always temporary) of social obligations that govern and rhythm my daily life. My routine is overwhelmingly defined by my professional, domestic and school schedule obligations (I have three school-age children). Like most of the population, my busy schedule is compounded by the spatial

dispersion of the activities of family members. My daily trips have to be quick and efficient because they are meaningful when they become means to link up a series of distinct activities, which must all get done. Furthermore, the concrete conditions of the territory where I live generally turn these trips into an experience that is mentally draining, often associated with extenuating haste.

Inversely, slow movement undertaken outside the obligations and pressures of daily life, becomes something to be 'appreciated' in itself. In this situation, the movement is what organises the day (or a longer period) and the other activities are governed by its accomplishment. During the week I spent on the canals in Brittany, piloting the boat was considered to be the main activity. Other practices (even those considered essential, like shopping) had to be scheduled around it. The same can be said for the organisation of our hiking in the Alps: walking gives shape to the whole temporal parenthesis of the trip. For example, lodgings are chosen based on the distance we can travel on foot. We can thus see that the speed (or slowness) of a trip must not be understood in absolute terms. Appreciating slowness is relative, insofar as it is linked to the reciprocal subordination of the various activities I am involved in, seen from the perspective of a whole day at least. If not, the traffic jams I spend so much time in would have to be added to the list of enjoyable slow travels. But nothing is farther from the truth; in its emotional facet traffic jam slowness is the extreme opposite of slow tourism travel.

It is equally true that inverting the hierarchical relation between social activities does not depend solely on suspending professional and family obligations. Free time is merely a 'window of opportunity' (or a circumscribed time frame) to practice slow movement. A second condition is that the slow movement must occur outside the context of daily life, in another time-space, that of tourism, travelling or at least 'holiday time' (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 4). My river tourism experience was not only the first time I had navigated, but also my first discovery of Brittany, a region I had never visited before. On the other hand, although the Aosta Valley is my preferred destination for hiking in the Alps, I can visit it at the most only once or twice a year because of my professional obligations in Brussels. In other words, the pleasure of slow movement is closely tied with the fact that it takes place in a place I do not already know or else seldom visit. Moving slowly, for me, is thus a special way to

appreciate territories that are somewhat 'exotic', a characteristic of the tourist's approach (Remy, 1994; Urry and Larsen, 2011).

Of course, the appreciable, even admirable, character of the territories travelled across is largely constructed beforehand, when preparing the trip. A component of all movement is a space of anticipation, as Urry and Larsen (2011: 4) have pointed out. In my case, the space of anticipation for my slow travels is quite extended! I spend hours on end consulting specialised guides and web sites in search of information on places to see and defining alternative itineraries, but I do this mainly to soak in the images of these areas. I am not just preparing the logistics of a trip; I am also getting myself in condition to appreciate the 'high points' I will encounter and already entering in my memory the landmarks that I will admire. My visual anticipations are then transformed into emotions (and often photos!) once I find myself standing before the scene or monument. Transformed into delight when the reality conforms with my expectations (which was the case when our boat reached the Josselin castle, an unforgettable sight, even though it was undeniably anticipated), or else in frustration when reality does not measure up to the sight foreseen (in particular this was the case at one point in the Alps where I expected to feast on the panorama the Oropa Sanctuary on the Piedmont side of the Alps; yet the promise of all those images consulted in my anticipation space was dashed by a thick fog). All this illustrates a certain postulate, both practical and projective, that underlies my slow movement practices: there are environments that lend themselves to the pleasures and marvels of slowness and these environments will not (and cannot) be those of daily life. In other words, slow movement, to be appreciated, cannot occur anywhere or anytime. It must be more or less radically detached from the space of daily life. Space is therefore not a neutral area; it is an archipelago of territories with distinct qualities, precisely defined by the use I make of them and the "values and meanings" I attach to them (Crang, 2011: 211).

But where exactly is the focal point of the pleasure I feel in these 'un-embedded' places and instants? My body is what moves. A body that travels over an unknown territory, in an unaccustomed manner, thus a body that is un-embedded from its usual environment and re-embedded in one that is unfamiliar. And suddenly, the body relates to the immediate environment in a different mode than it does in daily life, both in its sensations and in the actions it must accomplish efficiently. When it comes

to sensations, there is a considerable contrast between the way the body relates to daily movement and that of slow travel. When moving around in my daily life, I try to forget my body's relation to the surroundings. Through a series of practices I virtually quarantine my body from the environment: listening to music, reading, using a mobile device, turning on the car air-conditioning, lowering the train window shade and so on. Inversely, during my leisure-time slow movements, all my senses are mobilised and many sensations become the object of explicit and occasionally extended attention. Light, odours, thirst or hunger or tactile sensations from the wind or a breeze, heat or coolness express themselves differently. This is especially true with hiking; the body manifests its pleasure or pain when arms, legs and muscles exert themselves. The slower moving body is the receptacle of all these sensations (Edensor, 2000: 82). And we should not forget the gaze: unlike the insipid or invisible landscape of daily trips, the scenery stretching along the path of slow movement always offers a decor that is surprising in its beauty or strangeness, worthy of admiration. I enjoy being totally immersed in it.

However, while I am moving this way, I must alternate visually between contemplation and ensuring the correct movement (how I place my foot or steer the boat). This double task is often the source of extra attention, instants of indecision and even a few mishaps. Indeed, my body is not only the seat of my sensations; it is also a tool for my movement. In this latter function, it brings satisfaction when it is efficient: slow but regular pace, steady feet and backpack settled comfortably on my shoulders, or else a skilful boat manoeuvre, successful mooring, or even, equally important in these situations, snapping the perfect photo. Nonetheless, the unaccustomed nature of slow movement renders a series of efficient daily 'body techniques' ill-adapted or ineffective. The body must work in different ways, some of which can be more difficult and less comfortable. For example, I remember on the canal boat how hard it was to find a comfortable position during long sessions at the helm; and I never really managed to find one that was perfectly satisfying. And my insatiable photographer urge when I am in the mountains has led me to deploy various technical strategies in the aim to reconcile the act of walking with that of picture taking. So far none has really measured up; either they disrupt the hiking rhythm or the photos taken are of a disappointing quality.

Enjoying slow movement thus relies on an ‘art of using the human body’ (Mauss, 2006), a body that is both the seat of sensations sought and a tool for unaccustomed efficiencies. It is an ‘art’ that derives its importance and taste (occasionally bitter!) from the opposition with my body’s uses outside this happy parenthesis, holiday time.

Nevertheless, because of its extraordinary nature, slow movement entails the mobilisation not only of certain unusual body techniques, but also of tools and devices needed to deal with a series of elements found in the situation and potentially problematic in accomplishing the activity itself. Movement, even slow, through an unknown territory requires the ability to orient oneself, acquired through the use, among others, of maps, GPS (although I never use these devices and stick to maps on paper!) or else signposts found along the way itself, the perfect example of this is the cairn (Chollier, 2009). The person who moves slowly must also be able to use one’s ‘instrumental techniques’ (Mauss, 2006), in other words to equip oneself with things rarely needed in daily life, but which are of aid in the body’s unaccustomed uses: hat, hiking boots and stick, backpack, sleeping bag, gloves and life jacket, to name only a few examples from my own experiences.

Illustration 1: The excitement and pleasure of experiencing new ‘body as instrument’ techniques. My daughter Zoé, equipped with gloves and a lifejacket, handles the boat’s mooring rope while passing a lock along the Nantes-Brest canal.



Source: Photograph by the author.

Then there are objects that one leaves at home because they are incompatible with slow movement practices. All hikers know the Number One rule to keep the backpack as light as possible. This means doing without many daily tools or reducing their size (toothbrush, towel for example). As for inland navigation, the boat rental agency advises their customers to unpack their bags as soon as they get on the boat and to leave the empty suitcases at the boat office so as to not take up limited space on board. Lastly, slow travel calls for different logistics than those of daily life, in terms of supplies, lodging and health. This means having a grasp on the infrastructure in a territory while following unusual metrics (in my case slow walking pace or navigation), knowing that I am myself un-embedded from a series of efficient tools and infrastructures - in particular the road-automobile-driver which offers a radically different kind of mobility. As a result, slow travel paradoxically requires particular attention to time management. As the terrain is unfamiliar and passing through it could give rise to problems, it is crucial for me to assemble information beforehand on the length of the movements foreseen: their success implies a slowness that cannot be improvised, at the risk of losing the control I have of the areas crossed. My space of anticipation for these trips is thus largely spent consulting more or less institutionalised information sources (web sites, specialised works, official guides) on the metrics of this slowness because this knowledge should enable a successful embedding in the terrain. As can be seen, my 'capacity' to travel slowly is, in the situations under question, largely distributed in, and thus dependent on, a series of supports and devices I am not really used to. Yet, the extra-ordinary nature of these 'intermediaries' is precisely what gives them their charm and transforms their use into emotionally intense experiences.

3. Slow tourism as an exceptional experience: The symbolic ingredients of enjoyment

The personal happiness I have just described is not based solely on material conditions, but also on symbolic ones, which give my slow practices a powerful dimension of social expressiveness. I will try to identify them as well.

First of all, what are the standards and values that guide me from within and make me appreciate my slow movement practices? If I examine what makes slow movement a pleasant and successful experience, even while engaged in it, I discern three criteria. The first (and most decisive) factor is the fact that the trip leads to places that are *frequented both seldom and by few*. Solitude, or the exclusive enjoyment of a place, is the situation that gives me the greatest satisfaction. ‘It was magnificent; there was nobody there’ are the words I typically use to recall the two principles on which my enjoyment of slowness depends: scenic beauty and social isolation. There is no greater happiness, in fact, than to follow a trail all day long without encountering anyone, or at best the odd hiker; there is no greater pleasure than to enter a refuge where you meet a handful of people occupying two tables for a meal; there is no greater joy than to moor your boat on an isolated riverbank, with no other people around—in short, there is no better feeling than to get away from the crowd, basking in the privilege of isolation, tranquillity and distance from other tourists who stayed behind, and who I imagine are clustered in the same places due to a lack of courage or taste. And as Dean MacCannell (1999: 107) reminds me, such a feeling “only expresses a long-standing touristic attitude, a pronounced dislike, bordering on hatred, for other tourists.”

The second source of satisfaction is the feeling of having *accomplished* something, and something unusual, at least for me, as well as for ‘others’ because, clearly, no one else is around. This comes from having reached the day’s destination, while having benefitted from a leisurely hike through alpine trails. I feel satisfaction after safely piloting a boat, after making some pleasant stops along the way to visit sleepy villages or quiet little towns or after glimpsing a beautiful part of the countryside. Slow movement is a particular way of doing things and is as distinct from heroic exploits (perceived as badges of a sporting, cultural or tourist elitism or aristocracy) as it is from dull or shapeless activities (which I associate with mind-numbing ease). But whereas my satisfaction comes from opposition to these two extremes, in practice I paradoxically embrace elements of both. Due to its unusual nature, successful slow movement is a kind of ‘minor feat’ (even though, when speaking with friends and family, I always instinctively deny this daring aspect and stress how accessible or even easy the experience was to achieve). Moreover, slow movement implies a certain negation of action as it is carried out, notably by promoting the principle of ‘taking

your time’ or even by including long stretches of inactivity (time spent at a refuge or in a boat suggests an idleness often highlighted by those that hear of my travel accounts, who may ask ‘Don’t the kids get bored?’ or ‘So what do you do at night?’).

Illustrations 2 and 3: Enjoying isolation: unforgettable experiences (left: daybreak on the Nantes-Brest canal, with the whole family still sleeping on the boat; right: a view of Mount Grivola from the Arpisson alpine pasture in the Cogne Valley).

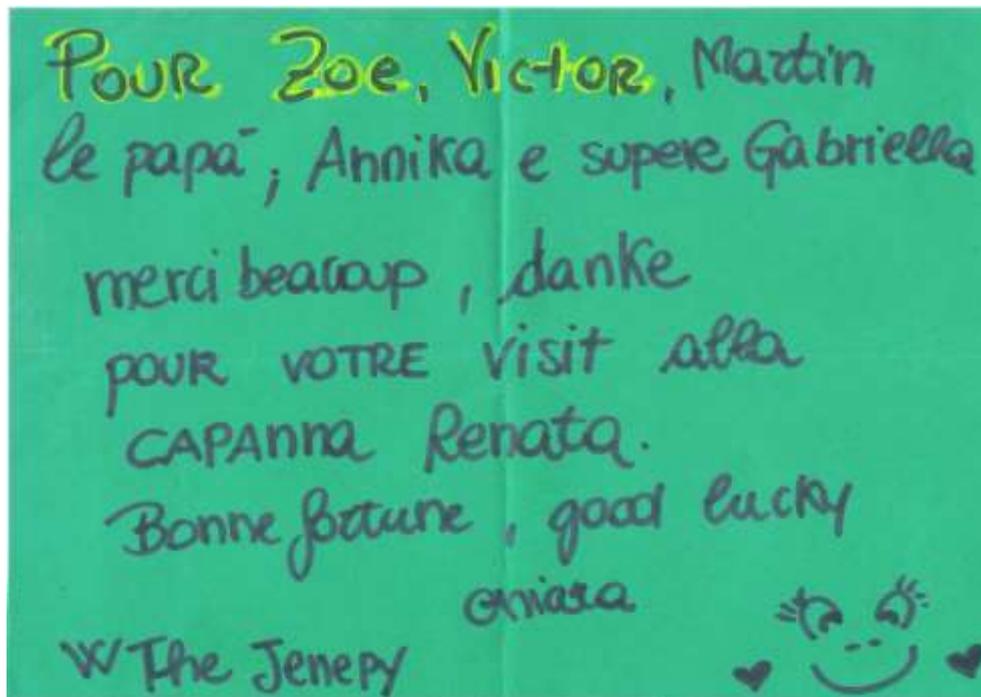


Sources: Photographs by the author.

The third reason that slow movement makes me happy lies in moments shared with locals when their behaviour seems to depart from the role I expect of them, at least in my eyes. It is important to note here that I am not looking for ‘authentic’ encounters, nor would I consider requesting this, even implicitly, of my hosts. I ask for nothing more than a functional reception and formal cordiality: I start from the premise that I am just another customer, an ordinary tourist, and there is no reason that I should be treated any differently (I abhor the contrived amiability reserved for luxury consumer sites as much as the overwhelming geniality of travellers who demand that everyone they encounter instantly become their best friend). Yet in certain, rather rare situations, I am happily surprised: an unexpected gesture, a drink together, special treatment and the feeling suddenly arises that the relationship has

taken on a different flavour, not becoming an open door towards local authenticity, but expressing what is undoubtedly genuine cordiality.

Illustration 4: An unforgettable 'happy surprise': Chiara, the keeper of the *Capanna Renata* refuge (Monte Camino di Oropa, Biella) left us this note on the breakfast table because she had left for her job in the valley before dawn. We had hit it off the day before and spent the evening talking about our lives over a meal of quiche, polenta and fresh salad. Magnificent treatment and a cherished souvenir!



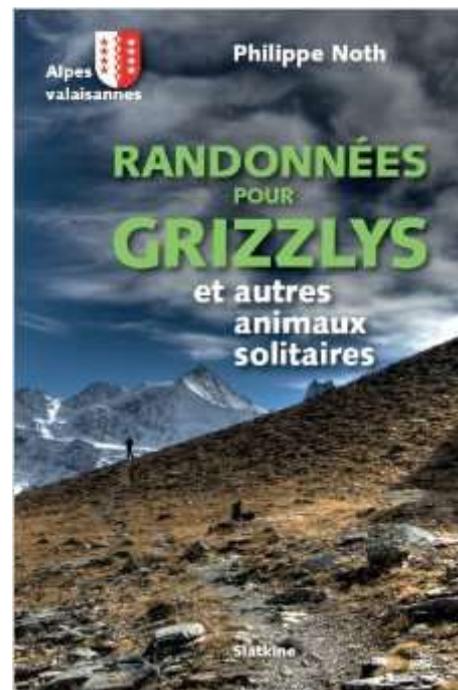
Source: Personal document of the author.

When these three practical expectations are met, my slow travel gives me great satisfaction. This satisfaction is largely linked to my own values and standards, which are fully social because they also belong to individuals subjected to equivalent processes of socialisation. In fact, the family, social and professional circles and tourism promoters are all areas of socialisation that transmit standards and values supporting the development of the pleasure of slow movement, though each in their own way and on different social scales. When I was a child, our family holidays were often spent in the mountains, which introduced me and my sister to the pleasures of hiking; today, after leading my children along paths and canals, they tell me how much they appreciate these experiences that they have never had before. Many of my colleagues say that they enjoy various forms of slow movement, though I find less enjoyment among acquaintances from other social and professional backgrounds, particularly those with less schooling. Finally, public and private organisations that

promote slow movement practices, or at least the ones whose literature I have read, primarily convey an image of getting close to nature, scenery, stillness and an activity that suspends the tensions of daily life to enable the two-sided social process of finding oneself by getting away from the crowd. This is the promise of an advertising brochure for the boat rental company that I personally used, emphasising the ‘unique’ and ‘different’ nature of river tourism:

This year, for your holidays, we invite you to enjoy what makes our form of leisure unique: a different understanding of time. ‘Timelessness’. On board our boats, you will experience time differently and **you will finally take the time** to discover, learn and share with your friends, your family or your partner. (Boldface in the original.)

Illustrations 5 and 6: Slow tourism and its promise of isolation and tranquility. Covers of a boat rental brochure (notice the slogan: ‘taking one’s time’) and a hiking guide for people seeking solitude (‘Hill-Walking for Grizzlies and other solitary animals’) thanks to which I organised a two-day family hike in a very quiet valley.



Source: Author.

In other words, it seems that Marcel Mauss was truly inspired when he called attention to the “social nature of the *habitus*” and to the fact that the appetites and performances it generates “do not just vary with individuals and their imitations, they vary especially between societies, educations, properties and fashions, prestige”

(Mauss, 2006: 80). Returned to the social space that produces and interprets them, preferences always express precedence and disgust always indicates distance.

There is another time when my slow movement practices are integrated into processes of symbolic distinction (Bourdieu, 1986), which is when I talk about them later. A trip rarely ends on the day you return home. Just as I give myself a space of anticipation when preparing for the trip, as explained above, I also give shape to what I could call space of retrospection in which I share my recollections of my experiences with certain audiences, according to wisely chosen methods. Families, friends and colleagues are the primary audiences of my loosely prepared reminiscing. I have printed photo albums as souvenirs for my children, while photos of our boat trip decorate our dining room wall. Other family members generally end up looking at the photos or watching the films of a trip. With friends and colleagues, this retrospection consists of accounts with varied levels of detail or is simply avoided, according to the interest that different people express. In any case, the way I recount these experiences is shaped by relational configurations, adapted to their specific social dynamics and to the roles and issues that each hold.

Therefore, I should admit that every step of my slow movement experience reflects the logics of social differentiation. Whether these are structural and implicit or expressed through explicit personal appreciation, they turn my practices into incarnations of models valued because they are socially situated, i.e. they assume their full meaning through their opposition, with varying clarity of awareness, to (certainly imaginary) counter-models linked to social groups towards which I feel foreign and distant. It now remains to be seen if the criteria by which I confer 'fair worth' to my own practices maintain some affinity with the values of fairness that slow tourism, for its part, associates with slowness.

4. When slow tourism questions my slowness

In their book *Slow Travel and Tourism*, Janet Dickinson and Les Lumsdon (2010: 191) summarise the main principles of this philosophy and how they differ from the approaches of conventional tourism. Even if there are several definitions of the term

and slightly different conceptions of what slow tourism is about (Dickinson, 2015), I use these principles hereafter to take another look at my slow tourism experiences.

The first principle is to pay attention to the trip itself, meaning to the way you travel to the tourist destination. While conventional tourism advocates quick, direct and comfortable travel, resulting in the mass use of the automobile or the airplane and becoming a 'corridor' to cross with no attention paid to the regions traversed, slow tourism turns the act of travelling into a tourist attraction in itself, involving less intense speeds and more circuitous routes that make other modes of transport worthwhile, like trains, boats or bicycles. Here, my personal practices are purely conventional: I travel to my destinations by car or plane so I can spend as much time as possible practicing slow tourism, as the hiatuses I can enjoy are brief (from four days to two weeks) and cannot be extended due to the restraints of my social obligations. Tour operators largely support this approach, including those who try to market slowness, by often providing tourists with information to reach their destinations quickly, whose main feature is their use as 'enclaves' where tourists move in an almost exclusively slow fashion (Wilson & Richards, 2008).

Illustration 7: Travel conceived as a corridor. Taken from the *Captain's Handbook* providing information to undertake my river journey from Redon ('Your destination') and the ways to get there (by automobile, airplane or high-speed train).

F REDON

GPS: 47°38'42.81"N, 02°05'19.54"W

Starting out formalities: departure days from 2 to 6 pm.

Boarding: as soon as the boat is ready.

Access:

🚗: From the North: E50 (A81 + N157 + N136), at Rennes, exit no. 8 to D837 direction St Nazaire/Bruz/Redon, then follow D177 direction Redon (65 km), From the South E60 - N165 exit 11.1 St Nazaire/La Baule, then follow D773 and D164 (27 km)

🚆: Redon TGV station (1 km)

➔: Rennes-Saint-Jacques (58 km), Nantes Atlantique (73 km)

Parking: covered, not guarded: € 46/week

BRITTANY

Source: Author.

The environmental impacts of tourism practices should also be taken into consideration: slow tourism advocates activities that minimise carbon emissions and require few resources, thus reduce tourists' ecological footprint. My slow travels largely meet this requirement, either because the one (walking) is presumably only carried out through human power or because the other (inland navigation) consumes a low level of fossil fuels, and also because they both capitalise on the potential of previous networks predating the carbon society (Edensor, 2000; Fallon, 2012) – even if resupplying mountain refuges by helicopter could still be considered harmful from an ecological point of view. But in a larger perspective, the continuous growth and globalization of “excursion tourism”, which generally takes place in the summer (hiking and outdoor recreation activities of every type) and is theoretically “light” in terms of installations and impact, or at least perceived as such”, do nevertheless require the construction of infrastructural elements such as hotels, refuges, new access roads and parking lots, telecommunication networks devices, etc., and do undoubtedly have diffuse and indirect impacts on local socio- and eco-systems (Dérioz and Bachimont, 2009: 2).

The proliferation of sightseeing trips, visits of many attractions and the demand for easy access to certain sites (which entails the construction of heavy infrastructure bringing various forms of harm) are other features of conventional tourism condemned by slow tourism advocates insofar as they are based on a system of damaging intensification of tourist practices. The practice of slow tourism renounces this *de facto* due to its logistics and its material and symbolic affinities with seldom trodden paths. In my case, the only form of time-related pressure comes from my daily itinerary, which in any case may be revised if the circumstances require. However, the boundaries of the calendar that mark my holiday hiatuses preclude any possibility of prolonging my stay extemporaneously. Staying in one place for a while is therefore an act circumscribed in advance, and slow travel appears to me as a way to intensify the relation to this place in the time I allow myself, though surely in a different manner than evoked above.

