

“REPELLENT” TOURISTS VERSUS “SLOW” TOURISTS

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ABSTRACT: Slow philosophy is gaining support in society and making substantial changes in the way we understand the consumption of goods and services and it is also bringing about change in terms of trends in tourist demand. Following this premise, the aim of this paper is to find out the effects of “slowness” on tourism and the potential emergence of a new generation of “slow” tourists. The conclusions include the transformation of the definition of “slow” tourist as a consumer *permeable* to the *genius loci*, as opposed to the “repellent” tourist, *impermeable* to the experience of travelling. **Keywords:** tourist demand, qualitative approach, “slow” tourism, repulsive tourism, sustainability.

RESUMEN: La filosofía *slow* está ganando espacio en la sociedad y está marcando un cambio sustancial en la manera de entender el consumo de bienes y servicios, provocando también una transformación en las tendencias de la demanda turística. Bajo esta premisa el objetivo del presente trabajo es conocer los efectos de la lentitud en turismo, y la potencial aparición de una nueva generación de turistas “lentos”. Destacar entre las conclusiones del trabajo el acotamiento de la definición de turista “lento” como un consumidor *permeable* al *genius loci*, en contradicción con el turista “repelente” o *impermeable* a la profundidad del viaje. **Palabras claves:** demanda turística, enfoque cualitativo, turismo slow, turismo repulsivo, sostenibilidad.

RESUMO: A filosofia *slow* está a ganhar espaço na sociedade e está a marcar uma mudança substancial na maneira de entender o consumo de bens e serviços, provocando também uma transformação nas tendências da procura turística. Considerando esta premissa, o objetivo do presente trabalho é conhecer os efeitos da “lentidão” no turismo, e o potencial aparecimento de uma nova geração de turistas “lentos”. As conclusões visam circunscrever a definição de turista “lento” como um consumidor permeável ao *genius loci*, em oposição ao turista “repelente” ou impermeável à experiência da viagem. **Palavras-chave:** Procura turística, enfoque qualitativo, turismo “slow”, turismo repulsivo, sustentabilidade.

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INTRODUCTION

Demand is one of the essential components of the tourist system and as such it is the object of great attention from fields like Economics, Marketing, Anthropology and Sociology of Tourism. This variable in the tourist system can be studied following different approaches, some of them quantitative (Li, Song, and Witt, 2005) which are focused on the statistical and economic analysis and identify it with the number of actual and potential arrivals, hotel occupancy rate, expense per capita, etc. Others opt for qualitative considerations and study the anthropological and sociological dimension of this tourist variable with the aim of identifying its human characterizations and the set of needs, desires and motivations that define it (Dann, 1996; Song and Li, 2008). The latter approach has become more meaningful from the moment people, rather than numbers and processes, were put at the centre of the tourist phenomenon. Therefore, if studies of the demand system are called into playing the role of a support tool for tourist planners and policy-makers (Faulkner and Valerio, 1995; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010), it becomes ever more necessary to complete and integrate the “numerical” analysis with socio-anthropological and descriptive considerations. In this sense, current studies in the literature show us the way the scientific community has focused on research related to the quantitative aspects of the demand system (Walle, 1997) while qualitative ones - those which can show the socio-anthropological components of the tourist phenomenon and above all its dynamic changes, fashions and trends (Riley and Love, 2000) - fade into the background. This paper falls into this latter category of studies on tourist demand as it focuses on the need to shed light on the recent development of the slow movement and its main implications and effects on tourist behaviour.

The slow philosophy has pervaded different socio-economic spheres over the last few years. *Slow Food* (Petrini, 2001) and *Cittàslow* (Knox, 2005; Mayer and Knox, 2006), for example, are worth highlighting. The slow movement has developed within the framework of degrowth theories (Latouche, 2010; Hall, 2009), which in turn have given rise to considerations regarding the soft and green economy (Cianciullo and Realacci, 2006), slow consumption (Hall, 2009; 2010), slow territories (Lancerini, 2005) and more recently slow tourism or slow travel (Dickinson, et al., 2011; Lumsdon and McGrant, 2011; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Nijkamp and Baaijens, 1999; Blanco, 2011). Starting from this basic assumption, we can consider the multidisciplinary interest in slow topics as the justification for this study. The main objective of our paper is to define the new slow tourist, who in our view will be *permeable*, (Canestrini, 2004; 2008), i.e. open and willing to perceive the *genius loci*, the spirit of the place, as opposed to the tourist we

will define as *repellent*, in the sense of a rushed consumer, indifferent to establishing relationships with the territory and the local residents and trapped in stereotypes. Accordingly, we will present a review of the literature on tourist demand, both quantitative and qualitative, to finally focus on this latter category in an attempt to find an answer to the “Who is the slow tourist?” question. We will point to their search for authenticity and tourist awareness as the main nuances that differentiate them from the traditional tourist.