Finally, the slow tourism philosophy seeks a de-commercialised form of tourism and a de-standardisation of forms of hospitality. While hiking and river navigation require the use of fewer commercial goods and services when undertaken, it is

nevertheless clear that this slow movement leads to the purchase of specific equipment beforehand; in fact, this equipment is generally industrially mass-produced (for sporting and tourist equipment stores), which is far from the ideals that slow tourism espouses. I nonetheless use these stores frequently, mainly because of the price, but also because I am not so sure that the production of high-end equipment is organised according to more ethical principles. Regarding alternative formulas of hospitality (especially in terms of food and accommodation), such offerings are assumed to be available to slow tourists. However, travelling on foot or by boat in sparsely populated territories is often synonymous with less choice, or even no choice at all (this is the case of hikers who determine the legs of their journey based on which refuges they can reach). This does not rule out that the hospitality available may take a less conventional form, in material or human terms.

Ultimately, this comparison between the sociological self-analysis of my practices and an evaluation of them according to the principles of slow tourism clearly shows that these two forms of slowness share little in common but their name, except perhaps for a few shared aspects of form rather than of spirit (for example, the absence of carbon emissions when walking). The exercise thereby shows how slowness may take on essentially immeasurable tastes by rooting itself in such diverse configurations.

5. Conclusion: From the problem of conditions to the problem of attention

The gap that undoubtedly separates my tourist slowness from the policies of slowness promoted by slow tourism opens at least two fields of inquiry, which I would like to state by way of conclusion to this rather peculiar paper.

On the one hand, one could investigate the mutual influence between the configuration of slow travel practices (as I have described them here) and the existence of alternative standards for tourism practices (with regard to the conventional sort). Will individuals who become aware of this philosophy, and view it as morally good, modify their attachments and the ramifications of their current practices to shape new experiences (François-Lecompte and Prim-Allaz, 2011)? In the context of specific tourism practices, what could emerge as levers, or conversely as

hurdles, to such a transformation? To what extent do different areas of socialisation like those cited in my self-analysis (in terms of space of anticipation and retrospection about travel experiences) help to spread slow tourism standards? In other words, what would be the conditions for a structural transformation of tourism practices (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Hall, Gössling and Scott, 2015)? If I had to answer this personally (considering my own future tourism practices), I would need to describe ingredients and results in a self-analysis different from the one above; it would have to be a sort of behavioural self-forecast necessarily akin to moral introspection. I shall not engage in such an exercise here, not only because it triggers a fault that could undermine my ability to regard myself as a consistent subject (Martucelli, 2002), but especially, and more fundamentally, because I see no heuristic utility in disclosing such a thought experiment to the public. It seems sufficient to say that growing awareness of the slow tourism philosophy – like the sociological self-analysis attempted above, but using other tools – draws back the veil of practical evidence and moral innocence surrounding the products and services provided by the conventional tourism industry, thereby making the exercise of individual and collective reflexivity possible.

On the other hand, the perspective adopted in this article may ask the question – as unusual as it may seem to me – about the status of the many forms of mediation or of the numerous and heterogeneous intermediaries inherent to all tourist practices whether they follow the logics of conventional market tourism or of slow tourism. Tourists enjoy both configurations, but the structural conditions are different. Indeed, what does the slow tourism philosophy offer, if not the enjoyment of tourism by recognising the many intermediaries that necessarily give it shape? Slow tourism is tourism that ideally enjoys each link in the chain by paying attention to it. In contrast, industrialised tourism promises tourists enjoyment by enabling them to ignore, or remain unconcerned with, the behind-the-scene conditions through which their travel is made possible and seamless. What are the working conditions in the multinational companies that sell speedy transport or the cheap equipment necessary for my trip? What are the ecological, heritage and human impacts of the infrastructure built for mass transport and tourism? Are the wastes from my in-flight dinner sorted for recycling? What supply chains does my hotel use? What are the (hidden) costs that make my slowness and isolation possible? And more generally, what do I know about

all that goes on behind the scene of this service that is always 'offered'? The large majority of tourists (myself included) do not care, and are not able, to reply. This is firstly because industrialised tourism turns intermediaries into black-box services, requiring no concern other than their price and added-value for one's trip. Actually, to the extent that these tourist 'services' are areas in which such a system may extract added value, their recipients must remain unaware of the conditions and consequences of their production under pain of compromising their enjoyment as happy-go-lucky tourists (Becker, 2013). On the contrary, enabling travel intermediaries to become matters-of-concern is the policy aim of slow tourism: constructing a tourist who pays attention to them and enjoys paying attention. This reversal can only occur through efforts made in advance to learn more about these intermediaries and the attention they deserve. For example, I could add to the list of guides I consult when preparing my travel the manual published by the World Wildlife Fund *Holiday Footprinting*, in order to include a few other intermediaries in my 'space of anticipation'.¹ Unlike the conventional tourism system, where all the ramifications of tourist practices are transformed into means that can be 'streamlined' by producers and consumers alike according to a logic of maximum cost reduction (meaning profit maximisation), the slow tourism philosophy focuses not on taking advantage of means but on paying and enjoying attention to them; as Carl Honoré puts it, slowness "is about making real and meaningful connections" (2005: 14).

In sum, the comparison between the self-analysis outlined here and the perspective of slow tourism philosophy reveals that these two approaches, even if they do remind us that slowness "appears to be a far from unmediated pleasure" (Edensor, 2000: 83), do not highlight the same kind of intermediaries. If this perspective is correct, one could conclude that my personal slow travel experience, structured by conventional tourism, is a form of attention to slowness, or a certain way of viewing the world, while slow tourism would be the practice of paying attention to the world through slowness, implying the breakdown of the social structures of the conventional holiday resort. With the paradoxical logic that he loved, old Zeno of Elea would surely say that the infinite multitude of intermediaries that separates these two types of slowness makes moving from one to the other impossible.

¹ This document is available on the site of WWF-UK: www.wwf.org.uk/wwf_articles.cfm?unewsid=716.

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**Desarrollo de turismo *slow* por medio de la actividad ecuestre: Estudio de caso
Granxa do Souto, Galicia, España**

**Slow tourism development through equestrian activity: The Case of Granxa do Souto
Galicia, Spain**

**Desenvolvimento do turismo *slow* através da atividade equestre: Estudo de caso da
Granxa do Souto, Galiza, Espanha**

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Resumen

El principal objetivo de este trabajo es estudiar las posibilidades de la actividad deportiva ecuestre como catalizadora del turismo *slow* por medio de un estudio de caso concreto, Granxa do Souto (Galicia, España). La metodología empleada se divide en dos fases: una primera cualitativa (basada en dos entrevistas en profundidad) y una segunda de carácter cuantitativo para profundizar en las motivaciones de los visitantes y seguidores de la Granxa y sus preferencias sobre actividades en el destino, actividades gastronómicas y vinculadas a la actividad ecuestre. Los resultados obtenidos indican una gran afinidad entre el turista ecuestre y la filosofía *slow* y sobre ello se aportan las líneas de trabajo principales que deben incorporarse en la Granxa do Souto para adaptarse a la filosofía *slow*.

Palabras clave: turismo *slow*; autenticidad; actividad ecuestre; Granxa do Souto; desarrollo local.

Abstract

The main objective in this study is to explore equestrian activity as a catalyst for slow tourism development. It is focused on the study of Granxa do Souto (Galicia, España). In line with the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative methodology was adopted in the first phase (two in-depth interviews were conducted with the managers at Granxa do Souto). The second phase is based in a quantitative study, where the main aspects studied are motivations, preferences for activities at the destination, gastronomic and equestrian activities. The results reveal a high level of affinity between the equestrian tourist and the slow philosophy, and allow the definition of the main action points in order to adapt Granxa do Souto to the slow philosophy.

Keywords: slow tourism; authenticity; equestrian activity; Granxa do Souto; local development.



Resumo

O objetivo principal deste estudo é explorar a atividade equestre enquanto catalisadora do desenvolvimento do *slow tourism*. O estudo foca o caso da Granxa do Souto (Galiza, Espanha). A metodologia utilizada divide-se em duas fases: uma primeira qualitativa (baseada em duas entrevistas em profundidade aos gestores da Granxa do Souto) e uma segunda de carácter quantitativo para aprofundar as motivações dos visitantes e seguidores da Granxa e as suas preferências sobre as atividades no destino, atividades gastronómicas e equestres. Os resultados obtidos indicam uma grande afinidade entre o turista equestre e a filosofia *slow* e permitem a definição das linhas principais de trabalho a incorporar na Granxa do Souto para se adaptar à filosofia *slow*.

Palavras-chave: *slow tourism*; autenticidade; atividade equestre; Granxa do Souto; desenvolvimento local.

1. Introducción

Alrededor de la actividad turística han surgido nuevos modelos de oferta (Weiler y Hall, 1992; Robinson y Novelli, 2005) entre los que se encuentran aquellos que fomentan la actividad turística como un instrumento de desarrollo local. Bajo este paradigma, han nacido y evolucionado iniciativas como el turismo *slow*, que sobre los principios de respeto a la cultural local y al medio ambiente, impulsa la conexión del viajero con otros viajeros y con la comunidad local. El turismo *slow* surge a partir del movimiento *Slow Food*, al igual que el conocido *Cittaslow Movement*, que está basado en la premisa del desarrollo local de las comunidades basándose en su identidad y características diferenciales (Jung, Ineson y Miller, 2014). Como parte de una filosofía que aboga por una vida más lenta y más sostenible, involucra a todos los *stakeholders* del destino (Heitmann, Robinson y Povey 2011; Jung *et al.*, 2014; Schneider, 2008 (cit. en Lee, Packer y Scott, 2015)). Además, para Petrini (2003) es primordial que los consumidores aprendan a valorar la calidad y entiendan que para conseguirla tienen que pagar a veces un precio más elevado.

Por otro lado, la actividad ecuestre es una actividad motivadora de desplazamientos turísticos, que podría desarrollarse como parte de la experiencia turística *slow* por su amplia acogida internacional en diferentes países de Europa y América (Kyle, Graefe, Manning y Bacon, 2004; Marion y Leung, 2001; Oh y Hammitt 2010). Sin embargo, el turismo ecuestre no ha recibido mucha atención (Newsome, Smith y Moore, 2008) a pesar de que es cada vez más importante por su impacto en la economía local de las comunidades donde se lleva a cabo.

La mayor parte de los trabajos académicos alrededor del turismo *slow* se centran en *Slow Food* y también, aunque en menor medida, en el *Cittaslow movement* (Pearson *et al.*, 2011; Sassatelli y Davolio, 2010; Sims, 2009; Sparks, Bowen y Klag, 2003; Spiller, 2012). Los trabajos que estudian la actividad ecuestre se enfocan principalmente en los impactos económicos y medioambientales que provoca en el entorno (Daniels y Norman, 2005; Hackbert y Lin, 2009; Helgadóttir, 2006; Helgadóttir y Sigurdardottir, 2008; Sun y Walsh, 1998).

Ante la escasez de estudios y dada la relevancia del tema, es importante desarrollar investigaciones que aborden el desarrollo del turismo *slow* a partir de otras actividades existentes en un destino (como la actividad ecuestre) que, vinculadas a la naturaleza y cultura local, pueden generar sinergias por su capacidad de generar desarrollo y de hacerlo involucrando a los diferentes actores de un destino.

Para ello, esta investigación se enfoca en el estudio de un caso concreto, Granxa do Souto en Galicia (España) y se aborda en dos fases metodológicas (cualitativa y cuantitativa). Los resultados obtenidos definen las líneas de trabajo principales que deben incorporarse en la Granxa do Souto para adaptarse a la filosofía *slow*.

2. Revisión de la literatura

2.1 Turismo *slow*

Turismo *slow* es una forma de viajar desde el respeto a la cultura, tradiciones y medio ambiente del destino, entendiendo su diversidad y donde el turista entra en contacto con otros turistas y con la comunidad local, permitiendo además que esta conexión con los habitantes del lugar se reafirme a un nivel más profundo. Sus aspectos diferenciales respecto al turismo “tradicional” son el compromiso, la inmersión y la tranquilidad; requiere más interacción con la comunidad y con el medio ambiente para adquirir más conocimientos y formar recuerdos más sólidos (Heitmann *et al.*, 2011). Está enfocado en personas que desean explorar las oportunidades que les brinda el entorno durante una estancia turística (Fullagar, Markwell y Wilson, 2012) y hoy día representa una alternativa importante al turismo masivo de “sol y playa” y al turismo cultural “tradicional” (Lumsdon y McGrath, 2011).

No existe un único perfil ni una única motivación del turista que realiza este tipo de turismo aunque, según Dickinson, Lumsdon y Robbins (2011) una de las principales motivaciones sería evitar el avión y el coche como medios de transporte, y por tanto, reducir el impacto medioambiental que supone utilizar estos medios cuando se viaja. Otra motivación se basaría en vivir experiencias más ricas e intensas en destino. Estos enfoques son similares a los que fueron identificados por Gardner (2009), que equiparaba el turismo *slow* con una forma de experimentar y vivir que comienza en el hogar del viajero mediante la exploración de lugares de interés cercanos y donde el trayecto en sí mismo es parte de la experiencia turística, que debe fortalecerse visitando mercados locales o mediante el contacto con la población local.

La autenticidad es otro concepto importante en la experiencia del turista *slow*, porque normalmente este tipo de turista se concentra en entender los lugares que visitan más allá de las ofertas turísticas habituales. La autenticidad se convierte, por tanto, en el eje central de las motivaciones del turista y gran parte de la experiencia está dirigida a encontrarla (Cohen, 1988).

2.2 El turismo ecuestre

El turismo ecuestre es conceptualizado como el conjunto de actividades ecuestres realizadas por los turistas fuera de su lugar de residencia habitual (cursos de formación, cursos de perfeccionamiento, rutas a caballo, excursiones a caballo, estancias hípicas u otros) y que tienen como eje principal la experiencia a caballo (Federación Oficial del Turismo Ecuestre, 2010). Esta definición genérica presenta dos ramificaciones; una más amplia que categoriza todas las actividades turísticas que tienen que ver con los caballos; y otra más concreta que recoge las rutas y las excursiones a caballo:

El término turismo ecuestre designa a un tipo de turismo específico consistente en la realización de rutas o itinerarios a caballo de duración variable y que pueden incluir o no pernoctación, asemejando dicho término al de turismo a caballo, para diferenciarlo de aquellas otras actividades susceptibles de aprovechamiento turístico que tienen en el caballo su argumento principal (exhibiciones, espectáculos, cursos, artesanía, etc.) y que se han dado en llamar turismo del caballo (Luque Gil, 2003: 73).

Según esta definición, el turismo a caballo es el equivalente al turismo ecuestre en el que la equitación es un medio que permite el descubrimiento y el conocimiento del

medio natural y cultural de un territorio, y que puede servir para generar por sí mismo un producto turístico específico. De este modo, el turismo ecuestre formalizado en rutas, paseos y excursiones es un modo de explorar el destino de forma sostenible: proporciona al turista la oportunidad de visitar lugares desconocidos y de conectar inmediatamente con el medio ambiente y con el patrimonio cultural del lugar.

Las empresas encargadas de proporcionar estos servicios suelen ser pequeñas y familiares, además de grandes conocedoras de la naturaleza y del atractivo cultural de la zona, lo que le brinda al turista la oportunidad de conocer el destino a través de la mirada de la población local. Cuidan lo que tienen porque el entorno natural es su modo de vida, y su actividad está directamente relacionada con la sostenibilidad, aunque en muchos casos este nexo se da de manera inconsciente. En este sentido, y según Kline, Cardenas, Viren y Swanson (2015) las acciones de cooperación entre empresas locales mejoran la experiencia del visitante, vinculando las infraestructuras turísticas ya existentes (alojamientos y otros negocios relacionados con la actividad turística) con los negocios e infraestructuras relacionados con el mundo del caballo. Por ello, para promocionar el turismo ecuestre de forma eficiente para todos los involucrados, las relaciones entre el mismo turista que realiza actividades a caballo, los establecimientos que lo ofertan, las autoridades, la comunidad local y la conservación del medio ambiente tienen que fortalecerse (Kline *et al.* 2015).

3. Metodología

El propósito de este trabajo es analizar la conexión entre el turismo ecuestre y el turismo *slow*. Para ello, se analizará el caso concreto de la Granxa do Souto; un centro especializado en actividades ecuestres y turísticas situado en la comarca del Ortegal (A Coruña, Galicia). Ubicada en un paraje natural extraordinario, Granxa do Souto es un espacio dedicado al conocimiento activo de la naturaleza. El centro ofrece alojamiento y actividades relacionadas con el mundo del caballo como rutas o clases de equitación, así como clases sobre fauna y flora en el aula de naturaleza, sesiones de agroturismo, visitas a la granja escuela, etc. Los gestores de la Granxa conocen el movimiento *slow* y lo que éste persigue, y aunque quizás no de manera consciente, se desarrollan actividades en sintonía con los valores de familiaridad, integración, amor por la

naturaleza y la cultura endémica, la tranquilidad y la experiencia real como nexo de unión entre el centro y sus visitantes.

Para abordar el estudio, se consideró la investigación cualitativa como el primer paso para un acercamiento a esta realidad. Las investigaciones centradas en granjas “turísticas” precisan de técnicas como las entrevistas en profundidad por la propia complejidad del tema (Di Domenico y Miller, 2012; Haugen y Vic, 2008). Se llevaron a cabo dos entrevistas en profundidad semiestructuradas al propietario de Granxa do Souto (MV) y a la gerente del establecimiento (SV). Las entrevistas giraron alrededor de tres bloques: (i) actividades en la Granxa; (ii) demanda actual y (iii) turismo *slow* en la Granxa. Fueron grabadas para su posterior transcripción, lo que permitió el posterior análisis del discurso.

La segunda fase del trabajo se centra en un análisis cuantitativo, para lo que se administró electrónicamente un cuestionario a los aficionados a la equitación, clientes y seguidores de Granxa do Souto que realizan desplazamientos por ese motivo (en español e inglés) compuesto por treinta y cuatro ítems divididos en cuatro bloques (ver Tabla 1). El cuestionario se publicó en el portal web de Granxa do Souto y en la página de la red social *Facebook*. La población objeto de estudio es indeterminada. La escala aplicada en el cuestionario en cada ítem fue una escala Likert de 1 a 5, siendo 1 nunca y 5 siempre.

Tabla 1: Bloques de preguntas

Bloques de preguntas	Referencias bibliográficas
I. Perfil del jinete	Kline <i>et al.</i> (2015)
II. Estilos de viaje	Lee <i>et al.</i> (2015)
III. Actividades en destino	Lee <i>et al.</i> (2015)
IV. Gastronomía	Lee <i>et al.</i> (2015)
V. Variables sociodemográficas	Elaboración propia

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

En la Tabla 2 se muestran los principales datos relacionados con la población, la muestra y el tratamiento de los datos.

Tabla 2: Ficha técnica de la investigación cuantitativa

Características de la población y la muestra (cuantitativo)		
Población objeto de estudio		Aficionados a la equitación, clientes y seguidores de Granxa do Souto que realizan desplazamientos por ese motivo.
Ámbito geográfico		Europa
Recogida de la información		Encuesta. Administrada electrónicamente por medio de la web y redes sociales de Granxa Do Souto. Idiomas: castellano e inglés.
Tamaño de la muestra		173
Proceso de muestreo		No probabilístico.
Periodo de recogida de la información		15 Mayo 2015 – 15 Junio 2015
Duración del cuestionario		4 minutos
Técnicas estadísticas utilizadas		Análisis descriptivo. Tablas de contingencia (Estadístico Chi – cuadrado). Programa de análisis estadístico SPSS, versión 16.0.

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

4. Principales resultados del estudio

4.1 Resultados de la investigación cualitativa

A continuación, se exponen los principales resultados de las entrevistas en profundidad en dos bloques: (i) actividades y demanda actual y (ii) Granxa do Souto y turismo *slow*.

4.1.1 Actividades en la Granxa y demanda actual

Granxa do Souto ofrece clases de equitación para todos los niveles, más orientadas hacia el salto, rutas y paseos a caballo de distinta duración, cursos intensivos de fin de semana, campamentos hípicos para niños durante el mes de julio y además todas las actividades que tienen que ver con la granja escuela como visitas escolares y celebraciones de cumpleaños.

Se colabora con el deporte de base con dos o tres concursos de salto federados al año, ya que al mismo tiempo, en las instalaciones de Granxa do Souto funciona un club hípico premiado con dos estribos (M.V.).

En concreto la ruta simple, que es la ruta del Cal da Loba es la más demandada... De todas formas creo que el resto de rutas podrían tener la misma importancia lo que pasa que la gente siempre elige la más simple y la más barata (S.V.).

El éxito de la ruta corta reside en que permite al cliente la desconexión y el contacto con la naturaleza durante un rato, sin necesitar ningún conocimiento previo en equitación:

La conexión con la naturaleza que transmite esa sensación de aventura... además, la gente no suele tener un caballo en el que poder salir a dar un paseo. Durante las rutas se recorren parajes desde la Galicia profunda hasta lugares místicos como los castros, en los que se explica qué tribus vivían ahí, en qué épocas, etc. (S.V.).

Las actividades ecuestres se dividen en dos grupos: clases y rutas. Las clases de montar a caballo las conforman sobre todo niñas menores de 16 años, mientras que las rutas son contratadas, en su mayoría, por parejas y grupos de amigos. El público extranjero contrata mayoritariamente las rutas a caballo más largas (varios días), debido a la gran afición ecuestre existente en Centroeuropa y en las islas británicas.

Granxa do Souto necesita promocionar este tipo de cosas a gente que monta habitualmente a caballo, por eso creo que habría que publicitarse en foros especializados y en países que se monta mucho a caballo como Estados Unidos, Inglaterra, Irlanda, etc. Son países con una elevada cultura ecuestre y con un gran porcentaje de gente que monta (M.V.).

En relación con las instalaciones de alojamiento, en Granxa do Souto existen dos espacios preparados para el alquiler vacacional: el albergue y “la casita de la granja”. El albergue sirve para alojar a los niños del campamento durante el mes de julio, pero durante el resto del año no tiene mucho uso. No se promociona lo suficiente ya que:

[...] Ahora mismo es complicado, porque es pequeño y habría que hacer una inversión en mejorar las instalaciones que ahora mismo están pensadas para niños. Sobre todo mejorar las instalaciones de cocina y comedor porque están separadas del dormitorio y habría que ponerlas más cómodas (M.V.).

La casa fue durante muchos años la vivienda de los trabajadores de la granja, pero quedó vacía en el año 2004 y se reformó para poder ofertar un alojamiento vacacional:

Alquilamos por semanas o por fines de semana. Es una casa con 3 habitaciones y 6 plazas, integrada dentro de las instalaciones de la Granja (M.V.).

Actualmente la casa tiene buena ocupación en julio y agosto, comenzando la temporada baja a partir de septiembre. La estacionalidad es el problema principal de la

actividad turística de la granja, cuya posible solución podría ser diseñar y comercializar de manera efectiva *packs* de fin de semana en los que se ofrecieran combinados el alojamiento y las actividades de la granja. Esto es algo que ya ofrece Granxa do Souto:

Sí. Se suelen hacer pues por ejemplo en San Valentín, que es llegar, alojamiento en la casita de la granja, ruta a caballo con brindis equino y una clase de naturaleza. Lo hacemos por eventos, en el magosto (fiesta del otoño) también... No están diseñadas en la web en sí sino que las sacamos en las redes sociales (S.V.).

4.1.2 Turismo slow en la Granxa

Granxa do Souto no es, hoy en día, un centro especializado en turismo *slow*. Sin embargo, su filosofía y sus actividades tanto ecuestres como turísticas recuerdan en muchas ocasiones a las ideas del propio movimiento *slow*.

Creo que sí que se fomenta el turismo *slow* a nivel de familiaridad, a nivel de conexión con la naturaleza, a nivel de la pasión que denota la granja o su dueño por la fauna, la flora y por la zona en general (S.V.).

Algunos aspectos a mejorar son la inclusión de la gastronomía y los productos locales en el día a día de la granja; ofertar este tipo de turismo es importante, pero también lo es la actitud del cliente:

Si la gente viene a toda prisa y lo que quiere es que los niños monten a caballo, y después dar un paseo, y ellos mientras aprovechan para hacer deporte mientras los niños montan... pues eso no es nada *slow*... Podríamos diseñar esa oferta pero necesitas que haya clientes que de verdad quieran integrarse en este tipo de cosas (M.V.).

Granxa do Souto tiene la capacidad para organizar sus actividades ecuestres y turísticas en el marco del turismo *slow*, debido a un emplazamiento idóneo para el contacto con la naturaleza, con la tranquilidad y la lentitud:

Tenemos los conocimientos necesarios antes de que se pierdan para poder hacerlo, desde apoyarnos en granjeros de la zona hasta poder hacer todo tipo de labores agrícolas con gente que las sabe hacer (M.V.).

Además, existen ejemplos de casas rurales de la zona del Ortegal que se adaptaron al turismo *slow* para atraer a otro tipo de clientes y, aunque obtenían muy buena

respuesta en cuanto a ocupación, fracasaron en su intento de integrar a los turistas en el entorno y de cambiar su predisposición a disfrutar de su viaje de una forma distinta.

Tú puedes proponer todo el turismo *slow* que quieras, pero si el cliente lo único que quiere es tirarse en una tumbona al sol o leer El País y al terminar irse a la playa porque es una pena desperdiciar un buen día en el huerto, pues es muy complicado. Lo que falta es que al público le interese lo que tú ofreces, y que tengan tiempo (M.V.).

El turismo *slow* podría integrarse en la Granxa do Souto, lo que sería muy positivo para fomentar la recepción de un tipo determinado de turistas (los viajeros *slow*). Sin embargo, la Granxa do Souto cuenta con una desventaja a la hora de implantar este tipo de turismo de la cual ellos son conscientes, y es la propia gestión de la granja.

(...) hacer una gestión coherente y que haya un proyecto claro a seguir sí o sí. Por otro lado, el trato que hay hacia los animales, que pacen en campos y son tratados con mucho cariño y respeto, el enclave natural en el que se encuentra Granxa do Souto, cerca del mar y rodeados por montañas, y el aspecto de familiaridad de la granja (S.V.).

La granja tiene medio camino ya andado hacia la filosofía *slow*, nos falta la segunda mitad de la etapa. Todo lo que hemos conseguido hasta ahora se ha logrado a base de trabajo duro y dedicación, y así se seguirán haciendo las cosas (M.V.)

4.2 Resultados de la investigación cuantitativa

Dada la importancia otorgada por los entrevistados a la predisposición de la demanda ante el turismo *slow*, es muy importante conocer los gustos de los aficionados a la equitación, clientes y seguidores de la Granxa respecto a esta filosofía. A continuación, se exponen los principales resultados de la encuesta en 6 bloques; (i) características básicas de la muestra; (ii) perfil como jinete; (iii) estilo de viaje; (iv) actividades en el destino, (v) gastronomía en destino y (vi) diferencias según grupos de edad.

4.2.1 Características de la muestra

La muestra está compuesta por clientes y seguidores de la Granxa Do Souto. Para su formación, se publicó el cuestionario en la página de la Granxa incluida la red social *Facebook*. La muestra se compone de un porcentaje similar de participación de hombres

y mujeres (52% hombres y 48% mujeres) y casi la mitad (47,8 %) se encuentran entre los 18 y los 25 años de edad. Las personas que se encuentran en esta franja de edad son también conocidas como generación Y o Millennials, y representan a los jóvenes nacidos entre 1977 y 1994 (Herbig, Kochler y Day, 1993). Se diferencian de otros grupos de demanda por haber crecido usando las tecnologías, lo que les hace tener comportamientos de compra diferentes a los de generaciones previas. Según Hendrix (2012), también son denominados SoLoMo (resultado de la combinación de Social, Local y Móvil). Actualmente confirman un segmento de demanda muy estudiado por las diferencias que representan respecto al resto y por ser los “clientes futuros”. El país de procedencia de la mayoría de los encuestados es España (76,3%).

Tabla 3: Características de la muestra

Características de muestra (cuantitativo)	
Género	52% Hombres 48% Mujeres
Nacionalidad	76,3% España 9,2% Reino Unido 2,3 % Francia 8,7% Otros países europeos 3,5% Países no europeos
Edad	18 – 25 años: 42,8% 26 – 35 años: 19,7% 36 – 50 años: 27,7 % 51 a 65 años: 9,8 %

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

4.2.2 Perfil del jinete

Las preguntas del primer bloque estaban relacionadas con el *perfil del jinete*, y se diseñaron para conocer más en profundidad las preferencias ecuestres de los encuestados. En cuanto a la frecuencia de la práctica de la hípica, gran parte de los encuestados (43,4%) montan a caballo siempre que pueden y lo hacen con sus amigos (41,6%).

En relación con las rutas, a lo que la gerencia de la Granxa ha otorgado tanta importancia, la mayoría de las personas encuestadas prefieren realizar rutas cortas “de 1 a 2 días” con un 30,6%, seguido muy de cerca por las personas que prefieren rutas de menos de 24 horas, con un 27,7%. En relación con la “ruta a caballo ideal”, un 24,3% de los encuestados preferirían hacer la ruta en un circuito predeterminado que combinara

destinos como playa, montaña, acantilados, lugares históricos, etc., mientras que un 21,4% prefiere una ruta con diferentes destinos y etapas.

4.2.3 Estilo de viaje

Una vez comprendido el perfil de los jinetes, se procede a definir el *estilo del viaje* y preferencias de los mismos a la hora de viajar. Los resultados reflejados en la Tabla 4, muestran que este tipo de turista es muy afín a la filosofía *slow*: para el 63% lo más importante en sus viajes es conocer nuevas culturas y nuevos estilos de vida y para un 40,5% de las personas encuestadas siempre es primordial conocer en profundidad los sitios que visita, seguido de un 35,8% de las personas para quienes con mucha frecuencia es lo más importante. Además, la mayoría de los encuestados, un 68,8%, siempre o casi siempre intentan mezclarse con la gente local y experimentar sus costumbres cuando está de vacaciones.

Tabla 4: Estilo del viaje - Resumen respuestas

Items relacionados con el estilo del viaje.	Importancia (1: nunca: 2: casi nunca: 3: frecuentemente: 4: casi siempre y 5: siempre)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Lo mejor de viajar es conocer nuevas culturas y nuevos estilos de vida.	0%	1,7%	12,1%	23,1%	63%
Cuando me voy de vacaciones me gusta conocer en profundidad los sitios que visito.	0,6%	1,2%	21,5%	35,8%	40,5%
Siempre intento mezclarme con la gente local y experimentar sus costumbres.	1,2%	6,9%	23,1%	31,2%	37,6%
Intento ver muchas cosas cuando estoy de vacaciones.	1,2%	8,1%	26,2%	34,9%	29,7%
Las mejores vacaciones están en los lugares donde hay mucha vida nocturna.	23,1%	34,7%	28,9%	11,0%	2,3%
Prefiero visitar lugares donde la gente hable mi idioma.	20,8%	30,6%	31,8%	12,7%	4%

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

4.2.4 Actividades en el destino

Con las respuestas a las preguntas relacionadas *con actividades en destino* se pretende conocer más en profundidad las actividades que los encuestados realizan en el destino que visitan y su dinamismo e integración a la hora de realizarlas. Según los gerentes de la Granxa do Souto se pueden organizar actividades ecuestres y turísticas

en el marco del turismo *slow*, gracias al emplazamiento de la Granxa en un incomparable entorno natural lo que permite al visitante disfrutar la experiencia con tranquilidad y lentitud. Destacaron además que la Granxa cuenta con los medios necesarios para que sus clientes conecten con el entorno y vivan una experiencia auténtica. Las respuestas de los participantes reflejan sintonía con lo anterior: en relación con el alojamiento, el 58,9 % prefieren alojarse en pequeños hoteles familiares más que en resorts o grandes cadenas hoteleras, y lo hacen normalmente o con mucha frecuencia. La gran mayoría de los encuestados (54,9%) prefiere disfrutar con calma del destino donde se encuentran de vacaciones y disfrutan siempre (47,4%) y casi siempre (39,9%), realizando actividades relacionadas con la naturaleza o que les acerquen a la cultura y al modo de vida del destino.

Además, el 71,7% de los encuestados afirma que le gusta, de manera frecuente (casi siempre o siempre), visitar mercados de productos locales cuando están de vacaciones y al 58,4% cuando están en el destino les gusta vivir como una persona local casi siempre o siempre, lo que les aproxima a la necesidad de vivir experiencias auténticas, definidas por Trilling (2009 [1972]) como el apego a la verdad de cada persona.

Tabla 5: Actividades en destino - Resumen respuestas.

Items relacionados con actividades en destino.	Importancia (1: nunca: 2: casi nunca: 3: frecuentemente: 4: casi siempre y 5: siempre)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Me gusta visitar mercados de productos locales cuando estoy de vacaciones.	0%	8,1%	20,2%	37,0%	34,7%
Cuando estoy en el destino, me gusta vivir como una persona local.	2,9%	9,2%	29,5%	33,5%	24,9%
Me gusta disfrutar del destino lentamente, con calma.	2,3%	10,4%	32,4%	32,9%	22,0%
Disfruto realizando actividades que me acerquen a la naturaleza, al modo de vida y a la cultura del lugar que visito.	0%	2,8%	9,8%	39,9%	47,4%
Prefiero quedarme en pequeños hoteles familiares, más que en resorts o en grandes cadenas hoteleras.	1,7%	5,8%	33,5%	31,2%	27,7%

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

4.2.5 Gastronomía en destino

A partir de las entrevistas en profundidad, se ha concluido que en la Granxa existen aspectos a mejorar como la inclusión de *gastronomía y productos locales*, a pesar de que para el éxito de estas iniciativas, lo más importante es la actitud “receptiva” del cliente. En este sentido, las respuestas reflejan que el aficionado a la equitación es bastante proclive a la filosofía *slow*. Casi la mitad de los encuestados (41,6%) prefiere siempre comprar alimentos producidos en el destino, y también les gusta conocer recetas y menús típicos del destino (39,9%) a pesar de que la asistencia a clases de cocina no tendría buena recepción entre los visitantes.

A los encuestados, en un alto porcentaje (78%), les gusta probar siempre la gastronomía tradicional de los destinos siempre o casi siempre, lo que denota un elevado interés por la gastronomía local. Esto está en línea con que casi la mitad de los encuestados (49,1%) prefiere comer siempre alimentos locales de los destinos que visita en restaurantes o lugares especializados, ya que según las respuestas prefieren no cocinar sus propias comidas durante las vacaciones.

Tabla 6: Gastronomía en destino - Resumen respuestas

Items relacionados con la gastronomía en destino.	Importancia (1: nunca: 2: casi nunca: 3: frecuentemente: 4: casi siempre y 5: siempre)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Me gusta comprar productos y alimentos locales cuando me voy de vacaciones.	0,6%	5,8%	20,2%	31,8%	41,6%
Me gusta conocer recetas típicas y menús en los lugares a los que voy.	2,3%	6,4%	22%	29,5%	39,9%
Me gusta ir a clases de cocina en mis viajes, si es posible.	57,8%	22,5%	15%	3,5%	1,2%
Durante mis vacaciones, prefiero cocinar mis propias comidas.	36,4%	30,6%	23,1%	7,5%	2,3%
Disfrutaría yendo a eventos o festivales de comida en el destino.	10,4%	15,6%	30,6%	31,2%	12,1%
No como comida local en el destino: prefiero los alimentos con los que estoy familiarizado.	49,1%	24,9%	19,1%	4,6%	2,3%
Cuando viajo, me gusta probar la comida tradicional de los destinos.	3,5%	3,5%	15%	28,3%	49,7%

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

4.2.6 Diferencias según grupos de edad

Por último, se ha procedido a la contrastación de posibles relaciones entre las variables por medio del análisis de contingencia y la aplicación del estadístico chi cuadrado. Concretamente se ha analizado la relación entre la edad del viajero y la importancia otorgada a los aspectos relacionados con el estilo de viaje, las actividades en destino y las preferencias gastronómicas durante el viaje. Para ello se han dividido los participantes en función de su edad en dos grupos: aquellos cuyas edades se encuentran entre los 18 y los 25 años y el resto, por considerarse los primeros un segmento relevante para el sector turístico en general y en particular para la actividad que se lleva a cabo en Granxa do Souto. Del mismo modo, se han agrupado las valoraciones sobre los distintos *ítems* en dos grupos: uno denominado como “poco importante” donde se incluyen las valoraciones más bajas “1”(nunca) y “2”(casi nunca) y otro denominado como “muy importante” con las más altas “3” (frecuentemente), “4”(casi siempre) y “5” (siempre).

En la siguiente tabla se presentan los *ítems* en los que se rechaza la hipótesis nula por tener un nivel de significación inferior o igual a 0,05, es decir, los *ítems* cuya importancia depende de la edad de los viajeros.

Tal y como se desprende de la tabla, la importancia otorgada a la vida nocturna en el destino, el ver muchas cosas durante las vacaciones, cocinar la comida, asistir a eventos gastronómicos, alojarse en hoteles pequeños o visitar lugares donde se hable el mismo idioma, está relacionada con la edad de los viajeros. Específicamente, la existencia de vida nocturna en el destino es más importante para los más jóvenes, así como el ver muchas cosas en el lugar o asistir a eventos gastronómicos. Los mayores de 26 años valoran más el hospedarse en pequeños hoteles y el visitar lugares donde se hable el mismo idioma.

Tabla 7: Items cuya importancia depende de la edad de los viajeros - Resumen respuestas

BLOQUE	Item	Rangos edad	IMPORTANCIA (frecuencias)		TOTAL (frecuencias)	Sig. exacta (unilateral)
			POCO IMPORTANTE	MUY IMPORTANTE		
ESTILO DEL VIAJE	Vida nocturna en destino ¹	18 – 25 años	23	51	74	0,000
		Más de 26 años	77	22	99	
	Ver muchas cosas en destino ²	18 – 25 años	3	71	74	0,033
		Más de 26 años	13	85	98	
	Visitar lugares donde se hable mi idioma ³	18 – 25 años	44	30	74	0,047
		Más de 26 años	45	54	99	
ACTIVIDADES EN DESTINO	Pequeños hoteles ⁴	18 – 25 años	11	63	74	0,002
		Más de 26 años	2	97	99	
ACTIVIDADES GASTRONÓMICAS EN DESTINO	Cocinar propia comida ⁵	18 – 25 años	41	33	74	0,004
		Más de 26 años	75	24	99	
	Evento gastronómico ⁶	18 – 25 años	13	61	74	0,021
		Más de 26 años	32	67	99	

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

5. Conclusiones

La primera conclusión del trabajo está relacionada con la conceptualización del turismo *slow* y la transformación productiva de una granja hacia la actividad turística. Estos procesos de “transformación productiva” han sido llevados a cabo con éxito en Noruega o Reino Unido, donde el 50 % de las granjas hoy día obtienen ingresos de otros

¹ Calculado sólo para una tabla 2x2. 0 casillas (0%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es 31,23.

² Calculado sólo para una tabla 2x2. 0 casillas (0%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es 6,66.

³ Calculado sólo para una tabla 2x2. 0 casillas (0%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es 35,93.

⁴ Calculado sólo para una tabla 2x2. 0 casillas (0%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es 5,56.

⁵ Calculado sólo para una tabla 2x2. 0 casillas (0%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es 24,38.

⁶ Calculado sólo para una tabla 2x2. 0 casillas (0%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es 19,25.

negocios no relacionados con su actividad inicial, incluida la turística (Carter, 1998; *Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs*, 2008) lo que influye no solo en las propias granjas sino también en la forma de vida de las familias (Getz y Carlsen, 2000; Ilbery, Bowler, Clark, Crockett y Shaw, 1998). En el ámbito de los destinos y el movimiento *slow*, encontramos experiencias internacionales exitosas como las vinculadas a *Cittaslow* que hoy cuenta con 147 pueblos ubicados en 24 países, lo que le ha convertido en un estándar internacionalmente reconocido. Aspectos como la integración con la comunidad local, el respeto al medio ambiente y culturas locales, y el interés por conocer nuevas formas de vida son los atributos diferenciadores del turismo *slow* frente al turismo tradicional (Heitmann, Robinson y Povey 2011; Petrini, 2003; Schneider, 2008 cit. en Lee *et al.*, 2015) y que pueden estar en línea con el turismo ecuestre como un medio para descubrir y el conocer el medio natural y cultural de un territorio. Específicamente, la vinculación de los agentes locales en el destino es la clave del éxito del mismo (Jung *et al.*, 2014). El turismo ecuestre es en sí mismo un producto turístico específico y la simbiosis entre ambos conceptos (turismo *slow* y ecuestre) permitiría generar sinergias que beneficiarían a todos los agentes involucrados en el proceso (turista, comunidad local, empresas locales) bajo la premisa de la sostenibilidad.

La segunda conclusión del estudio refleja que los establecimientos, como la Granxa do Souto, que reúnan las condiciones necesarias para adaptarse a la filosofía *slow* por medio del turismo ecuestre, pueden trabajar para alinearse con los principios de esta filosofía y ofrecer experiencias turísticas distintas y auténticas. A día de hoy existen experiencias exitosas que vinculan el turismo ecuestre con la filosofía *slow* y que además están certificados como *Cittaslow*, tales como los de Sebastopol (USA) o Sedgefield (Suráfrica). En este sentido, la visión de los gestores de la Granxa, y su autenticidad coincide con la de Di Domenico y Miller (2012) o con la visión de la autenticidad como la elección libre de la propia identidad de la Granxa más allá de tradiciones y culturas ancestrales (Steiner y Reisinger, 2006). Pero esta adaptación no es solamente fruto de un esfuerzo individual, sino que requeriría además trabajar con el resto de agentes del lugar (organismos públicos y empresas privadas) por medio de acuerdos de colaboración, con el fin de generar sinergias y desarrollo local (Kline *et al.*, 2015). Estos acuerdos de cooperación entre empresas locales y la Granxa es una de las opciones con más posibilidades de llevarse a cabo en este momento.

De las dos conclusiones anteriores y de los resultados del estudio de caso, la tercera conclusión del estudio está relacionada con la “afinidad” de los visitantes de la Granxa hacia esta filosofía, tan relevante para los gestores de la misma y en línea con Petrini (2003). Los resultados generales permiten constatar que los aficionados al mundo del caballo encuestados son proclives a la filosofía del movimiento *slow* y a las actividades relacionadas con el turismo a caballo. Concretamente, el segmento de demanda más joven (aquellos entre 18 – 25 años) es especialmente sensible a conocer la gastronomía local y todos los atractivos posibles durante sus vacaciones. Por ello, y a pesar de que Granxa do Souto cuenta ya con muchas ventajas, debe adaptar su oferta al turismo *slow*, mediante el diseño de nuevas rutas y mediante la conexión de su oferta con la gastronomía local y los productos locales para adaptarse mejor a las preferencias de los clientes más jóvenes. Por otro lado, los encuestados mayores de 26 años manifiestan más interés por alojarse en establecimientos de pequeño tamaño así como por viajar a lugares donde se hable su mismo idioma: estos resultados reflejan una mayor proximidad de la Granxa al público de mayor edad por las características mismas del lugar y sus instalaciones.

En relación con las limitaciones del trabajo, cabe mencionar en primer lugar el proceso de muestreo llevado a cabo: en futuras investigaciones sería importante realizar un proceso de muestreo aleatorio para lograr así una mayor representatividad de la muestra. Además, la muestra empleada presenta cierto desequilibrio por un mayor número de participantes jóvenes y de nacionalidad española, lo que ha podido provocar una distribución desigual de los resultados. También sería interesante estudiar el caso de Granxa do Souto una vez se hayan implantado medidas adaptadas al turismo *slow*, para analizar su repercusión en la de demanda, ocupación y respuesta de los turistas.

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Revitalizing tourism in small regional towns through folklore-driven slow tourism: The example of Matyó land, Hungary

Revitalizar a atividade turística em pequenas localidades através do turismo folclórico slow: O caso de Matyó, na Hungria

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Abstract

This paper raises the issue of revitalization of small town tourism through the lenses of folklore-driven slow tourism. Folk art is slow by nature; it promotes traditional craftsmanship, human creativity, host-local relations and community cohesion. Therefore, it has similar characteristics to the slow movement, particularly 'slow tourism'. In this paper 132 tourists were surveyed at the heart of the Matyó land, in Mezőkövesd, about the slow aspects of their holiday, their folklore consumption and their satisfaction with visit. The findings revealed: (1) visitors have some awareness of the slow movements; (2) respondents readily chose slower transport options; (3) A certain link could be established between more intensive consumption of folklore products and longer stay; (4) Visitors had a high satisfaction rate regarding the consumption of folklore products. Based on the results the author draws the conclusion that boosting the consumption of folklore products in the context of 'slow tourism' might be one way of revitalizing tourism in small regional towns.

Keywords: slow tourism; *cittáslow*; folklore; intangible cultural heritage; Matyó; Mezőkövesd.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa o tema da revitalização de pequenas localidades através do turismo slow folclórico. A arte popular é lenta por natureza: promove o artesanato tradicional, a criatividade, as relações turista-anfitrião e a coesão da comunidade. Como tal, partilha características com o movimento *slow*, concretamente, com o *slow tourism*. Neste trabalho, 132 turistas foram inquiridos na localidade de Matyó, na Mezőkövesd, de modo a conhecer o lado *slow* das suas férias, o consumo dos produtos de folclore e o grau de satisfação com a visita. Os resultados revelam que (1) os visitantes têm conhecimento da existência dos movimentos *slow*, (2) os inquiridos prontamente escolhem opções de transporte mais *slow*, (3) há uma ligação entre o consumo mais elevado de produtos folclóricos e uma estada mais longa, e (4) os visitantes ficam muito satisfeitos com o consumo de produtos de folclore. Com base nos resultados, o autor conclui que, no contexto do *slow tourism*, o aumento do consumo de produtos de folclore pode ser uma forma de revitalizar o turismo em pequenas localidades.