In order to carry out this study we have looked into the most relevant literature in various scientific databases such as ScienceDirect, Scopus, Springerlink, Dialnet, Wiley and Google Scholar using, slow travel, slow tourism, qualitative and quantitative research as main key words. In terms of journals reviewed, “*Annals of Tourism Research*”, “*Tourism Management*”, “*Journal of Travel Research*”, “*International Journal of Forecasting*” and “*Journal of Sustainable Tourism*” are worth mentioning. Upon finding meaningful contributions on slowness in non-scientific publications, we thought it appropriate to complete the study with references from alternative texts such as tourist, socio-anthropological and economics books.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper starts from a reflection on the need to study the slow component of the new tourist class in more depth, focusing on the identification of its needs, desires and socio-anthropological peculiarities. These considerations make us focus on the qualitative analysis of tourist demands, which has been neglected by the specialized scientific literature (Riley and Love, 2000; Walle, 1997). In contrast, contributions from other fields like Sociology and Anthropology are more numerous (Cohen, 1988; Boorstin, 1964; MacCannell, 1976; Turner, 1973; Canestrini, 1993). Tables 1 and 2 show the main work on demand studies from both approaches, qualitative and quantitative.

Table 1: Relevant literature about tourist demand – Qualitative studies

| Authors/year | Title | Journal |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Riley, R. and Love, L. (2000) | The state of qualitative tourism research. | Annals of Tourism Research |
| Walle, A. W. (1997) | Quantitative versus qualitative tourism research. | Annals of Tourism Research |
| Faulkner, B. and Valerio, P. (1995) | An integrative approach to tourism demand forecasting. | Tourism Management |
| Cohen, E. (1988) | Traditions in the qualitative sociology of tourism. | Annals of Tourism Research |

Methodology: “*Informal*” methodology, observation, interpretative paradigms and qualitative methods.

Objectives: *Qualitative approach on tourism demand.*

Table 2: Relevant literature about tourist demand – Quantitative studies

| Authors/year | Title | Journal |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Song, H., et al. (2011) | Forecasting tourist arrival using time-varying parameter structural time series model | International Journal of Forecasting |
| Guizzardi, A., & Mazzocchi, M. (2010) | Tourism demand for Italy and the business cycle. | Tourism Management |
| Song, H., & Li, G. (2008) | Tourism demand modeling and forecasting - a review of recent research. | Tourism Management |
| Li, G., et al. (2005) | Recent developments in econometric modeling and forecasting. | Journal of Travel Research |
| Lim, C. (1999) | A meta-analysis review of international tourism demand. | Journal of Travel Research |
| Lim, C. (1997a) | Review of international tourism demand models. | Annals of Tourism Research |
| Lim, C. (1997b) | An econometric classification and review of international tourism demand models. | Tourism Economics |

Methodology: *Statistical, econometrics and quantitative analysis.*

Objectives: *Econometric studies, identification of new trends in tourism demand forecasting, study of cycles in the tourist consumer behavior.*

This theoretical digression is necessary in order to justify the need to move further towards qualitative studies on tourist demand. Descriptive and interpretative research can in fact show nuances in tourist demand which are otherwise impossible to detect by means of statistics and numbers. Therefore, a methodology perhaps less sophisticated and strict, but capable of throwing light on those human and social components of the demand system which are the basis of buying behaviour and expenditure decisions, seems suitable. Here it is important to highlight the large production of quantitative studies related to tourism in general and demand in particular (Riley and Love, 2000), and the scant attention qualitative studies have received; the validity of the latter being limited to a complementary support function for quantitative studies, which are given “scientific” status (Walle, 1997). “[...] since World War II, scientific (or quantitative) methods have dominated. As a result, the main role of qualitative research has typically been reduced to helping create and pose hypotheses which can then be tested and refined using scientific and/or statistical research methods and models [...] Much tourism scholarship, working within such a cross-disciplinary context, reflects this bias in favor of rigorous, quantitative, and scientific methods.” (Walle, 1997: 524).

In the field of quantitative studies, Song and Li published an article in 2008 that represents the state of the art in tourist demand research and which is a reference point for our study. This article collects the