Palavras-chave: *slow tourism*; *cittáslow*; folclore; património cultural intangível; Matyó; Mezőkövesd.



1. Introduction

This article takes the case of small towns, and tries to put them onto the map of contemporary tourism. In this endeavour it will be argued that culture, notably folklore traditions tied to slow tourism, can serve as an efficient tourism marketing tool. In the literature review the problems small towns face are discussed, followed by an overview of the 'slow' philosophy as a counterculture born in reaction to the superfast-paced modern world. Although slow tourism has been a mainstream staple for some time now providing a truly diverse collection of academic work (e.g. Caffyn, 2012; Dickinson, Robbins and Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar, Markwell and Wilson 2012; Honoré, 2005; Lumsdon and McGrath 2011; Murayama and Parker, 2012; Parkins, 2004; Sugiyama and Nobuoka, 2007; Uchida, 2006), the interlink between slow and other tourism types is under-theorized, so the intersection of slow and folklore is also yet to be reviewed.

The literature review is followed by the author's own folklore-led tourism model and the analysis of the empirical research set in Mezőkövesd, a small town at the heart of the Matyó land. The research revolves around the following key themes: first, it seeks to examine respondents' slow aspects of their holiday including transport choice to and at the destination, and the length of stay of their holiday. Next, their awareness of 'slow' is analysed, followed by the examination of folklore products consumption, and the analysis ends by looking into the satisfaction level of cultural tourists versus spa tourists.

The concluding remarks point out several issues waiting to be resolved. The author argues that Mezőkövesd has some important ingredients that can be packaged as a slow destination and with the fusion of folklore and slow, the successful repositioning of Matyó culture can take place. As a result, visitors might have additional incentives to stay longer at the destination. In the paper the term 'culture' and 'folklore' are used interchangeably, as the culture of Mezőkövesd is solely based on the Matyó folklore.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Small towns, big problems

The definition of small and medium towns is a fluid category. Jamieson (1993) defines small and medium sized towns (SMSTs) as having between 5,000 and 50,000 inhabitants. In his paper, he writes about the major challenges small towns are facing such as economic decline owing to ageing societies, depopulation, depleting tax base, businesses moving away, low community spirit, and ailing agriculture. At the same time, he points towards cultural tourism as a way forward. American terminology contrasts metropolitan with micropolitan, and according to the US Census Bureau (2015) the latter “is a micro area containing an urban core of at least 10,000 (but less than 50,000) population”. In Hungary the classification shows great variations, although Pirisi (2008), who carried out extensive research into Hungarian small towns, used the range 5,000-30,000 in terms of population.

The plight of smaller settlements is at the heart of several European initiatives. ECOVAST is the European Council for the Village and Small Town set up in 1984 to further the wellbeing of rural communities, and safeguarding the rural heritage. Within this framework the most notable initiative so far is ‘Action to Strengthen Small European Towns’ (ASSET), which has managed several pan-European Studies. According to their latest figures nearly 78 million Europeans live in 4,580 small towns with a population of 10,000-30,000. In addition, towns between 30,000 and 50,000 are still considered ‘small’ and 1,210 were identified with a combined population of more than 45,000,000. The organization emphasizes the positive contributions of small towns to landscape and people’s wellbeing, constituting an important part of the hierarchy of European settlements (European Council for the Village and Small Town [Ecovast], 2010).

Another European scheme recognizing the complexity of small towns’ problems is called Urban Vision Central Europe Small Town 2020 (European Union – European Regional Development Fund, 2013). However, it deals with some of the issues raised in a conventional way, for example, the ageing population becomes merely a transport and health issue and it does not offer any solutions as to how to turn around current demographic decline or how to bring creative energies into towns.

The United States Census Bureau (2015) confirms that spatial inequality has been growing for decades. Dure (2014) points to the fact that younger generations are flocking to expensive urban centres, and affordable housing does not play a role in their decision. Instead, economic opportunity is the key and small communities are currently failing in that respect. Some viable solutions are discussed in a book entitled *Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development* (Lambe, 2008) compiled by the University of North Carolina, describing a collection of 45 inspirational examples. One of the key findings of those case studies is that “defining assets and opportunities broadly can yield innovative strategies that capitalize on a community’s competitive advantage” (Lambe, 2008: 6). Elkin, a small town in North Carolina, decided to build on the local craft economy and invested in a craft guild and an apprenticeship program that provides crafts training, mentorship and small business courses to artist entrepreneurs. This is a shining example of how the craft industry tied to tourism promotion might be a potential economic engine.

In addition to economic failure, not a negligible number of them face serious branding problems as Bill Baker (2007) in his seminal book *Destination Branding for Small Cities* concludes. He claims that many small towns lack a unique selling proposition (USP); consequently, they are much less attractive for both tourists and settlers than bigger ones. In contrast, big cities are flourishing as preferred places of residence as well as tourism destinations. They are also boosted by low airfares and the convenience of online booking available for individual travellers. As for small towns becoming slow cities and/or turning to slow tourism, this might be a road to survival and to eventual prosperity. Small towns’ charms lie partly in their community and slow tourism is a tool to showcase that community spirit through local food and culture. Tietz and Rothhaar (1991) list the following areas to be addressed in strategic planning for small towns:

- Enhance green spaces and sports opportunities
- Create communications spaces like passages
- Improve the centre through construction, restoration and heritage protection
- Strengthen the market function of the town by organizing flea, food and crafts markets
- Support events to improve image

2.2 *Cittaslow* and slow tourism

The *Cittaslow* (slow cities) movement emerged in 1999 to counterbalance the unchallenged urbanization and superfast-paced life. It was built upon the first grassroots initiative - slow food - launched in 1984 by the Italian Carlo Petrini in Pollenzo to protest against the opening of a McDonald's restaurant in Rome (Slow Food, 2015). In 2014, the number of slow cities reached 192, but to date only one Hungarian town, Hódmezővásárhely, has qualified. This initiative gives an alternative for those who enjoy the perks of cities (heritage and culture) without the speed and pollution. Although the beneficiaries of its main principles such as environment preservation, resident-friendly infrastructure, reuse and recycling, and great hospitality are primarily local residents, urban areas of smaller scale (with a population of less than 50,000) create fertile grounds for slow tourism, as a growing number of travellers find the promise of the slower pace attractive (*Cittaslow*, 2014).

Mayer and Knox (2006) demonstrated in their case studies through the examples of two German towns - Waldkirch and Hersbruck - how embracing *Cittaslow* values can work in terms of urban development. Another more recent, well-documented case is Tarakli, Turkey, where scholars (Adigüzel and Erikci, 2013) describe the process of becoming a slow city. Korkmaz, Mercan and Atay (2014) successfully link branding with the *Cittaslow* philosophy through the example of Seferihisar, Turkey.

One key strand of literature on slow tourism is connected to Dickinson and her colleagues, who developed a widely accepted concept of slow travel: "Slow travel is an emerging conceptual framework which offers an alternative to air and car travel, where people travel to destinations more slowly overland, stay longer and travel less" (Dickinson *et al.*, 2010: 1).

They emphasise that the way of travelling is an integral part of the trip and that only slow means of transport are acceptable. Likewise, Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) outlined four core principles: slow mobility, locality, means of transport and environmental protection. They stress that slow transport and slow activities deepen the tourist experience.

Outside Europe, contemporary social scientists in Japan have also taken the issue of the fast and slow dichotomy. Japan is the quintessence of binarity, where hyper-fastness exists in tandem with the super slow traditions such as tea ceremonies or onsen (hot springs) rituals. Sugiyama and Nobuoka (2007) delivered their own slow tourism concept, which is on the one hand less restrictive than the concept above, as car usage is allowed; and on the other hand, it is more holistic by placing greater focus on self-realization, health and active lifestyle. Their whole slow concept is a wide umbrella term (Murayama and Parker, 2012) including different types of alternative tourism such as green tourism, ecotourism and agri-tourism.

Another lens is Caffyn's (2012), who embraces the hedonistic side of slow tourism, which might make it easier to promote slow tourism to a wider spectrum of travellers. Consequently, her idea of slow is not about the drastic reduction of consumption, but opting for slower local choices in terms of eating, drinking and shopping. As regards long-haul travel, she suggests that the ratio of distance travelled and the time spent at destination is a more meaningful and realistic measurement. She also argues that some remote destinations are in desperate need of tourism revenues and the exclusion of air travel might put poor, faraway destinations at a disadvantage. Her concept of slow echoes Honoré's (2005) and Petrini's (2007) interpretation of slow, which also highlights the enjoyment of good food, good drink and good company at the right tempo.

There is a striking lack of research from the Central-Eastern European perspective, which needs to be addressed. First of all, speed is a culturally-loaded term and it has a much more positive connotation in the post-socialist countries, for example, fast cars and regular European city breaks indicate high economic and social status. There is no Hungarian equivalent of the term 'downsizing' and slow tourism has not entered into the realm of academic discussion either. Without a strong rural tourism base, but with a long tradition of bathing culture and rituals as well as some idiosyncratic cultural traditions, it is highly likely that the eventual concept will take a more holistic turn adopting some aspects of the Japanese concept. In fact, comparative studies have already been carried out by Rátz (2010) on bathing. It is also more than probable that it will heavily rely on the Cittaslow principles as the most active civil initiatives are all connected to urban areas. Slow maps of Budapest (Slow Budapest, 2015) and Szeged

have already been designed and regular events such as thematic days, talks and walks are regularly held in both cities.

While dissecting the existing definitions of slow tourism, the negligence of the economic aspect is palpable, without which a slow concept has less chance in the Hungarian context. If local communities do not see concrete economic benefits, any discussions about slow in any shape or form will be nothing but a failed theoretical effort. This is the rationale behind the focus of this paper; notably more emphasis has been placed on the potential directions of a solid 'slow' marketing strategy based on folklore rather than on the contribution to the development of a global concept.

2.3 The concept of heritage and folklore

Heritage means “[v]alued objects and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural traditions that have been passed down from previous generations” (Online Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). Our main concern here is folklore, which is part of intangible cultural heritage. According to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is defined as follows:

Intangible Cultural Heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2003: 2)

According to the American Folklore Society (AFSNET, s.d.: 1):

Folklore is the traditional art, literature, knowledge, and practice that is disseminated largely through oral communication and behavioural example. Every group with a sense of its own identity shares distinct folk traditions ranging from planting practices to family traditions, has a certain way of doing things like dancing, making music or sewing clothing, knows how to build and make architecture, art and craft, and say personal experience stories, riddles or song lyrics.

The concept of folklore has invited several thinkers to formulate their definitions. Noyes (2004: 375) focuses on the aspects of being 'not modern': “Folklore is a

metacultural category used to mark certain genres and practices within modern societies as being not modern.” Why study folklore? The most comprehensive summation is given by Wilson (1988: 156) who stresses that no other discipline is more concerned with linking us to our cultural heritage from the past. Moreover, it shows the interrelationships among different cultural expressions and reveals the basis of our common humanity.

For the purpose of this study, folk arts and crafts are included in the concept of folklore as in the AFSNET definition above, since Matyó heritage relies heavily on traditional arts and crafts (clothing, embroidery, jewellery, pottery and furniture) which are interlinked with performing and oral traditions such as wedding ceremonies, festivals, dancing and singing.

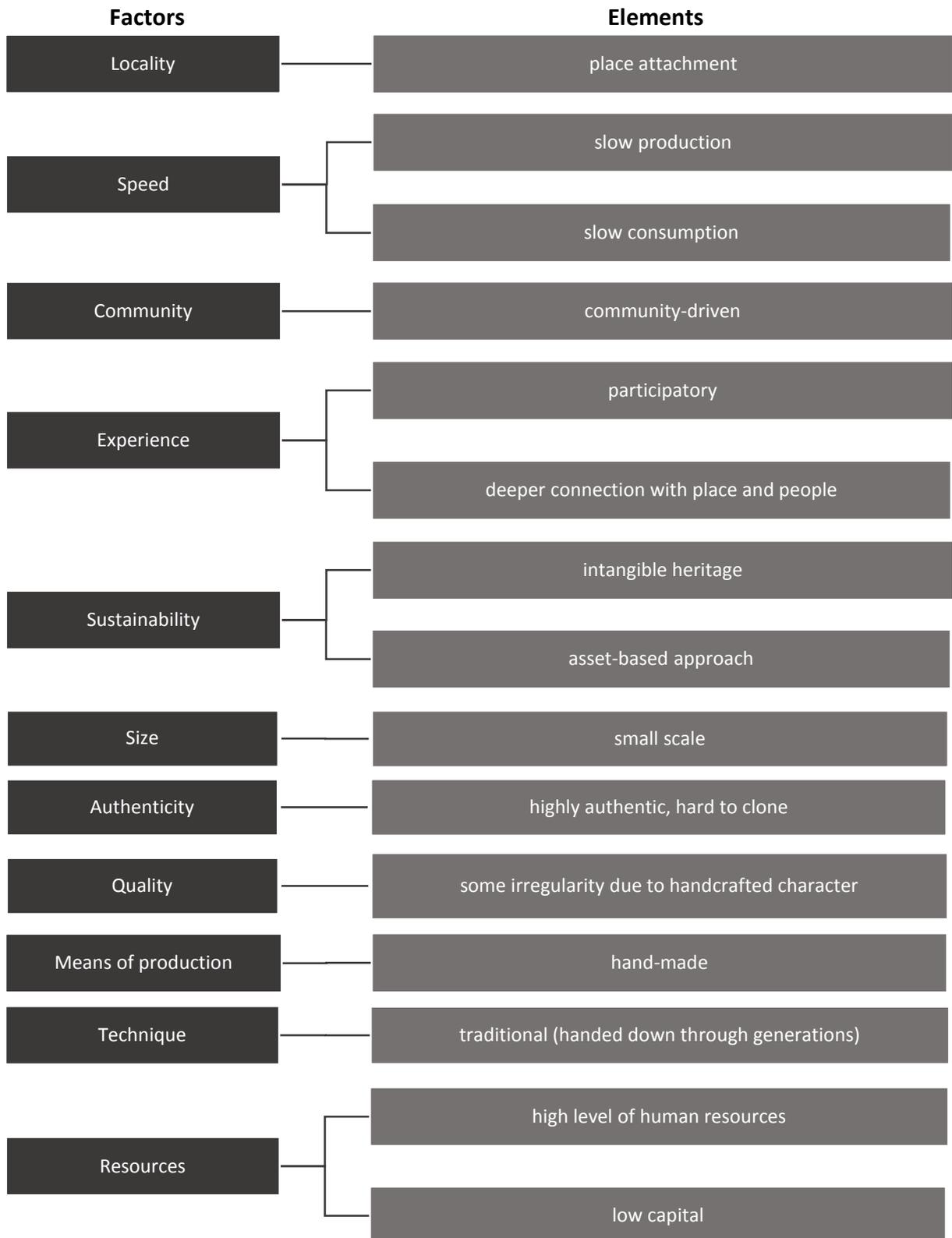
Folklore with its small scale and imperfections constitutes a sharp contrast to the sanitized global world. Therefore, strong folkloristic traditions can give a competitive edge to a particular area, which is certainly a blessing for any emerging or struggling tourism destination. Folklore is mostly experienced in the countryside, which has been neglected in terms of tourism development in several countries. The reason being is that creative energies today are associated with fast-paced bustling megapolises. This article refutes this argument by saying that folklore is creative and since creativity requires time and effort, it is also slow by nature, and therefore can be rightfully placed in the slow tourism concept.

The Hungarian Elements on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2009, 2011 and 2012: 1) include:

1. The dancehall or *Táncház* method: a Hungarian model for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage.
2. *Busó* festivities at Mohács: masked end-of-winter carnival costume.
3. Falconry, a human living heritage.
4. Folk art of the Matyó – embroidery of a traditional community. Motifs decorate traditional dresses worn by local people in celebratory events, in folk dancing and singing performances. Matyó motifs are also featured in furniture, arts and crafts.

3. Where slow meets folklore

Figure 1: The model of folklore-driven slow tourism



Source: Author.

The preservation of intangible heritage is more complex and requires a knowledge-intensive approach as its success greatly depends on the people who naturally become the custodians of this heritage by practising and passing on its legacy. Unfortunately, traditions are often poorly documented; as a result, intangible cultural heritage is very fragile and vulnerable (Mallik, Chaudhury and Ghosh, 2011).

To illustrate folklore-driven slow tourism visually, a graphic representation is shown in Figure 1. In the model eleven relevant factors were used, with one or two elements attached to them. One set is featured in most literature on slow tourism, and others are my own ideas conceived while experiencing folklore first-hand. The former include: locality, speed, community, experience, sustainability, size and authenticity (Caffyn, 2012; Dickinson *et al.*, 2010; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar *et al.*, 2012; Honoré, 2005; Lumsdon and McGrath 2011; Murayama and Parker, 2012; Sugiyama and Nobuoka, 2007; Petrini, 2007). The aspects of means of production, technique and quality are related to folklore and reflect the characteristics of the hand-made arts and crafts. The factor of resources was also added to emphasize that folklore-driven slow tourism is more labour-intensive than other forms of tourism. This is far from an exhaustive inventory of factors; however, with some alteration it is possible to apply the model for linking slow tourism to other forms of tourism.

4. Mezőkövesd: location, tourism and culture

Mezőkövesd is situated in the North-Hungarian region, in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (BAZ) County. It lies 130 km from Budapest, 60 km from Miskolc (regional centre) and 20 km from Eger (local centre). The town is reached by M3 highway, with the closest international border checkpoint (to Slovakia) being Bánréve (70 km). The furthest is Letenye (to Croatia), around 370 km away, while the Austrian border is 300 km distant.

I selected Mezőkövesd as the centre of my research because the town suffers from most of the problems that many small towns in Hungary and indeed worldwide face today. Its dwindling population currently stands at 16,502 and has been declining gradually for over a decade (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2015). Between 2000 and 2014 it lost 8% of its residents due to two main factors: low birth rate and outward migration of the young, better-educated generation. Depopulation is a highly

disadvantageous situation in terms of sustainable tourism development since the sustainability itself will be in danger due to the shortage of a qualified workforce and local enthusiasts who would volunteer, promote and present their tourism attractions to visitors. The town lies in a disadvantaged county of Hungary which has missed the boat of attracting corporate investment that would boost creative energies, and locals have no financial means to set up enterprises, so unemployment is rampant.

On the bright side, Mezőkövesd is rich in 'soft assets', being famous for its spa culture as well as its UNESCO listed Matyó heritage. In 1938 a thermal spring was found and later a thermal bath was built. This part of the town has evolved into a true health resort with a wide selection of accommodation to cater for all pockets. Hungary has an internationally acclaimed and highly competitive spa and wellness culture and health resorts are among the honey-pots for international and domestic visitors alike. Unfortunately, Mezőkövesd is under-performing in this regard, so the challenge is to turn the town into a high performing destination. One possible way to achieve this is to make its unique cultural traditions more visible through marketing it as a slow destination.

Table 1: Comparative data: Tourism in selected health resorts in Hungary, 2014

Towns	Number of visitors	Number of guest nights	Average length of stay [nights]	Population	Ratio visitors/resident
Hévíz	187,530	987,367	5.3	4,634	40.47
Hajdúszoboszló	228,922	803,671	3.5	23,882	9.59
Bük	166,223	679,835	4.1	3,256	51.05
Sárvár	165,863	452,496	2.7	15,651	10.60
Zalakaros	128,250	428,900	3.3	1,791	71.61
Mezőkövesd	38,337	105,706	2.8	16,502	2.32

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2014.

Table 1 clearly illustrates how far Mezőkövesd lags behind the most popular health resorts in Hungary. Both the number of visitors and the guest nights in Mezőkövesd pale in comparison with the results of the other settlements. The average length of stay is the second lowest among the examined resorts and almost half that of Hévíz. Analysing the ratio of the number of visitors in relation to residents, the picture

is even bleaker. It is obvious that relying exclusively on spa tourism in terms of boosting tourism revenue is not working in the case of Mezőkövesd.

Figure 2: Accessibility of Mezőkövesd



Source: www.mechapark.hu/en/mechatronics-industrial-park, 2014.

In terms of accessibility Mezőkövesd has great potential as it is easily reachable from all corners of the country (Figure 2) by a great variety of transport modes, including slower options such as train or coach. The Budapest-Miskolc-Kosice Intercity goes through the town eleven times on an average day, linking it with the capital city and the north of Hungary. The railway station is 1.5 km from the town centre and it takes about 1 hour 50 minutes to reach the town from Budapest. The coach station is merely 500m from the centre and coaches reach the capital within 1 hour 45 minutes. There are no navigable waterways through the town; the closest, the River Tisza being 25 kilometres away. The closest international airports include Budapest - Liszt Ferenc airport (150km), a low-cost airport in Debrecen (110 km) and the Slovakian airport in Kosice (135 km). Within the town, a regular bus service, cycling and walking are all viable options; the length of the dedicated cycling track is over 6 km.

The origin of the name “Matyó”¹ is debated: it is thought to have been a common word around the early 19th century to designate a group who became Catholic, during

¹ Legend has it that a Matyó man was once kidnapped by the devil. His lover begged the devil to let him free. The devil was willing to do this on one condition: “Bring me the most beautiful flowers of the summer in your apron and you can take your lover back.” It was wintertime, so the girl embroidered the loveliest flowers on her apron and took it to the devil.

the Counter-Reformation. There is also a belief strongly held in local folk tradition that the name is a distorted and familiar form of the name Mátyás due to the fact that market town privileges were given to the town by King Matthias (see www.matyovk.hu). The Matyó culture is one of the last strongholds of authentic cultural manifestations in Hungary. Tard and Szentistván, two neighbouring villages, also belong to the Matyó community; however, historically the Roman Catholic inhabitants of Mezőkövesd had a key role in the establishment of Matyó cultural identity, so my explorations are spatially limited to that community.

Unlike some other intangible heritage on the UNESCO World Heritage list, Matyó culture differs in a way that not only a particular performance or cultural manifestation is worth protecting but also everything that features Matyó embroidery. Therefore, there are multiple opportunities such as festivals, museums, arts and crafts to be engrossed in real Matyó experiences. Right in the town centre the former Korona (Crown) Hotel houses the Matyó Museum, which showcases a comprehensive introduction to the Matyó folk art and the everyday life of people living at that time. However, the most authentic representation is the Hadas district where a neighbourhood comprising twelve preserved peasant houses was turned into an open-air museum and offers visitors close encounters with this unique folk art (Figure 3 and 4). The following exhibitions and workshops welcome visitors (mezokovesd.hu, 2014):

Figure 3: Hadas district



Source: Photo taken by the author (2014).

- In the Gingerbread Village House of Anna Pető, visitors can learn about the gingerbread making and enjoy the permanent exhibition.
- The Furniture Painting Workshop shows the works of Szabolcs Kovács and the 250-year-old furniture painting traditions.
- In the Kisjankó Bori Memorial House visitors can learn about the life of the “drawing woman” of Mezőkövesd with the help of some original furniture.
- In the Toyhouse, the toys of former Matyó children as well as old weaving and spinning tools provide fascinating insights.
- A music house operates in the Gari Takács Margit Memorial House, which displays a wide range of folk instruments.
- The historic building that is used by painter, Mihály Laczkó Pető and graphic designer and hand weaver, Aranka Tábori as a creative house and exhibition space is a unique heritage from 1817.
- In the House of Enamels and Embroideries the adventurous can try the technique of hand embroidery.
- In the Pottery House, visitors can find everyday folk items and learn about pottery making.

Figure 4: Exhibition in the Hadas district



Source: Photo taken by the author, 2014.

In 2014 eight programs related to Matyó folklore were held in Mezőkövesd spanning from January to September (Table 2). However, it is poor planning not to extend the official “Matyó festival season” until the end of the year. It would be advisable to fill already established traditional celebrations (St. Martin’s Day, Advent) with some Matyó content, so that cultural visitors’ needs could be met all year round.

Table 2: Cultural events related to Matyó culture in 2014

Date	Name of events
18 January	Fest of Matyó Rose
20-21 April	Matyó Easter
20 June-30 September	100 Roses Embroidery Exhibition
21 June	Night of the Museums
15-21 July	First Matyó World Summit
21-22 July	Day of the Town - Matyó Festival
1-3 August	Matyó land folklore festival
20-21 September	Day of Cultural Heritage

Source: Mezőkövesd.hu, 2016 (http://mezokovesd.hu/userfiles/file/latnivalok/mezokovesd_2016.pdf).

5. Sampling and Methods

The survey was carried out over the autumn months of 2014, when 150 questionnaires were distributed and 132 valid responses were obtained. Convenience sampling was selected, but to avoid the pitfalls of collecting information only from one type of visitors, questionnaires were distributed in the Hadas district, the Tourinform Office and the Matyó Association Office, all located in the town centre, as well as in the neighbourhood of the thermal bath where most tourist accommodation is found. It should be noted that the health resort is located four kilometres from the town centre.

The research questions revolve around the following key themes. First, the survey seeks to examine respondents’ slow aspects of their holiday including transport choice to and at the destination, and the length of stay of their holiday. Then their awareness of slow is analysed, followed by the examination of folklore products consumption. Finally, it looks into the satisfaction level of cultural tourists versus spa tourists.

The following hypotheses were focused upon: 1. Visitors have some awareness of the slow movements; 2. Respondents readily chose slower transport options; 3. There is a link between more intensive consumption of folklore products and a longer stay; 4. Visitors have a high satisfaction rate regarding the consumption of folklore products.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 Slow mobility

Since slow mobility is such an integral part of slow tourism there is some merit in discussing it first. The question was related to the means of transport participants used. According to the findings 66% of respondents used their car to reach the destination and about one-third (34%) opted for slower means of transportation including coach, rail or bicycle, which is quite encouraging. Unfortunately, most drivers (92%) continued using their car within the destination and only a negligible number switched to slower options, mainly walking, which indicates that car travellers remain car travellers regardless of the distance they are supposed to cover.

When asked about their permanent residency, most respondents reside either in Pest County (27%), or in BAZ County (31%) and this fact is also favourable for the development of slow tourism, since residents in both counties have the most convenient access to the destination due to their proximity and the variety of transport choice. Out of the 19 Hungarian counties, five were not represented by respondents; all those counties are located far in the Western part of Hungary and possess unmatched spa and wellness facilities and services. As expected, Pest county residents used their car in greater number (70%), while only 55% of in-county travellers did so.

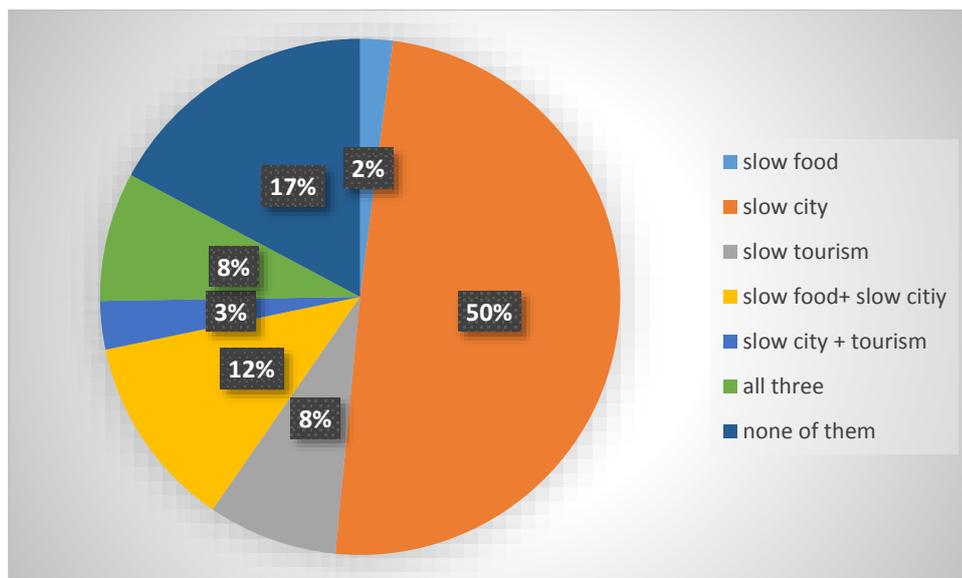
The second topic to be explored was the length of stay. Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010: 38) suggest that the longer the time tourists spend at a destination, the slower they become, because their travel carbon foot print is spread over a longer stay. Unfortunately, 44% did not spend any nights in Mezőkövesd and only one tenth stayed a week or more at the destination. Yet 56% met one of the prerequisites for slow tourists by staying at least a night as defined in the literature (Caffyn, 2012; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Sugiyama and Nobuoka, 2007). The fact that those tourists did not regard the town as a mere one-day destination could be an encouragement for local

stakeholders to find ways of keeping one-night visitors longer at the site and transforming them into ‘slower’ tourists. Pest county residents stayed overnight in greater proportion (63%), while 48% of in-county visitors did the same.

6.2 Awareness of slow

The next question was about the respondents’ awareness of the main slow movements: “Have you heard any of the following slow movements: slow food, slow cities or slow tourism?” Respondents had to tick as many as they had heard of. The rationale behind this question was to help marketers finding the right approach to tourism strategies (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Respondents’ knowledge of slow movements



Source: Author.

It is promising that only 17% had no knowledge whatsoever of any of the movements, which suggests that in this media cacophony, the voices of slow life advocates are getting through and have already reached the great majority of respondents. Half of the respondents had heard about slow cities at the time of the survey, which might be due to the fact that the first Hungarian Cittaslow member, Hódmezővásárhely was heavily featured in the news at the time of their candidacy in

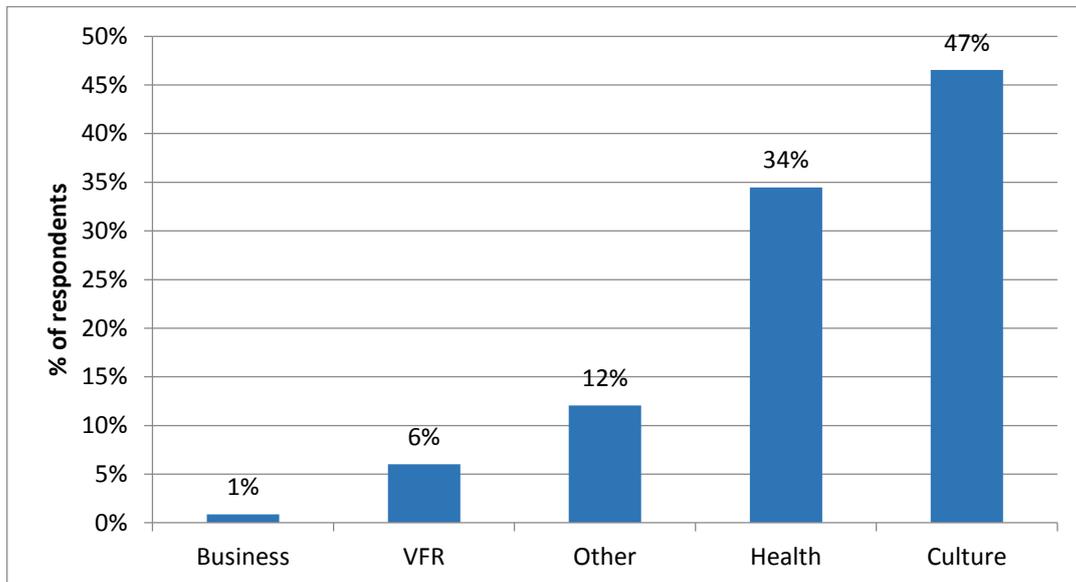
2011 and whenever it recurs in the news, the slow city title always resurfaces in the rhetoric. Urban civil initiatives in connection with slowing down in an urban environment are regularly featured in the media. The issue has been embraced primarily by the young and hip urban generation; therefore, a wider layer of society is captured thanks to both the alternative media and the social media, as opposed to the slow food movement, which has stronger foothold in the countryside, and is often seen as the last resort to survive and protect gastronomic heritage. Members are joined in local chapters known as *convivia* (singular: *convivium*), simply meaning local groups. To date there are 1,300 *convivia* (Slowfood, 2015).

This approach is a far cry from the urban hip, so it is more difficult for them to seize the media opportunity and get the message through, which might be a reasonable explanation for this paltry 2% who had heard of slow food. The picture is brighter if we add those 12% who were aware of both slow city and slow food. A further 3% had some ideas about slow city and slow tourism. Interestingly, only 19% of participants heard about slow tourism in any combinations as opposed to 73% who heard about slow city. This means that it would be worthwhile to approach slow tourism through *Cittaslow* because the latter is a much better-known concept.

6.3 Interest in Matyó culture

Figure 6 shows visitors' main travel motivations, where leisure purpose was divided into two categories: cultural tourism and health tourism, the latter so far being the main drawcard of the area. However, the survey suggests that respondents were more interested in the Matyó culture, since nearly half of the participants mentioned cultural tourism as their main reason for travel, followed by health tourism, as roughly one-third went to Mezőkövesd for that purpose. The number of those who were visiting friends and relatives was negligible and the business purpose was hardly measurable. Respondents contributed freely to the 'other' reason category, mentioning simple relaxation or hospitalization. The lack of business travellers is very unfortunate as this type of tourism always yields handsome revenue to a host destination. Unfortunately, there is no tradition of holding business meetings in spa hotels in Hungary.

Figure 6: Travel motivation



Source: Author.

The next issue raised was the participants' consumption of folklore products. Respondents were asked to select as many products as they visited from a list of 12 cultural items. Among them, eight are situated in the Hadas district (listed above), besides which the Matyó Museum, the Agricultural Museum and two churches were included in the list. Respondents visited four attractions on average and the Matyó Museum stood out as the most popular sight, visited by 82% of people, almost twice as many as the second most popular attractions including the two churches, the Agricultural Museum and Kisjankó Bori's Home. Those who stayed overnight in the town visited 5.6 sights on average. But even the excursionists managed to visit 3.5 sights on average, which is quite impressive given the short time-frame. Whether there is any chance to encourage day-trippers to stay any longer is another question.

What emerges from this examination is that the duration of the visit and the number of cultural sights appear to be interlinked. However, the real "culture vultures" were those who stayed four to six nights in Mezőkövesd, who visited seven cultural sights on average during their stay, substantially more than those who stayed over a week.

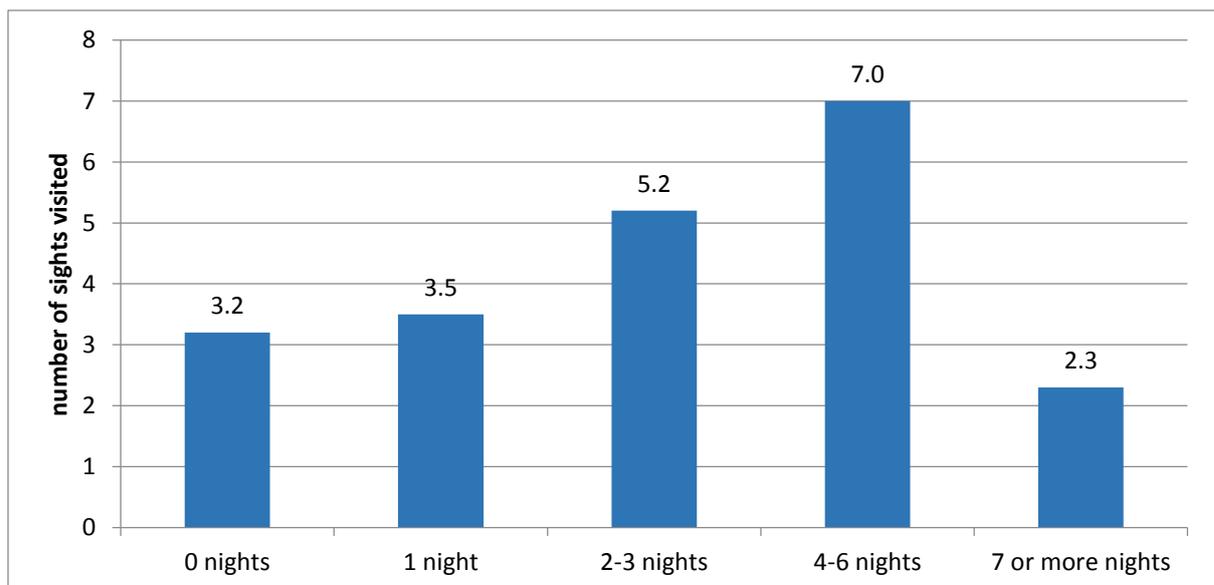
Figure 7: Szent László Church



Source: Photo taken by the author, 2014.

The explanation may lie in the motivation for the trip, since the latter group came to Mezőkövesd either to enjoy the spa and wellness facilities and services available or to visit friends and relatives. As can be seen in the Figure 8, the number of sights visited increases sharply up to the length of 4-6 nights where it peaks, and then drops dramatically to 2.3 attractions.

Figure 8: The number of nights spent versus the number of cultural sights visited

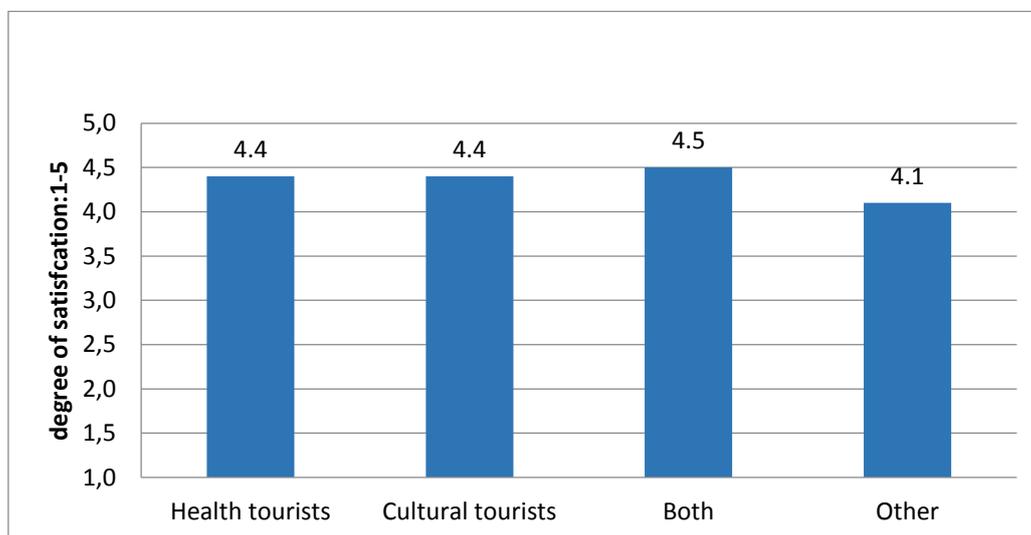


Source: Author.

6.4 Satisfaction with visit

Fifty-three per cent of respondents were visiting Mezőkövesd for the first time, while 47% were returning visitors, so the data shows a high level of loyalty among tourists on which tourism planners and marketers can build. For the sake of this analysis, I grouped the respondents according to their motives to identify any difference between their satisfaction levels, should there be any. My initial assumption was that cultural attractions contribute to the positive experience visitors have in Mezőkövesd regardless of their prime motivation.

Figure 9: Degree of satisfaction with visit



Source: Author.

Figure 9 shows how the respondents rated their satisfaction on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The result actually reveals no noteworthy difference between the groups. Participants with dual purposes had similar levels of satisfaction to those with a single purpose of visit. While it cannot be said that cultural pursuits heighten experiences, what it clearly demonstrates is that engaging in cultural pursuits can be as enjoyable as taking a health holiday. So it is not “either or”, but both that are worth developing. For those destinations where spas are not enough for tourism to thrive, culture might be the safest bet. Even if cultural pursuits do not enhance tourists’ experiences yet, from the economic perspective visitors’ growing interest in local culture will certainly benefit the local community and help with the preservation of customs and traditions.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study aimed to contribute to the literature on slow tourism from a folklore perspective and set out to discuss the potentials of a Hungarian town – Mezőkövesd, situated at the heart of the Matyó land - as a slow destination, since it possesses some crucial slow destination criteria, including good accessibility and unique tourism drawcards. Related research suggests that many small towns are ailing around the world and are experiencing difficulties in recapturing their energies in our modern globalised, urbanised world. In Hungary for example, Makó with its unique gastronomy and the organic architect Makovecz's built heritage, or Mohács with its intangible world heritage (the Busó carnival) are two towns which could use a cultural focus in their tourism promotion.

The plight of small towns has been at the centre of scholarly research for some time and they could also find useful principles and guidance by joining the Cittaslow movement. However, there is still little research into linking slow tourism to smaller urban places. Today, Mezőkövesd is well placed to be Hungary's first authentic slow destination, yet it is lagging behind Hungarian health resorts. As a multidimensional destination, it could be booming if packaged properly, and I would argue that a good context for this might be slow tourism.

As for the exploratory research, the most promising finding was the large proportion of returning visitors, which proves that visitors' loyalty is already there, and around which a successful marketing strategy could be put together. Returning visitors are an important source of promotion for tourism destinations, since they act as authentic narrators and ambassadors on behalf of the place. They are also more beneficial for the carrying capacity than first-time visitors because they are more likely to get off the beaten track, spread out spatially, and consequently make the destination less vulnerable and more sustainable. Therefore, there is a compelling argument for diversifying tourism offerings and designing a loyalty scheme.

The town is easily accessible by a variety of modes of transport including slower options. In fact, a sizeable proportion of respondents chose the latter, environmentally friendlier alternatives. Unfortunately, those who opted for car travel continued driving

during their holiday. To limit car use outside and within the destination, more promotion of slower travel alternatives is needed; particularly the push for the mixed use of train and bicycle. The town is within easy reach of regional and national centres by rail, and bicycles are transported free of charge on most trains. The town itself possesses a network of cycling roads that locals frequently use, so the facility exists to literally take more mileage out of it. The only downside is the less appealing road connecting downtown with the health resort, where some landscape design of easy maintenance would not only fix the problem, but also would make sensory improvements for recreational cyclists to enjoy.

The survey also found that cultural purpose was the main motivating factor to embark on a trip to the town, since more people selected cultural reasons than health or other motivations, providing a solid foundation for folklore-driven slow tourism. The 3.5 cultural sights per capita is an encouraging start, but the challenge in that respect is to make Matyó culture more enticing for health tourists. Respondents with dual motives (spa visit and culture) showed similar satisfaction levels to those with a single motive, which suggests that culture might be as attractive for visitors as spas. Folklore tourism is more labour-intensive than health tourism (spa and wellness) while the latter is more asset-focused; therefore, from the perspective of job creation, there is a compelling argument not to neglect cultural tourism.

As for the limitations of this research, unfortunately tourism development is not a panacea and there are a great number of settlements which do not stand out in any way. My concern was places with internationally recognized folklore where the 'slow' potential is there and yet the community has been underperforming. Former industrial towns and dormitory towns to name a few need a different recipe for success.

Hopefully, this exploratory research will serve as a catalyst for future academic discourse along the line of slow and folklore fusion, helping intriguing but struggling country communities to survive and prosper both domestically and globally.

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Slow tourism and railways: A proposal for the Italian-French Roia Valley

Slow tourism e os caminhos-de-ferro: Uma proposta para a região franco-italiana do Vale do Roia

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Abstract

The slow tourism philosophy is usually directed, on the one hand, at mature tourist destinations with the aim of renewing them with up-to-date sustainable and responsible elements and, on the other hand, at promising destinations in order to help them enter today's extremely competitive tourism market. The Roia Valley, which since 1860 has been partly Italian and partly French, is the natural link between the maritime tourist region of the Riviera and the Côte d'Azur in the South, and the mountain resorts of Piedmont in the North, but it is not an important tourist destination *per se*. Nonetheless, since the 1920s a very interesting railway has crossed the Roia Valley. This railway line, destroyed during the Second World War and entirely restored in 1979, has mainly been used for local transport or to connect the seaside with Piedmont, but it has not yet been exploited for local tourism. The aim of this research is to see to what extent a tourist exploitation of the railway line, through a slow tourism programme, could transform the promising Roia Valley into a new tourist destination closely connected to the mature Riviera and Piedmont regions.

Keywords: slow tourism; railway tourism; political tourism; international railways; Roia Valley.

Resumo

De um modo geral, a filosofia do *slow tourism* aplica-se, por um lado, aos destinos turísticos consolidados com o objetivo de renová-los com elementos sustentáveis e, por outro lado, aos destinos promissores, de modo a ajudá-los a entrar no atual, e extremamente competitivo, mercado turístico. O Vale do Roia é, desde 1860, uma região partilhada pela Itália e pela França, e é o elo natural entre a região turística de praia da Riviera e da Côte d'Azur, no sul, e as estâncias de montanha do Piedmont, no norte, não sendo, todavia, um destino turístico *per se*. Em 1920, construiu-se uma linha ferroviária atravessando o Vale do Roia que foi destruída durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial. Em 1979, a linha foi restaurada e tem sido utilizada essencialmente no transporte local e para fazer a ligação entre a beira-mar com Piedmont, mas ainda não foi explorada para o turismo local. O objetivo deste trabalho é analisar até que ponto a exploração turística da linha ferroviária, através de um programa de *slow tourism*, poderia transformar o promissor Vale do Roia num novo destino turístico intimamente ligado às regiões turísticas da Riviera e de Piedmont.

Palavras-chave: *slow tourism*; turismo ferroviário; turismo político; linhas ferroviárias internacionais; Vale do Roia.