main contributions to the study of the demand system published up to 2008 (1960-2007) and includes among others the work by Crouch (1994), Witt and Witt (1995), Lim (1997a, 1997b, 1999), Li, Song and Witt (2005). The contributions by these two authors allow us to identify the main models and methodologies used in the analysis of and predictions regarding tourist demand. Thanks to this systematization work, it becomes evident that despite the great variety of approaches in demand's research, statistical, econometric and quantitative methods predominate (Song and Li, 2008). Song and Turner (2006) had arrived at the same conclusion in a previous study. There is a more recent study by Guizzardi and Mazzocchi (2010) on Italian tourist demand that focus on the analysis of cycles and their effects over the economy. The study takes the contributions by Song and Li (2008) and follows the existing trends in the literature adopting statistical methods for the study of demand cycles, their case study being Italian hotels (Guizzardi and Mazzocchi, 2010). Finally we have included the research carried out by Song et al. (2011) in our reference literature. They carried out a statistical analysis which confirmed the predominant trend towards the quantitative approach in the studies published in the most relevant scientific journals on tourism (*Tourism Management, Annals of Tourism Research, International Journal of Forecasting, Journal of Travel Research, Tourism Economics*). Despite the plethora of publications and the attention the scientific community has paid to quantitative studies on tourist demand, there exists an ever increasing need to study this variable through a different approach, one which rescues it from the vortex of numbers and figures into which statistical studies have drawn it and attempts to find its human, anthropological and social component. If studies carried out so far have favoured models and predictions about tourist flows aimed at helping policymakers and tourist managers in the territorial planning of the demand system (Faulkner and Valerio, 1995; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010), it is evident now that for the analysis of the demand system to reach this objective, its qualitative component cannot be neglected. Regarding this variable only and exclusively through numbers and statistics leads to planning a supply system "in figures", which is inevitably standardized, based on hotel vacancies and catering, somewhat inflexible and closed to changes in tastes, trends and tourist flows. Hence the consideration of the role of qualitative research on tourist demand is understood as a type of study capable of studying in greater depth the motivations, behaviours, desires and the psycho-social context of the tourist. These parameters are increasingly necessary for programming the supply system. Due to the extreme complexity and the level of competition in current tourist markets, the use of differentiation tools, which can

no longer be identified with a “quantitative” knowledge of tourist flows, becomes indispensable. Thus, we focus on the analysis of the current status of qualitative research in the main scientific literature on tourism. We will refer in particular to four articles which we have identified as the cornerstones of this part of our study and which TABLE 1 illustrates. We will start with the oldest item in our literature of choice: “Traditions in the qualitative sociology of Tourism” (Cohen, 1988). Cohen’s reflections confirm the background position of qualitative studies on tourism as compared to quantitative ones (Cohen, 1988). Along the same lines, Collins (1984) states that the best Sociology studies have been carried out using qualitative methods and leaving aside statistical analysis. This last point leads us to another reflection relative to the disciplinary field which has shown the greatest interest in and the highest number of publications on qualitative studies about tourism. As Cohen (1988) suggests, tourist studies, which started significant literary and scientific traditions offering at the same time numerous opportunities for more rigorous quantitative research, maintain a qualitative character and are found in sociological and anthropological journals rather than in tourist publications: *Social Research, American Journal of Sociology, International Journal of Comparative Sociology and Sociology* (Riley and Love, 2000). The work done by Cohen (1972, 1973, 1979), MacCannell (1973), Foster (1964), Boorstin (1964), Smith (1977) in this field is worth noting. Faulkner and Valerio (1995) do not opt for purely qualitative studies but point out nonetheless the need to apply an integrated methodological approach in order to understand the increasing complexity of the tourist demand; they consider “scientific” methods focused in the setting up of flow prediction models insufficient for a whole comprehension of the said demand. The need to adopt an integrated and eclectic methodology is a thesis Walle (1997) also supports in his article “Quantitative vs. qualitative tourism research”, in which he justifies the importance of adopting broader approaches fit to cover the complexity of the tourist phenomenon. As opposed to Faulkner and Valerio’s (1995) and Walle’s (1997) more flexible posture, Riley and Love (2000) are more explicit in their complaint about the lack of qualitative studies and the scarce interest in them found in the literature. With the aim of reviewing the descriptive literature on the status of qualitative research in tourism, the authors develop a theoretical and conceptual basis for the use of interpretative paradigms and qualitative methods in tourism research.

To conclude our review of the literature, it is safe to state that the exclusion of a qualitative analysis from research on the demand system causes the crystallization of the dialogue between tourist management and the new interests of the demand side, which leads to the

alienation of tourist processes from social and human contexts and brings about “plastification”. Hence the justification of this study, which judges descriptive and interpretative analysis as the only tool capable of detecting and studying the new trends in the emergent tourist class. Once the methodological plan is presented, we identify at the conceptual level the proclivity to slowness in today’s society as an element potentially capable of bringing about significant changes to the expense habits of consumers, including tourists. First, a proposition in relation to the meaning attributed to slow philosophy in this study is necessary. Far from being merely fashionable or a good marketing strategy, the new ideas about time and the need to “downshift” have to do with a new characterization of the current socio-economic systems. According to this meaning, the concept of slowness goes beyond time limitations and covers a set of concepts and contents within the scope of social and environmental responsibility, the sense of equality, the valuing of authenticity and identities, etc. The main literature studied in this part of our study is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Relevant literature about slow tourism