1. Introductory remarks

The 'slow movement' has been an engaging topic of research for many years now, so much that it seems to be not merely a passing trend, but a new philosophy of life altogether: a local, global and social approach currently characterizing a broad range of people, local communities and stakeholders (Calzati and de Salvo, 2012). Even though this is almost universally accepted, the actual meaning of 'slow' is not so widely shared. The term has in fact had the same misfortune as other similar ethical adjectives – such as 'sustainable', 'responsible', 'conscious' etc. – and its frequent use, and often abuse, has ended up confusing its meaning; so much so that it is now quite hard to give a univocal sense to it. If, on the one hand, this carelessness constitutes a flaw, on the other hand, 'slow' has now become a polysemic term, so that it can be used from different points of view, each of them involving an interesting perspective.

As far as tourism (or travelling) is concerned, this important human activity of our times has also been affected by the 'slow' dimension, and in this case there have also been different ways of considering the concept. Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) have summarized them into four features: slowness and value of time; locality and activities at the destination; mode of transport and travel experience; environmental consciousness. These will be discussed further at a later stage, but what is important to highlight for the moment is that the term 'slow' has been used regarding the quality – sometimes of the experience, sometimes of the destination, sometimes of the journey and sometimes of the geographical impact. This confirms the vast polysemic character of the term when applied to the context of tourism research.

As the concept of quality has been introduced, it can now be explored further in relation to tourism. It is an irrefutable fact that nowadays the protection of resources and the valorisation of tourism cannot be achieved without a very high level of quality for the tourist, the local community and the environment (Shaw and Williams, 1994). In fact, up until some decades ago, tourism was mainly focused on providing travellers with the six Ss (*sun, sea, sand, sex, spirit, and sport*). This was because the tourist, unlike the local community, gave little importance to sustainability. Today this pattern has changed a great deal: more often than not, the tourism industry offers travellers not only the famous three Ls (*landscape, leisure, and learning*) instead of the six Ss, but also the 4th L

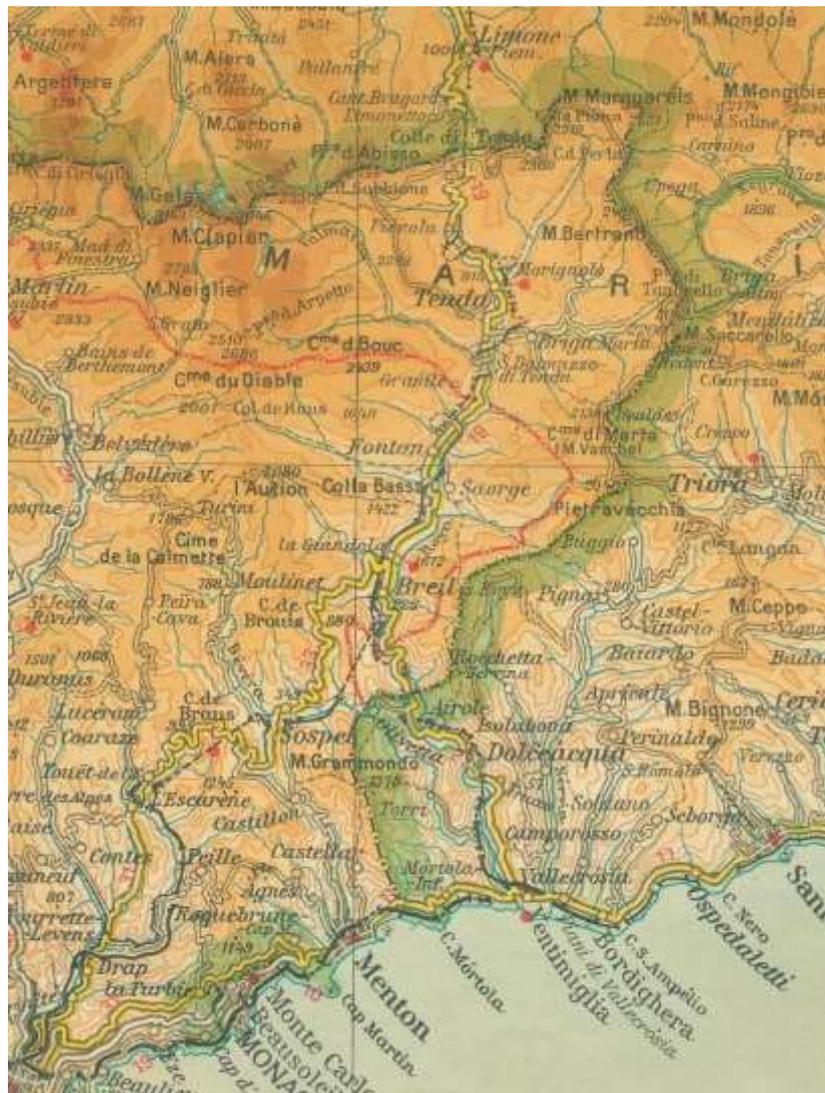
(*limit*) to make sure they are satisfied with their experience (Franch, Sambri, Martini, Pegan and Rizzi, 2008). The 'new tourists' (Florida, 2002) are aware of the environmental, social, and economic impact of their activities and of their own responsibilities; they therefore accept, or might even look for, a 'limited' tourism experience. A journey inspired by the *slow way philosophy*, therefore, seems to meet this new desire of tourists, where quality is explicitly linked with limit (Georgica, 2015).

The case study of the Roia Valley, which will be considered in this paper, adds two more important and original aspects to the topic of slow tourism: the first is the issue of borders and borderlands, and the second is the fact that the entire valley is served by a railway line.

2. Context

The Roia Valley has been divided between Italy and France since 1860 (House, 1959), although in different ways. In 1860, with the cession of the County of Nice to France, the central part of the valley of 290 km² in size (with Breglio/Breil, Saorgio/Saorge and Fontano/Fontan municipalities) was given to France, while the northern (with Briga and Tenda) and the southern parts (with Ventimiglia, Airole and Olivetta San Michele) remained in Italy. When Italy lost the Second World War, it had to give all the northern part of the valley to France (and the municipalities were renamed La Brigue and Tende), as well as the little hamlets of Libri and Piena (Libre and Piène), in the South; this means that the valley is now divided into two parts: the higher part in France, and the lowest one in Italy (Bagnoli, 2006; 2013).

Figure 1: A 1950s map of the Roia Valley, where both 1860 and 1947 boundaries are indicated



Source: Italian Touring Club archive.

Even though the valley is a natural link between the maritime tourist region of the Riviera and the Côte d’Azur, and the mountain resorts of the province of Cuneo (Piedmont), it is not an important tourist destination *per se*, especially when its partition into two states is taken into consideration (Lucarno, 1992). Nonetheless, since the 1920s, a very interesting railway has crossed the Roia Valley: a railway that was destroyed during the Second World War, and then entirely restored in 1979 (Schiavazzi, 1979). This historical railway constitutes a very important element of social identity for the entire valley. Until now this railway line has mainly been used for local transport, or to connect the seaside with Piedmont, but it has yet to be exploited for local tourism (Blancheton and Marchi, 2011). Therefore, the purpose of this research is to verify to

what extent a tourism exploitation of the railway line, through a slow tourism programme, could transform the promising Roia Valley into a new tourist destination, closely connected to the mature Western Ligurian Riviera and the Piedmont Alps. To this aim, this paper has been set up in two parts, which are described in the following section.

3. Methodology

The first part of the study consists of a geographic overview of the region under consideration, with particular attention on the practicality of the railway, to ascertain if it is possible, according to the researcher, to introduce the new slow tourist praxis in the region. In terms of methodology, the traditional procedure of regional geography (Ruocco, 1993) has been used, considering in succession: the natural environment, the settled population and the economic activities of the region, not only at the time of the research, but also with a broader historic viewpoint.

The research tools used include the recognition of the state of art and field research. For the first part the main focus was on the literature, with particular attention on the geographic and historic ones, and on statistics supplied by the national public administrations (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques [INSEE] for France and Istituto Nazionale di Statistica [ISTAT] for Italy). For the field research, the study is based on more than a decade of practice in the region, in depth-analysis and updated during the last months of the research (May-July 2014), and informal interviews with local privileged witnesses and stakeholders (Loda, 2010). From this analysis, as will be shown, it emerged that the region seems adequate to meet slow tourism practitioners' tastes in several aspects.

During the second part of the research, the method of participative observation was used to verify the interest of potential slow tourists. A group of around fifty visitors, the majority of whom had never visited the region, was accompanied in loco for a day visit (September 27th, 2014)¹ with the precise aim of determining from their behaviour and

¹ The fieldwork was carried out during the 57th National Congress of the Italian Association of Geography Teachers, held in Sanremo from September 25th to October 1st 2014, in which about 200 colleagues took

their observations if the opportunity to launch slow tourism in the valley could be successful or not.

The main research method used was a focused ethnography method (Knoblauch, 2005) – i.e. a qualitative investigation over a short-term visit. While the short-term visit and the qualitative approach are common practices with the ethnographic method, this research had two peculiarities. The first consists in the fact no questionnaires were distributed, but the outputs were carefully observed and recorded by the researcher. This was done so as to be sure that the opinions were independent and sincere. However, at least on a couple of occasions, discussions with restricted groups of participants were oriented more or less towards the argument of slow tourism. The second peculiarity is that the group was composed mainly of geography teachers, from various Italian regions (plus one from France), from all kinds of school – from primary to university – and of all ages, even though the majority were aged 55-65 years old. Therefore, although the sample was not representative, the opinions obtained are particularly suited because the researcher believes that geography teachers – especially experienced ones – can give adequate advice about the research topic because of their training for accuracy and the depth of their territorial knowledge.

4. The region

The Roia River runs through the valley of the same name for 59 km, flowing from the Tende Pass (1,871 m) in the Ligurian Alps to the city of Ventimiglia, on the Mediterranean Sea. The river basin is 662 km² in size, and today 90% of it is in France, with the remaining part in Italy. From a physical-geographical point of view, the rocks get younger and younger as you move from the source of the river towards its mouth. The valley is deeply carved, sometimes with steep canyons, where it is possible to admire tight meanders and deep giants' kettles, while other parts are more spacious and flat.² Fundamentally, even though the valley is quite short, there are two climatic

part. In fact, the entire day of the 27th of September was dedicated to travelling lessons, and I led 49 participants in the field on an excursion to the Roia Valley.

² The glacial period left some interesting phenomena such as moraines, cirques glaciers, and roches moutonnées, mainly in the Vallée des Merveilles, upon which prehistoric man left plenty of engravings, probably thinking a God was living on its highest peak, Mont Bégo at 2,872 m (Bernardini, 1979).

domains in it, an Alpine one in its higher part and a Mediterranean one in the lower. The vegetation is therefore very varied.³

Thanks to this interesting natural landscape, the National Park of Mercantour was created in 1979 to include all of the French Roia Valley, with the exception of La Brigue territory. However, all the Italian part is adjacent to the Regional Natural Park of the Ligurian Alps which was created in 2007. A few years ago, a museum was opened in Tende to host the most fragile engravings of the Vallée des Merveilles, with the main intention being to promote the site, which is quite inaccessible because of its heights.

The settled population in the valley amounts to about 6,000 people, concentrated mainly in Tende and Breil, the only centres with more than 2,000 inhabitants. Tende (2,157 inhabitants: datum INSEE, 2013) is situated at 820 m altitude, and it is a very picturesque historic village with its own castle, local stone roofs, with intriguing mountains surrounding it; while Breil (2,480: datum INSEE, 2013) is located at only 265m above sea level, on the bank of the Roia River where it widens and resembles a little lake. The other centres count only some hundreds of inhabitants each.⁴ Like in many isolated mountain places, the population in the Roia Valley developed a unique and original culture, not univocally connectable to any other. The principal evidence of this fact was the local dialect.⁵ In the last few decades, the local community has been affected by globalisation – the presence of immigrants is also quite evident – and today the valley's inhabitants no longer speak their dialect, but tend to speak French, and also English with their guests. In terms of religion, the tradition is certainly Roman Catholic, as can be seen by the presence of many Alpine sanctuaries or chapels welcoming pilgrimages, processions and liturgies primarily during the summer and during folkloric patron saints' festivals,⁶ which can add a certain religious tourist interest.

In terms of the economic activities of the area, the primary and secondary sectors are quite residual. When it comes to farming, sheep and cattle are popular in the valley,

³ Larch trees (*Larix decidua*) and some endemism like *Saxifraga florulenta* in the mountains; holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*), brooms (*Ginesteae*), olive trees (*Olea europaea*) and even palm trees (*Phoenix dactylifera* and *Washingtonia*) on the coasts, with a very original mix in the transition zone (Martini, 1996).

⁴ La Brigue: 719; Airole: 461; Saorge: 442; Fontan: 323; Olivetta San Michele: 225 (data: INSEE, 2013 for France; ISTAT, 2011 for Italy).

⁵ The dialect until a few years ago was considered as belonging to the ancient Occitan language, but it is not any more, or even perhaps less linked to it than to Ligurian or Piedmont dialects (Bartaletti, 2009).

⁶ Of particular note is the so-called Sistine Chapel of the Maritime Alps in La Brigue, entirely frescoed by Giovanni Canavesio at the end of the 15th century (Pastorelli, 1987).

and both have a direct influence on the traditional food. With regard to industry, the only important enterprises are the seven hydroelectric plants, five of which are in the French territory.⁷ However, the majority of the population of the area works in the tertiary sector, and in part in the tourism sector. As it stands, tourism activities in the area are quite low and have always been more of a transitory tourism nature. The provision for tourists is quite moderate: in 2014 there were only ten hotels registered (one with one star, five with two stars, one with three stars, and three not categorized) with a total of 145 rooms, and three campsites with 119 places (of course, only open during the summer months), one vacation home of six beds, and five B&B's (data: INSEE, 2014 for France; ISTAT, 2014 for Italy).

About thirty years ago, a ski resort project in Tende (on the opposite slope of the famous resort of Limone in Piedmont) was an attempt, which never came to fruition, to launch the valley on the tourism market (Garibaldi, 2014).⁸ Nowadays, sport lovers can trek or hike in the mountains, go horse riding or canoeing in Breil, or board the *via ferrata* in Tende and La Brigue, but these are the only tourist attractions of the valley.

5. The railway line

The main roadway in the Roia Valley is the European Route E74 (called Strada Statale 20 del Colle di Tenda in Italy and Route Départementale 6204 in France), built during the 16th century and today unsuitable both for commerce and tourism despite several reconstructions since the 1970s.

In 1928 a very important innovation affected Roia Valley communications: the completion of the railway line from Nice/Ventimiglia to Cuneo. Fifty-nine km in length from Ventimiglia to the entrance of the Tende tunnel, the railway line represents a very original engineering feat, with its helicoidal tunnels, steep inclines, and daring viaducts.⁹ The construction of the line encountered a lot of difficulties, due to its international

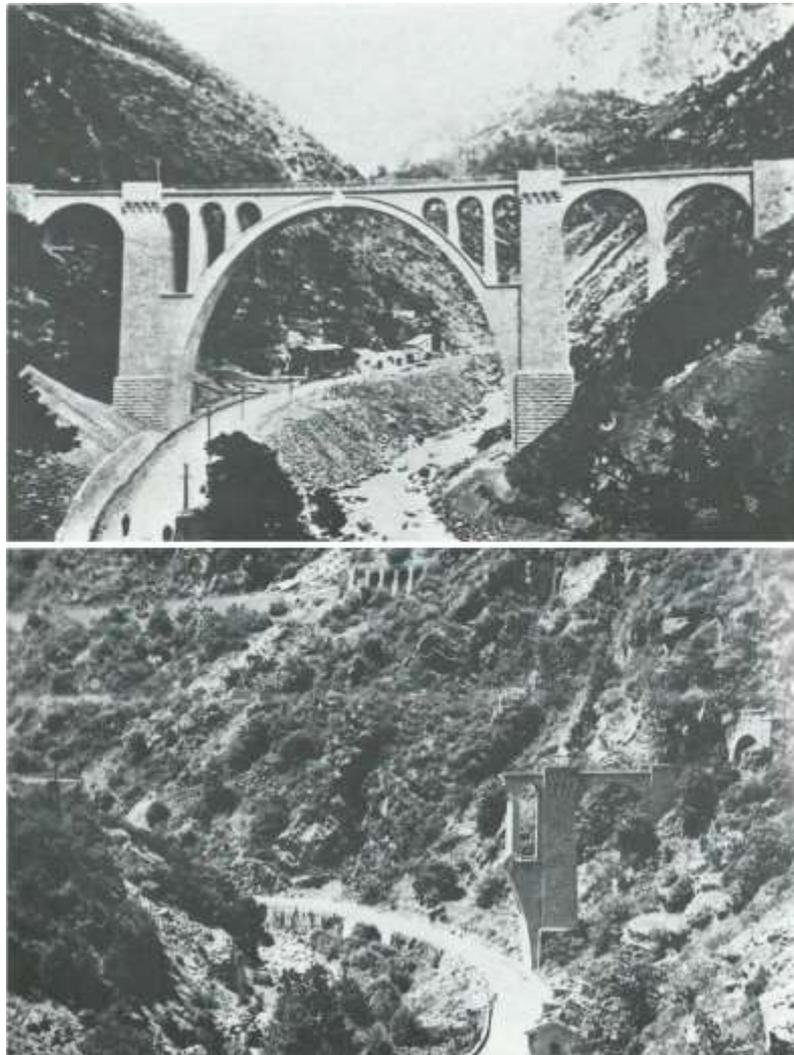
⁷ These plants produce about 330 million kWh and provide clean and renewable energy, both to France and Italy (data provided by: Electricité de France, Nice, for France; ENEL S.p.A., Genoa, for Italy).

⁸ Today that initiative would be unsuccessful due to the decrease in winter sports and reduction in winter snow in the Southern Alps due to climate change.

⁹ From Breil, an alternative 44 km long line links the valley directly with Nice.

itinerary, the severe geomorphology of the region, the severe climate at altitude, and the limited technology of the time.¹⁰

Figure 2: The railway bridge of Scarassoui before and after the Second World War



Source: Schiavazzi, 1979.

Unfortunately, on June 10th 1940 the war between Italy and France broke out. The Roia Valley railway was eventually a target of extreme war events, and it was literally devastated. In 1945, when peace was restored, the valley presented a very sad landscape with all the bridges destroyed. In the following years the railway line was further damaged by several landslides which worsened the situation. It is possible to say

¹⁰ Just to give some examples, the railway tunnel under the Tende Pass, 8,099 m long at an altitude of 1,040 m, required 8 years of work, and the Saorge Bridge, 40 m long, crossing the river at 50 m height, required innovative scaffoldings (Schiavazzi, 1979).

that the rebuilding of the Roia Valley railway line was perhaps the last work of the post-war rebuilding: it was only on October 6th 1979 that the new line was finally inaugurated after around five years of work.

Figure 3: The Scarassoui bridge under reconstruction and the special postal marking of the inauguration of the new Roia Valley railway line



Source: From the author's archive.

In the years that followed, the railway assumed quite a large importance in terms of the connection between the valley's villages, between them and the Ligurian and Piedmontese centres, and between the Riviera and the Alps.¹¹ To get to the Tende

¹¹ In relation to the latter, the 'snow train', which for years connected the Riviera towns with the skiing resort of Limone on winter Sunday mornings and late afternoons is worthy of note (established again as an experiment during the 2014-15 winter).

tunnel from Ventimiglia, or vice-versa, the train usually takes 1 hour 40 minutes to cover a distance of only 50 km. This low speed of the trains – due to the sometimes very steep incline of the railway line, but also because they make numerous stops¹² – is therefore very adequate for the slow tourist approach as it gives tourists the time to savour the journey whilst admiring the interesting landscape from the windows.¹³ Gradually, the railway line's fortune has changed for the worst (nowadays only two trains go in the two directions daily), mainly because of the high costs associated with its maintenance and the low interest demonstrated by the French railway company toward this short line, despite active local public campaigns to safeguard the railway.

Figure 4: French and Italians gathered: train in danger!



Source: Author's picture.

A clear strong voice from the local community in defence of the line is the geographer Prof. Liliane Pastorelli of La Brigue (University of Nice) – official correspondent of the valley for Nice Matin, the local newspaper of the French Department of Alpes-Maritimes – who fights convincingly to safeguard such a useful means of transport for the inhabitants of the valley.

¹² After leaving Ventimiglia, trains usually stop in Bevera (after 6 minutes), Airole (6), Olivetta San Michele (3), Breil (13), Fontan-Saorge (12), Saint-Dalmas-de-Tende (2), La Brigue (7), Tende (8) and Vievola (15), stopping about 1 minute in every station.

¹³ The centres of the villages are not always close to the station itself: La Brigue is at about 700 m away, but the 'Tibetan' village of Saorge – so called because it stretches on the slope of the mountain – is actually at 3 km from the station serving Fontan and Saorge, and it takes about an hour by foot to cover this distance due to the steep incline linking Saorge with its station.

As it stands, at least until now, forms of railway tourism being proposed in the Roia Valley are very rare, and the majority of tourists going into the valley use private cars, or coaches which are not always suitable for the winding and narrow roads of the region.

6. The research findings

To verify interest towards a slow tourism supply in the Roia Valley by potential tourists, the four aspects highlighted by Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) were used.

As previously mentioned, the first aspect highlighted is the full enjoyment of the locality itself. In relation to this aspect, Woehler (2004) affirms that a less regimented approach to holidaymaking is the way in which people can relax, and therefore, enjoy a more sensuous experience with greater emphasis on people and places. Therefore, the primary focus is on the place and its people, to which end we may highlight the pleasantness of the Roia Valley and the activities of its inhabitants, presented above, as potential objects of slow tourist appreciation.

The second aspect within which it is possible to analyse slow tourism is to consider the journey as a core component of the travel experience. The most recommended means of transport for slow tourism are bicycles, trams, trains, buses, or even horses, donkeys, mules... if not the tourist's own feet. In any case, contrary to traditional tourism, "the journey is an integral part of slow travel" (Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011: 268). Therefore, the second stage involved examining the tourist appeal of the communication routes of the Roia Valley, with a particular focus on the railway.

To continue with the aforementioned typology, the third aspect of slow tourism is of course the way in which time is used during the journey. Honoré (2004) clearly states that the idea is to savour time rather than simply count it. In fact, a genuine slow tourist does not only employ alternative slower means of transport, they also have a different attitude towards their time, one which brings them closer to a *flâneur* (Nuvolati, 2006) than to a traditional mass tourist.

Finally, even if sustainability has been defined as a 'utopia' (or, better, a "necessary utopia" (Manzi, 2001)), it has become necessary to refer to it in every tourist project hoping to be long-lasting in all its environmental, economic, and social dimensions (Saarinen, 2006). To make sustainable tourism a successful choice, it is necessary on the

one hand for the supply of tourist services to be supported by adequate sustainable policies (and this is the role of the hosts); but, on the other hand, the tourists themselves must prefer and use sustainable tourist services, both to maximize their own leisure experience and to minimize their negative impact on the territory (and this is the role of the guests). It can be argued that sustainability is only possible if the local community and the tourists together have what Lumsdon and McGrath (2011: 69) call an environmental, social and economic “discernible green consciousness”.

It is therefore possible to draw up Table 1 in which the different aspects of the region have been put in relation to the interest they created among the participants of the research according to the four above-mentioned criteria.

Table 1: Interests of potential slow tourists towards the Roia Valley

	APPRECIATE THE PLACE	ENJOY THE JOURNEY	SAVOUR TIME	CONCERN WITH SUSTAINABILITY
ENVIRONMENT				
GEOMORPHOLOGY	+	n/a	+++	+++
CLIMATE AND VEGETATION	++	n/a	n/a	+++
ENGRAVINGS	+	n/a	+	+++
NATURAL PARKS	+	n/a	+	+++
MUSEUM OF MERVEILLES	++	n/a	++	+
CULTURE				
HISTORICAL VILLAGES	+++	n/a	++	+
DIALECT	++	n/a	+	n/a
RELIGION	+	n/a	+	n/a
ART	+	n/a	+	+
ECONOMY				
BREEDING	+	n/a	n/a	+
FOOD	++	n/a	++	++
RENEWABLE ENERGY	++	n/a	+	+++
LEISURE AND SPORT	+	n/a	+	+
POLITICS				
BORDERS	++	n/a	++	n/a
PLACE-NAMES	+++	n/a	n/a	n/a
TRANSPORTS				
ROAD	++	+	+	+
RAILWAY (VIEW)	++	+++	+++	n/a
RAILWAY (ENGINEERING)	+++	+++	+++	++
RAILWAY (HISTORY)	+++	+++	+++	+++
RAILWAY (IDENTITY)	++	+++	+++	++

Key: + low; ++ medium; +++ high; n/a not applicable.

Source: Data from the research.

All the aspects created – when applicable – a relatively high level of interest in the participants of the survey. It is thus possible to conclude that the suitability of a slow tourism supply in the valley seems to be confirmed.¹⁴

However, it is useful to focus more on the train, which received the highest level of interest in almost all its aspects. According to the tourists, the railway would be very suitable for enjoying the valley, because of its scenic views and the possibility to appreciate it more and discover its intrepid engineering. Also, the history of the railway line – intricately linked with the war, the displacement of the boundaries, and the ‘Frenchification’ of the place names – as well as the strong identity links between the inhabitants of the valley and the railway line, were the most appreciated themes of the day. Therefore, using the train seems compatible with the major interests of the potential slow tourists.

During the informal conversations, interest in using the train for a slow tourism experience instead of the coach was clearly expressed, and some observations were made. For instance, some participants openly criticized choosing to use a tourist bus because it was unsuitable for getting to know all the aspects of the valley, and some others highlighted the sustainability of rail transport contrary to road transport; someone was interested in knowing the exact travel times of the trains, and another one suggested the need to envisage up-to-date devices such as smart technologies on the trains as a way of encouraging tourists to use the train; finally there was who complained of suffering from travel sickness when travelling by coach on the winding road!

Finally, there is an important aspect that emerged during the fieldwork, and this is that it is not quite the right time to expand the tourist provision in Roia Valley, with a view to ensuring sustainability. As a solution, there is an interesting suggestion that could be put in place without too much effort, with a good perspective on local development, and suitable for launching slow tourism: this is ‘alberghi diffusi’. An ‘albergo diffuso’ (literally: dispersed hotel) is a type of accommodation unit, conceived in Italy in the 1980s, which has also been successful in Croatia, Switzerland and France.

¹⁴ It is pertinent to remember here that the six dimensions that slow tourism has to simultaneously satisfy according to the authors of the Italian-Slovenian “Strategic project of cross-border cooperation 2007-2013” (Zago, 2012) – *time, slowness, authenticity, dialogue, emotion, and sustainability* – seem here to be present, too.

It is usually situated in a historic centre, or in a special area characterized by a lively community, located in many converted buildings each close to one another, with a unitary management able to provide normal hotel services from a central reception. Therefore, the 'albergo diffuso' is able to create a strong link with the territory, to supply a genuine local atmosphere to the tourists and, in the meantime, integrate the minor villages and rural areas needing an economic relaunch on the tourist market (Droli and Dall'Ara, 2012). This interesting tool seems suitable for a slow tourism proposal, because it can bring together the needs of the local community and the new tourists' tastes, in a positive and long-lasting way. Moreover, as Costa (2005) clearly says, if with low tourist flows (like in the Roia Valley) the regulation of accommodation and leisure activities is quite high, when the flows increase, it would be easier to manage the territory in a sustainable way.

7. Conclusion

As has been shown, creating a slow tourism programme in a territory means, in brief, to propose to visitors:

[A] value which leads to a reconfiguration of the time and quality of experience, an integral element of journey, and the modal choice of transport that offers a richer experience. Slowness also sheds some light on consumer behaviour and, in particular, highlights that environmental consciousness is an important element of a slow travel approach (Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011: 269).

Of course the hosts are also affected by such an innovation, and so many aspects are deserving of an appropriate debate within the local community. Every action grows from mediation and negotiation, and to do this it is necessary to have a genuine and trustworthy social climate: to achieve a result it is necessary to have the positive and optimistic attitude that agreements are possible if everyone is willing to put a limit to their own claims.

In the past the Roia Valley has too often been subject to decisions that did not come from below, that were not shared, or long-lasting, or promising. However, its population still believes in a better future for the region. The railway line seems to truly symbolize the valley: with its arduous route, the terrible destruction followed by its perfect

restoration, its slow, but conclusive progress. It has rightly assumed a strong link and meaning for the identity of the inhabitants. To use it as a means for tourists to discover the valley could mean sharing the local identity, but this must be done in a delicate manner, in a way slow tourism knows best.

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Slow Travel: Uma análise da relação entre ferrovia, meio ambiente e turismo no Brasil

Slow Travel: An analysis of the relationship between the environment, railways and tourism in Brazil

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Resumo

Inspirado na Teoria dos Sítios Simbólicos de Pertencimento de Zaoual, este trabalho exploratório e descritivo, contribui de duas formas para a produção do conhecimento sobre a interface turismo, ferrovia, meio ambiente no contexto do *slow travel*: (1) conceitualmente para o desenho do que pode ser denominado como *Slow Rail Travel* envolvendo relações com áreas protegidas (no Brasil denominadas Unidades de Conservação - UC); e (2) analiticamente com a identificação do potencial do *Slow Rail Travel* a partir do uso de locomotivas a vapor no Brasil. Os resultados apontam que as regiões sul e sudeste do Brasil, notadamente os estados de Minas Gerais e São Paulo (no Sudeste) apresentam cenários propícios ao desenvolvimento do *Slow Rail Travel* em associação às áreas protegidas.

Palavras-chave: ferrovia; turismo; *slow travel*; Brasil; áreas protegidas.

Abstract

Inspired by the theory of symbolic sites of belonging developed by Zaoual, this exploratory and descriptive study contributes in two ways to the production of knowledge on the interplay of tourism, railways and the environment in the context of slow travel: (1) conceptually, to the design of what can be called slow rail travel (SRT), involving relations with protected areas (in Brazil called conservation units); and (2) analytically, by identifying the potential of SRT provided by trains pulled by steam locomotives in Brazil. The results indicate that the south and southeast regions, notably the states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo (southeast) are propitious for the development of this type of rail travel in association with protected areas.

Keywords: railway; tourism; slow travel; Brazil; protected areas.



1. Introdução

Embora a relação entre a ferrovia e o desenvolvimento de destinos turísticos tenha sido abordada a partir de trens de alta velocidade (Masson e Petiot, 2009; Pagliara, La Pietra, Gomez y Vassallo, 2015), é possível tratar também a partir de outra perspectiva, a da lentidão. Dickinson e Lumsdon (2010) apontam para o impacto dos transportes para o turismo no *slow travel*, sendo assim é compreensível que a evolução tecnológica dos transportes determine, em parte, o desenho do turismo no tempo e espaço, tanto em termos de rapidez, quanto em termos de lentidão. Isso implica observar como que os quatro elementos que compõem os transportes (via, veículo, força motriz e terminal) são relacionados ao turismo (Palhares, 2002; Botelho e Fraga, 2014) e aos aspectos do meio ambiente (como por exemplo, a presença de áreas protegidas na origem/destino e, ou, percurso ferroviário) e podem influenciar na noção de *slow travel*. Especificamente sobre as locomotivas a vapor, estas já foram consideradas de grande velocidade notadamente no século XIX; atualmente no século XXI são lentas se comparadas com outras tecnologias de transportes e podem se relacionar com aspectos nostálgicos da experiência ferroviária turística (Fraga, 2013; Fraga e Frossard, 2014), sendo o *slow travel* associado a ferrovia turística¹ uma oportunidade.

A inauguração da primeira ferrovia no Brasil ocorreu em 1854 (Gerodetti e Cornejo, 2005), completando 160 anos em 2014. O modo de transporte terrestre predominante no país atualmente é o rodoviário, contudo existe um crescimento da oferta de trens exclusivos para fins turísticos nas duas últimas décadas (Fraga, 2011; 2013). Grande parte desses passeios e viagens ferroviárias turísticas utilizam-se de locomotivas a vapor e, portanto, as viagens são consideradas lentas para os padrões usuais, podendo provocar a percepção de “volta ao passado” e, também, a possibilidade de fruição da paisagem natural em vários casos (Fraga, 2013; Botelho e Fraga, 2014; Fraga *et al.*, 2014).

¹ Allis (2006: 123-24) aponta que boa parte dos autores tratam os serviços ferroviários turísticos como trens turísticos. Explica também que as ferrovias turísticas se distinguem das demais não só por atrair turistas, mas pelos serviços diferenciados aos visitantes como a possibilidade de acompanhamento de guias e distribuição de folhetos informativos.

Inspirado na Teoria dos Sítios Simbólicos de Pertencimentos de Zaoual (2008), o objetivo geral deste trabalho é apresentar o *slow travel* através do uso de locomotivas a vapor para fins turísticos no Brasil. A pesquisa é exploratória e foi realizada através de levantamento bibliográfico e consulta a *websites*, tais como Ministério do Turismo (MTUR), Ministério do Meio Ambiente (MMA), Associação Brasileira das Operadoras de Trens Turísticos e Culturais (ABOTTC), entre outros. Faz parte dos estudos do Grupo de Pesquisa Transportes e o Turismo (GPTT) como resultado parcial do Projeto de Pesquisa “Transporte ferroviário, meio ambiente e desenvolvimento de destinos turísticos” registrado no Departamento de Pesquisa da Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO).

Espera-se que este trabalho contribua para desenhar as potencialidades do *slow travel* no Brasil voltados aos apelos cênicos e nostálgicos envolvendo os deslocamentos de “maria fumaças”, como são popularmente chamada as locomotivas a vapor no país. As seções deste artigo tratam sobre uma breve revisão bibliográfica que embasa a construção da categoria “slow rail travel” (ver Seção 2). Logo após é detalhada a metodologia do estudo (ver Seção 3). Na Seção 4 são apresentados e discutidos os resultados encontrados.

2. Slow rail travel (SRT)

O turismo depende dos transportes, pois envolve uma série de padrões de deslocamentos, como exemplos: entre origem e destino(s) turístico(s) a serem visitados, entre destinos (primários e secundários), a circulação dentro dos destinos visitados e as rotas de retorno a origem. Logo, o avanço tecnológico dos transportes influencia no desenvolvimento do turismo, e, muitas vezes, é o desenvolvimento do turismo que requer estruturas e serviços de transportes específicos (Palhares, 2002; Lohmann, Fraga e Castro, 2013).

Os modos de transportes (aéreo, aquaviário, ferroviário e rodoviário) são tecnologias próprias. O modo ferroviário sempre depende de vias terrestres segregadas (através das guias, notadamente os trilhos) interligando as estações ferroviárias (terminais), contudo, também podem variar de acordo com a tecnologias ferroviárias empregadas, isto é, a vapor, elétrica, por levitação magnética. Estas tecnologias também

podem variar em função do objetivo de implantação do projeto ferroviário, por exemplo trens de aeroportos, trens regionais, trens exclusivos para o turismo, entre outros fins (Fraga e Castro, 2012; Fraga, 2013).

O modo ferroviário, desde os seus primórdios (iniciou-se no século XIX na Inglaterra), sempre foi associado a ideia de progresso e modernidade. Isso, em parte, relaciona-se com a força motriz e com o alcance em função da velocidade que contrapõem longas distâncias em curto espaços de tempo. Berman (1986), no clássico livro “Tudo que é sólido desmancha no ar”, ao tratar os timbres e ritmos da modernidade do século XIX, destaca uma série de elementos que compõem a nova paisagem que dá lugar à experiência moderna, e nisso se incluem as ferrovias. Trafegar numa rota preestabelecida e com horários rígidos fez da ferrovia um paradigma importante para o desenvolvimento. Isso, se relacionava com a velocidade “*fast*” que, através dos avanços tecnológicos, vem propiciando a produção e o consumo de objetos e lugares, inclusive para fins turísticos.

O Movimento *slow*, criado na década de 1980, relaciona-se com uma cultura oposta ao que é *fast*, isto é, rápido. O *slow* enquanto Movimento não está relacionado somente à produção e ao consumo de alimentos e bebidas, mas com uma infinidade de atividades, incluindo por exemplo o modo de vida em cidades (*slow cities*), o ato de viajar (*slow travel*), etc. O *slow travel* é um conjunto de ideias associadas e não uma definição estanque, e relaciona-se diretamente com o paradigma do turismo sustentável (Lumsdon e McGrath, 2011). Esses autores fizeram uma revisão bibliográfica sobre o tema das viagens lentas e demonstraram uma concentração de quatro características principais para o *slow travel*: (1) lentidão e o valor do tempo; (2) localidade e atividades no local de destino; (3) modo de transporte e experiência de viagem; e (4) consciência ambiental.

O movimento do *slow travel* e as características mencionadas por Lumsdon e McGrath (2011) aproximam-se do conceito sobre “turismo situado”, desenvolvido pelo pesquisador marroquino Hassan Zaoual. Segundo este autor, ao contrário de uma perspectiva do turismo de massa, caracterizado pela produção e consumo de maneira padronizada visando o lucro imediato, o “turismo situado” é produzido com foco na qualidade da experiência turística, em que o turista, interessado em dialogar com “o outro”, busca por experiências autênticas e diversas. Para Zaoual (2008), a sociedade

contemporânea vivencia um momento de transição bastante significativo, em que a mudança nos valores reflete no sentido dado às necessidades e, também, às atividades econômicas, sendo uma delas o turismo.

Diante desse panorama que Zaoual (2008) delinea a “Teoria dos Sítios Simbólicos de Pertencimento”; segundo esta ideia, é preciso que as concepções de desenvolvimento econômico inovem em suas análises e proposições, devendo levar em consideração a complexidade, a diversidade e o contexto das práticas econômicas de atores sociais situados. Nesse sentido, essa teoria compreende o sítio enquanto espaço de *compartilhamento* de crenças, de conhecimentos, de comportamentos e de práticas sociais que, de forma articulada, regulamentam e coordenam o processo de desenvolvimento econômico. Em uma análise do turismo com base na “Teoria dos Sítios Simbólicos de Pertencimento”, essa atividade é composta por fatores para além das relações econômicas. É com base nessa teoria que Zaoual (2008) entende que o “turismo situado” tem como fundamentos a disponibilidade para dialogar com o outro, para aceitar a contingência de linguagens e de culturas, e para se compartilhar sentidos e estabelecer uma interlocução com os sítios simbólicos de pertencimento, o que vai ao encontro das perspectivas do movimento do *slow travel*.

Buscando correlacionar a teoria dos sítios de Zaoual com as características *slow travel*, especificamente “lentidão e o valor do tempo”, recorre-se a Bartholo (2009: 45). Este autor lembra que, segundo o pensamento heideggeriano, o lugar não pode ser medido apenas metricamente. Nessa leitura, o lugar “encaminha ao encontro face a face no vigor da proximidade”, ou seja, a ideia de encontro tem a ver com o sentido de lugar, que não é espaço-temporal, é um acontecimento face a face, que não é passível de planejamento e controle. A seguir será mais bem detalhado isto em relação ao modo ferroviário e ao turismo com vista ao desenho do conceito de *slow rail travel* (SRT).

Sobre a “lentidão e o valor do tempo” e o “modo de transporte e a experiência de viagem” é possível destacar uma grande mudança relacionada às tecnologias ferroviárias considerando o breve intervalo de tempo entre o início do século XX e o início do século XXI. Nos Estados Unidos, a tecnologia ferroviária a vapor alcançou o recorde de 165km/h no passado (Palhares, 2002: 302). Em 2015, no Japão, um trem de levitação magnética alcançou em teste o recorde de 603km/h (Globo, 2015). Isso demonstra que a escolha da tecnologia ferroviária a vapor na atualidade pode estar

relacionada a um tipo de experiência de viagem na qual a “lentidão e o valor do tempo” fazem parte da experiência que se busca vivenciar, criando o contorno do que seria o *slow rail travel* (SRT) para os padrões das variadas tecnologias ferroviárias, ou seja, ser *fast* significa poder atingir 603 Km/h e *slow* pressupõe não ultrapassar 165km. Assim, o “valor do tempo”, em cada caso, é nitidamente diferente e pode se transformar com o rompimento das fronteiras tecnológicas que influem na velocidade ferroviária.

Torna-se fundamental para o *slow rail travel* (SRT) que não somente as locomotivas a vapor sejam empregadas, mas que na origem/destino(s) da viagem ferroviária lenta haja a preocupação com a produção e consumo na mesma perspectiva, para que o *slow rail travel* não se encerre apenas na viagem ou passeio ferroviário em si, mas que ao interligarem pontos de uma rede de transportes possam contribuir para o desenvolvimento de *slow rail destinations*, isto é, destinos turísticos ferroviários reconhecidos por tratarem a lentidão como um valor relevante. Nessa perspectiva, é importante destacar que muitos dos usuários de ferrovias para fins turísticos não são *railfans*, isto é, fãs da ferrovia (ver Stefanovic e Koster, 2014), mas são turistas que por outros interesses chegam ao contato e consumo do turismo ferroviário, logo estudar a importância do “valor do tempo” a partir da demanda turística é essencial para o SRT.

É notável que alguns trens para fins turísticos apresentem trajetos próximos ou inseridos em áreas protegidas (que em alguns casos é o destino ou a atração turística foco da visita); sendo assim, em relação ao item “consciência ambiental” é importante resgatar Dickinson, Lumsdon e Robbins (2011) quando explicam sobre a necessidade de se analisar as implicações das viagens nas mudanças climáticas. Compreender a relação entre ferrovia e meio ambiente, na perspectiva do *slow travel*, é fundamental para reforçar o papel importante que as áreas protegidas exercem no contexto das mudanças climáticas e, também, avaliar as possibilidades de visita das áreas protegidas associadas ao desenvolvimento de destinos turísticos. Dessa forma, no contexto das áreas protegidas, é relevante considerar, para fins de estudos variados, os seguintes pontos na análise sobre transportes (notadamente o ferroviário), turismo e meio ambiente: (1) a importância de áreas protegidas no processo de mudanças climáticas e cumprimento das diretrizes da Convenção da Diversidade Biológica (Irving, Corrêa, Zaratinni e Conti, 2013); (2) a possibilidade de sensibilização do turista para a importância das áreas protegidas ao

conhecer e apreciar a paisagem protegida (Irving *et al.*, 2013); (3) a existência ou expectativa de projetos e ações em prol do meio ambiente (Botelho e Fraga, 2014); (4) a possibilidade de integração entre ferrovia (muitas vezes centenárias) e áreas protegidas criadas pós o estabelecimento das ferrovias (inclusive para a mudança de paradigma de “progresso” para a perspectiva do “desenvolvimento econômico associado à proteção do patrimônio natural”) (Botelho e Fraga, 2014). A seguir são detalhados os aspectos metodológicos do presente estudo.

3. Aspectos metodológicos do estudo

A pesquisa é exploratória e descritiva, a seguir é contextualizado o objeto de estudo. O Ministério do Turismo (MTUR) brasileiro disponibiliza uma lista contendo informações sobre os trens turísticos, cuja fonte é a Associação Brasileira de Preservação Ferroviária (ABPF) (MTUR, 2014). A partir deste documento e da busca em websites como o da Associação Brasileira das Operadoras de Trens Turísticos e Culturais (ABOTTC), foram identificados dezenove trens turísticos e culturais tracionados por locomotivas a vapor (isto é, “maria fumaças”) no Brasil (portanto, o N= 19). Destas, duas estão desativadas temporariamente, mas foram considerados neste estudo pois podem retornar, e uma estava com inauguração marcada para “em breve”, prevista para inaugurar em outubro de 2015.

Tabela 1: *Slow rail travel* (SRT)

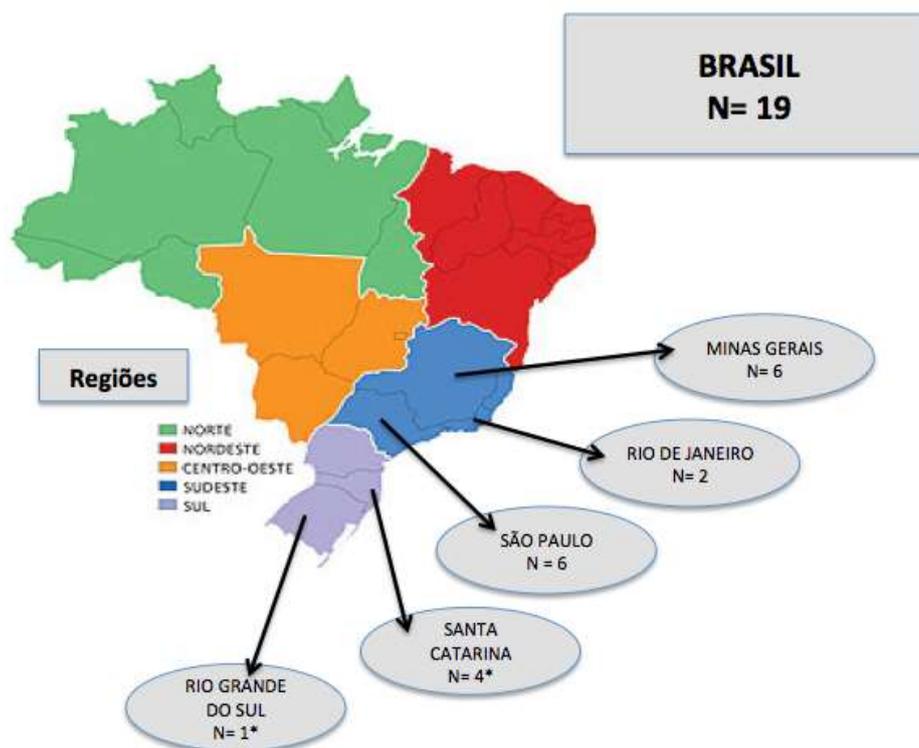
Modo ferroviário	Lentidão e o valor do tempo	Localidade e atividade no local de destino	Experiência de viagem	Consciência ambiental
Tecnologia a vapor	Distância percorrida (km)	Serviços oferecidos no percurso ferroviário e/ou nas estações	Nostálgica (ano de início da ferrovia)	Áreas protegidas abertas à visitação
	Duração da viagem (minutos e/ou horas)		Cênica (relação com Áreas Protegidas)	

Fonte: Adaptado de Lumsdon e McGrath (2011).

Com base na literatura consultada (ver Seção 1), foi possível determinar para o modo ferroviário e, em especial, para a tecnologia a vapor, critérios de acordo com quatro dimensões apontadas por Lumsdon e McGrath (2011) (ver Tabela 1).

Em termos de localização geográfica dos trens turísticos e culturais a vapor, o *slow rail travel* (SRT) no Brasil tem maior chance de se desenvolver nas regiões Sudeste e Sul do país pois, dezanove trens turísticos operados por locomotivas a vapor estão nestas regiões, sendo os estados de São Paulo e Minas Gerais com maior oferta de trens turísticos e culturais a vapor (ver Figura 1):

Figura 1: Trens turísticos e culturais a vapor no Brasil por estado (N= 19)



* Trem das Termas tem trajeto envolvendo dois estados da Região Sul do Brasil (Santa Catarina e Rio Grande do Sul), mas na figura foi considerado a origem em Santa Catarina para a contabilização.

Fonte: Elaboração própria a partir de consulta a MTUR (2014) e ABOTTC (2010).

Com relação às áreas protegidas, é importante mencionar que, no Brasil, essas são regidas pelo Sistema Nacional de Unidades de Conservação - SNUC (de acordo com o que dispõe a Lei 9.9985/2000 e o Decreto 4.340/2002) que dão as diretrizes para a criação, implantação e gestão das 1940 áreas protegidas registradas no Cadastro

Nacional de Unidades de Conservação (dados atualizados em 17 fevereiro 2015 Ministério do Meio Ambiente, MMA, 2015). Esse sistema é constituído pelo conjunto das áreas protegidas federais, estaduais e municipais, que é organizado em grupos, categorias e objetivos de manejo. Os órgãos responsáveis por executarem a Lei são o Instituto Chico Mendes de Conservação da Biodiversidade (ICMBio) e os órgãos estaduais e municipais, e possuem a função de implementar o SNUC, subsidiar as propostas de criação e administrar as áreas protegidas federais, estaduais e municipais, nas respectivas esferas de atuação. O SNUC classifica as áreas protegidas em doze categorias de manejo, divididas em dois grupos: Proteção Integral; e Uso Sustentável, conforme Tabela 2:

Tabela 2: Grupo das áreas protegidas brasileiras e órgãos executivos do SNUC

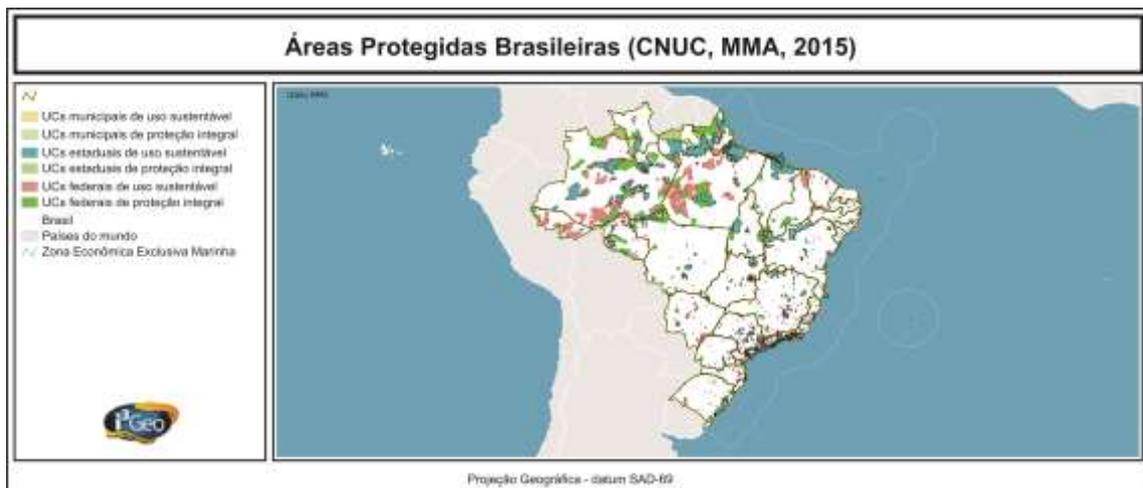
Grupos de Áreas Protegidas do SNUC	Órgão Executor
Proteção Integral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Instituto Chico Mendes de Conservação da Biodiversidade (Federal)· Órgão executivo Estadual· Órgão Executivo Municipal
1. Estação ecológica	
2. Reserva Biológica	
3. Parque Nacional	
4. Monumento Natural	
5. Refúgio da Vida Silvestre	
Uso Sustentável	
1. Área de Proteção Ambiental	
2. Área de Relevante Interesse Ecológico	
3. Floresta Nacional	
4. Reserva Extrativista	
5. Reserva de Fauna	
6. Reserva de Desenvolvimento Sustentável	
7. Reserva Particular do Patrimônio Natural	

Fonte: Elaboração própria com base no website do Ministério do Meio Ambiente (MMA, 2015).

Nas áreas protegidas do grupo “Proteção Integral” apenas é permitido o uso indireto dos recursos, pois o objetivo central é preservar a natureza. No entanto, é

possível, em alguns casos, atividades de pesquisa, educação ambiental e turismo ecológico. Esse grupo é composto por cinco categorias de áreas protegidas, com graus de restrição do uso indireto dos recursos naturais variáveis com relação à visitação, propósitos de proteção e tipo de propriedade (se pública ou privada). Já as áreas protegidas do grupo “Uso Sustentável” têm por objetivo a compatibilização entre conservação da natureza e uso sustentável de parcela dos recursos naturais. Esse grupo é constituído por sete categorias de manejo, podendo ser de domínio público ou privado. O uso direto dos recursos naturais é controlado, respeitando a capacidade de suporte dos ecossistemas e, em geral, são admitidas atividades de visitação e turismo de forma controlada.

Figura 2: Áreas protegidas brasileiras



Fonte: MMA, 2015.

Na Figura 2 é possível visualizar as áreas protegidas brasileiras, sendo que as com maior extensão territorial estão concentradas nos estados e regiões brasileiras com menores índices habitacionais. Porém, nos estados que compreendem as regiões sul e sudeste, que possuem maior concentração habitacional do país, há maior número de áreas protegidas. Na Seção 4, buscando compreender a relação entre ferrovia, meio ambiente e desenvolvimento de destinos turísticos, faz-se uma análise das possibilidades do SRT no Brasil.

4. Resultados e discussões preliminares

Embora não tenha sido possível identificar, no levantamento realizado, todas as informações referentes aos critérios adotados (ver Tabela 1), pôde-se fazer discussões preliminares a respeito das possibilidades e oportunidades para o desenvolvimento do *slow rail travel* (SRT) por locomotiva a vapor no Brasil. É importante destacar que alguns destes aspectos já tinham sido apontados em estudos anteriores cujos focos não eram no *slow rail travel* (como, por exemplos: Botelho e Fraga (2014), com foco na relação entre turismo, ferrovia e meio ambiente no Estado do Rio de Janeiro; e Allis, Fraga e Velazquez (2015), com o foco na relação entre turismo e ferrovia na América do Sul) e foram confirmados ou alinhados aqui como parte significativa para o desenho do *slow rail travel* ferroviário no Brasil.

Em linhas gerais, nota-se que a maioria dos passeios/viagens analisados apresenta frequência nos fins de semana e feriados, o que dialoga com o caráter turístico relativo à necessidade de tempo livre e favorece a demanda por turismo nesse período nas regiões atendidas. Com relação a extensão dos percursos estudados, estes são majoritariamente curtos, isto é, de 2km a 5km (cinco casos), e de 6km a 10km (quatro casos), embora existam alguns casos extremos, tal como um trecho que apresenta aproximadamente 0,6 km e trechos com mais de 30km. No que tange a duração da viagem, esta pode variar desde alguns minutos até sete horas, sendo que alguns passeios podem envolver paradas de até 1h30, o que demonstra a importância de estações e destinos turísticos para a experiência ferroviária relacionada ao SRT e, nisso, pode se incluir as áreas protegidas quando existentes.

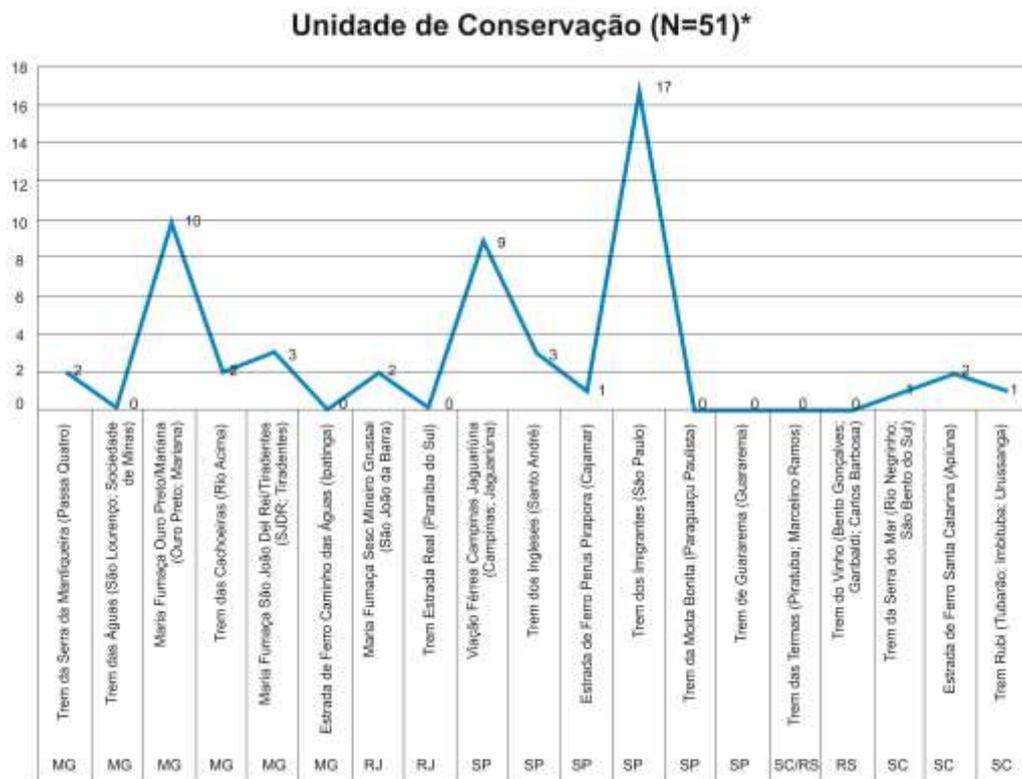
A respeito do preço médio cobrado pelos operadores ferroviários turísticos, este é bastante diverso, podendo variar em função das categorias de serviços oferecidos. Em alguns casos, dos trens culturais, a cobrança envolve apenas contribuições para custos operacionais e de manutenção. Ainda com relação aos preços, nota-se que em alguns existem variações em função da sazonalidade (baixa e alta temporada). Esse é um dado importante para o SRT, já que alguns turistas podem estar mais interessados na baixa temporada do que na alta temporada. Ou seja, quando os destinos tendem a ficar mais propícios ao *slow travel*.

Já com relação às atrações no interior do trem ou nas estações que refletem a cultura local, estas são notadas em alguns casos, sendo exemplos: (1) apresentação de grupo folclórico relacionados ao Trem da Serra do Mar em Santa Catarina; (2) feira de artesanato e shows musicais relacionados ao Trem das Águas em Minas Gerais, entre outros (ABOTTC, 2010). Percebe-se que a gastronomia local está presente em alguns trens, sendo exemplos: (1) degustação de vinho e espumantes relacionados ao Trem do Vinho, localizado no Rio Grande do Sul; (2) degustação de queijo, doces e cachaça (produtos locais) são ofertadas na classe especial do Trem das Águas em Minas Gerais, entre outros (ABOTTC, 2010).

Na experiência de viagem, observa-se que a motivação pode ser variada e que os dois pilares (nostalgia e cênico) do turismo ferroviário oferecem a base para o desenvolvimento do *slow rail travel* no Brasil. Sobre o aspecto nostálgico, a partir de Suêvo Rodriguez (2012) observa-se que o período da Primeira República no Brasil (1889-1930) foi o que apresentou maior expansão da malha ferroviária no país em relação ao período imediatamente anterior, chegando a 32.478,00km de extensão (Suêvo Rodriguez, 2012). Assim, Borges e Fraga (2015) trataram das heranças da Primeira República para o desenvolvimento do turismo ferroviário brasileiro na atualidade, o que demonstra a importância dos aspectos nostálgicos relacionados à história e à memória para as experiências de viagem ferroviárias turísticas por locomotivas a vapor, e isso relaciona-se com as nuances do SRT.

A análise da relação entre áreas protegidas e as locomotivas a vapor, em uma leitura sobre o aspecto cênico, é destacada na Figura 3. Esta mostra, de um lado, os trens turísticos e culturais tracionados a vapor por estado brasileiro (SC – Santa Catarina e RS – Rio Grande do Sul que fazem parte da Região Sul, e MG – Minas Gerais; RJ – Rio de Janeiro; SP – São Paulo, que fazem parte da Região Sudeste) e, de outro, o quantitativo de áreas protegidas identificadas no Cadastro Nacional de Unidades de Conservação (CNUC). Como mencionado, as áreas protegidas denominam-se, no Brasil, Unidades de Conservação (UC), de acordo com a legislação que rege o Sistema Nacional de Unidade de Conservação (SNUC).

Figura 3: Trens turísticos e culturais a vapor e UC (a partir de municípios selecionados para o estudo)



As siglas dos estados significam: MG – Minas Gerais; RJ – Rio de Janeiro; SP – São Paulo; RS – Rio Grande do Sul; SC – Santa Catarina.

*O Parque Nacional da Serra do Gandarela foi contabilizado tanto para o Trem das Cachoeiras, quanto para a Maria Fumaça Ouro Preto - Mariana. O Parque Estadual da Serra do Mar foi contabilizado tanto para o Trem dos Imigrantes, quanto para o Trem dos Ingleses. Por isso o somatório de Unidades de Conservação é 51 e não 53.

Fonte: Elaboração própria com consulta ao Cadastro Nacional de Unidade de Conservação no website do MMA (2015), ABOTTC (2010) e MTUR (2014).

Para o cenário delimitado neste estudo, ou seja, as áreas protegidas definidas pelo SNUC envolvidas no contexto de dezenove trechos ferroviários analisados, foram identificadas cinquenta e uma, sendo: treze Áreas de Proteção Ambiental; cinco Florestas; dois Monumentos Naturais; vinte e três Parques; cinco Reservas Particulares do Patrimônio Natural (RPPN); um Refúgio da Vida Silvestre; uma Área de Relevante Interesse Ecológico (ARIE); e uma Estação Ecológica. Numa perspectiva local, a cidade de São Paulo apresenta dezessete áreas protegidas no Cadastro consultado, o que evidencia o potencial do Trem dos Imigrantes (que tem um curto percurso de 3Km - ida e volta - ligando as estações do Brás à Mooca), contudo polariza o estudo (ver Figura 4). Numa perspectiva regional, o trecho ferroviário entre Ouro Preto e Mariana, cidades históricas mineiras, apresenta a maior concentração de áreas protegidas (dez ao total),

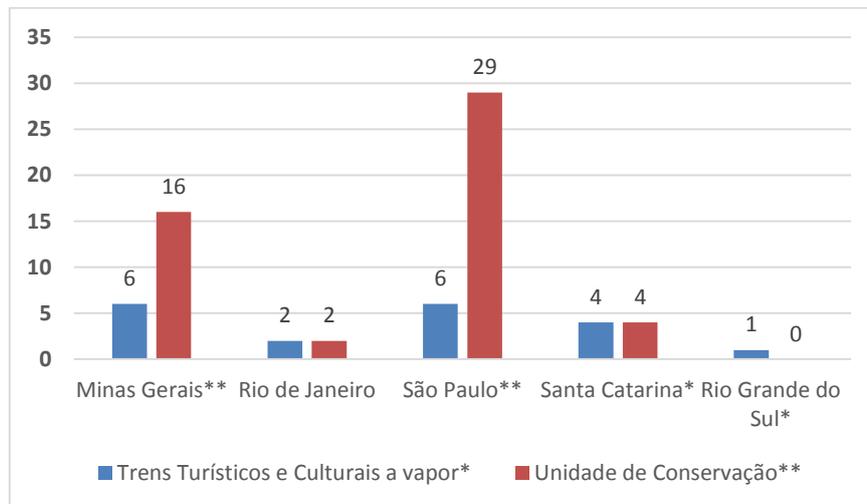
o que pode evidenciar uma grande potencialidade para o *slow rail travel* em diálogo com os aspectos históricos e cênicos. Outro grande potencial é a Viação Férrea Campinas Jaguariúna operada no Estado de São Paulo (nove áreas protegidas ao total) (ver Figura 3).

É fundamental destacar que o Brasil é ator-chave nas negociações referentes à Convenção sobre a Diversidade Biológica (CDB) e, dentre as diversas metas e acordos assinados, está o compromisso com a criação, implantação e gestão de áreas protegidas, com o objetivo de reduzir a perda de biodiversidade e minimizar os impactos das mudanças climáticas (Oliveira e Irving, 2011). Com base nesse cenário, entende-se que a proteção destas áreas também é importante para os destinos turísticos analisados neste estudo sobre o *slow rail travel*, na perspectiva do critério “consciência ambiental”.

As áreas protegidas constituem espaços com grande potencial de promoção de ações de educação ambiental por meio da visitação (Botelho e Maciel, 2014). Em dados recentes do Ministério do Turismo (MTUR), cerca de 7 milhões de pessoas visitam essas áreas anualmente (MTUR, 2015), o que demonstra uma oportunidade para que os diversos visitantes, brasileiros e estrangeiros, possam conhecer a diversidade biológica e cultural do país. Das categorias e tipos de áreas protegidas identificados no estudo realizado, apenas na Estação Ecológica a visitação é restrita, e deve ter por finalidade a educação ambiental e a pesquisa científica. No cenário estudado, notou-se que algumas áreas protegidas do conjunto total analisado estão abertas à visitação e, em alguns casos, pode haver cobrança de ingresso.

A Figura 4 demonstra os estados brasileiros mais propensos ao SRT no contexto das locomotivas a vapor e das unidades de conservação cadastradas no CNUC, isto é, Minas Gerais em primeiro lugar e São Paulo em segundo, o que se relaciona com os trechos ferroviários prioritários da Figura 3, ou seja, Trem do Imigrante (em São Paulo), Maria Fumaça Ouro Preto – Mariana (em Minas Gerais) e Viação Férrea Campinas Jaguariúna (em São Paulo).

Figura 4: Trens turísticos e culturais a vapor e UC selecionados no estudo (organizado por estados brasileiros)



*O Trem das Termas foi considerado a partir do Estado de Santa Catarina, embora tenha percurso envolvendo também o estado do Rio Grande do Sul (ver Figura 1).

**O Parque Nacional da Serra do Gandarela foi contabilizado apenas uma vez, embora possa se relacionar tanto com o Trem das Cachoeiras, quanto com a Maria Fumaça Ouro Preto – Mariana em Minas Gerais. O Parque Estadual da Serra do Mar foi contabilizado apenas uma vez, embora possa se relacionar tanto com o Trem dos Imigrantes, quanto o Trem dos Ingleses em São Paulo.

Fonte: Elaboração própria com consulta ao Cadastro Nacional de Unidade de Conservação no website do MMA (2015), ABOTTC (2010) e MTUR (2014).

Como mencionado, em algumas dessas áreas protegidas, a visitação é permitida e incentivada, o que demonstra o potencial para a realização de ações e/ou projetos integrados às ferrovias (que muitas vezes são centenárias) com o objetivo de fortalecer o desenvolvimento turístico de base local, e nisso se incluem as possibilidades e oportunidades do *slow rail travel* (SRT) no Brasil. O SRT será ainda mais relevante se o planejamento integrado envolvendo as ferrovias com usos para fins turísticos e as áreas protegidas forem capazes de refletir e influenciar a mudança de valores já vivenciada pela sociedade contemporânea, em que as trocas culturais e o compartilhamento de crenças, valores, conhecimentos, comportamentos e práticas sociais ganham maior ênfase nos “encontros com o outro” do que as trocas unicamente direcionadas para os valores econômicos, conforme nos explica Zaoual (2008).

5. Conclusão

Ao se discutir o *slow rail travel* (SRT) é fundamental compreender o tempo como uma instituição social, tempo atemporal e tempo fragmentado. Essa ideia aproxima-se da proposta do turismo situado, em que o encontro com “o outro” é permeado por trocas que vão para além das relações econômicas. Nesse sentido, a viagem é parte da experiência turística, na qual devem ser consideradas as ligações entre o turismo e auto-identidade dos viajantes e estilos de vida (Dickinson *et al.*, 2011). No Brasil, como há uma escassez de oferta ferroviária de transporte de passageiros na atualidade (ver Fraga, 2013), o uso de locomotivas a vapor (em alguns casos, centenárias) pode colocar o turista frente a frente com bens materiais e imateriais que provocam nostalgia, isto é, um sentimento de volta ao passado. A lentidão e o valor do tempo são corroborados como atributos desta experiência nostálgica. Mas um elemento agregador ao desenho do *slow rail travel* no Brasil podem ser as áreas protegidas.

Nesse sentido, a proposição do *slow rail travel* no Brasil pode ser um cenário fértil para a atuação conjunta de operadores ferroviários para fins turísticos, gestores de áreas naturais protegidas e demais interessados. Embora haja um grande potencial para o *slow rail travel* no país, esse desafio é complexo, pois é preciso apresentar objetivos, interesses e estratégias conjuntas para que o país se torne de fato um dos destinos principais do *slow rail travel*. Nesse sentido, ainda que conforme Zaoual (2008) e a Teoria dos Sítios Simbólicos de Pertencimento o atributo econômico não deve ser a prioridade nos projetos de desenvolvimento do turismo em destinos, a sustentabilidade econômica de qualquer proposta frente ao potencial apresentado é fundamental, pois caso não exista uma demonstração evidente dos retornos aos investimentos, dificilmente será possível desenvolver o *slow rail travel* no país de maneira consistente.

Este estudo é uma aproximação importante com a temática e seus desafios e oportunidades, mas apresentou limitações na parte de coleta de dados. Contudo, os resultados e discussões preliminares permitiram vislumbrar que o SRT - *slow rail travel* (notadamente por locomotivas a vapor e em diálogo com áreas protegidas) na atualidade pode ser uma opção significativa para a diversificação da oferta turística brasileira. Novos estudos poderão investigar aspectos da Tabela 1, a partir de outros caminhos metodológicos envolvendo, por exemplo, trabalho de campo com

observações e entrevistas direcionadas a atores e organizações, tais como operadores ferroviários para fins turísticos, gestores de unidades de conservação, entre outros.

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