| Authors/year | Title | Journal |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Blanco, A. (2011) | Una aproximación al turismo Slow. El turismo Slow en las Cittaslow de España | Investigaciones Turísticas |
| Dickinson, J. et al. (2011) | Slow travel: issues for tourism and climate change | Journal of Sustainable Tourism |
| Cilliers, P. (2006) | On the importance of certain slowness. Stability, memory and hysteresis in complex systems | Emergence: Complexity and Organization |
| Lumsdon, L. M. & Mc-Grant P. (2011) | Developing a conceptual framework for slow travel: a grounded theory approach | Journal of Sustainable Tourism |
| Dickinson, J. & Lumsdon, L. M. (2010) | Slow Travel and Tourism: Tourism, Environment and Development Series | Earthscan, London, Washington, DC |
| Dickinson, J. et al. (2010) | Holiday travel discourses and climate change | Journal of Transport Geography |
| Fosgerau, M. (2006) | Investigating the distribution of the value of travel time savings | Transportation Research Part B |
| Nijkamp, P. y Baaijens, S. (1999) | Time pioneers and travel behaviour: an investigation into de viability of “Slow motion”. | Growth and Change |

Source: authors

Here we will refer only to the articles which explicitly deal with slow tourism, despite its limited number. In order to complete the delimitation of the study context, we will refer to the prolific and abundant literature in topics with a direct relationship with slow tourism, from which the latter acquires its contents and meaning. Reflections upon the philosophy of slowness are developed in different fields. The attention that the importance of a “certain slowness” (Cilliers, 2006) and the need for a decrease in the consumption style of modern society receive finds its main implications and connections with environmental topics; slowness is seen as a new interpretation, both theoretical and practical, of sustainability and conservation of natural resources (Hall, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2010, 2011; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010). Beyond environmental concerns, the concepts of slowness and downshifting are also studied philosophically (Cilliers, 2006), financially (Cianciullo and Realacci, 2006), socially (Latouche, 2010; Honorè, 2009) and then at the tourist level (CST, 2009; Dickinson et al., 2010). A first systematization of the literature dedicated to the concept of slowness in tourism has led us to distinguish two approaches: the first one is based on the slowness-transport dichotomy and is represented by all the scientific production that matches slow tourism with certain choices of means of transport on the part of the demand side (Nijkamp and Baaijens, 1999; Fosgerau, 2006; Dickinson et al., 2010). The other approach broadens the concept to identify it as an element for structural change in the tourist industry as slowness pervades aspects other than just transport (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Lumsdon and McGrant, 2011; Cilliers, 2006; Dickinson et al., 2011; Blanco, 2011). Most of the publications on the subject of slowness, even those journals which are not explicitly on tourism, refer to the causality nexus that exists between the increasing levels of environmental degeneration and the gradual increase of international tourist flows; they put special emphasis on CO² emissions caused by highly contaminating means of transport such as airplanes and automobiles (Nijkamp and Baaijens, 1999; Fosgerau, 2006; Dickinson et al., 2010; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010).

The contributions by Nijkamp and Baaijens (1999) are worth noting in terms of the literature that we have studied. They propose the “time pioneer” definition, i.e. a pioneer user of time. This alternative attitude towards time could give rise to a new travelling behaviour, “slow motion”. The authors conclude that, as timely and urgent the adoption of a slow approach to transport and mobility might seem, slow motion appears to be a not widely known or popular psychosocial component. The empirical study they carried out among Netherlands travellers showed that the quota of consumers with a more paused behaviour is extremely lower than that of “traditional” travel-

lers (Nijkamp and Baaijens, 1999). Research approaches that broaden the concept of slow tourism and go beyond the limitations set by slow travel underline at all times the importance of the slowness-transport dichotomy, but also start exploring other tourism areas in which trends favouring downshifting are found, when for instance they become necessary in order to comply with artistic heritage conservation, environmental and social requirements. In those cases, slowness is no longer regarded as a psycho-social travelling trend (Nijkamp & Baaijens, 1999) but rather as the root of a structural change at the social, economic and anthropological levels. (Cilliers, 2006; Lumsdon and McGrant, 2011). These considerations mean slow tourism calls for a certain attitude both in terms of holiday type or style and of transport. Therefore slow tourism is starting to be seen as a combination of slow holiday and slow travel (Dickinson et al., 2011). Along the same lines Lumsdon and McGrant (2011) identify four key points in their review of the slow tourism literature: the value of time, localism and activities at the destination, transport trends and environmental responsibility; transport is thus one of those cornerstones rather than the main component of slowness. If at first view the literature on slow tourist phenomena seems to match slow philosophy with slow travel rather than with slow tourism and sees the former as a component of the latter, more authors increasingly opt for slowness as a term covering all aspects of the tourist industry, from supply and local residents' lifestyle to demand in all its variables, from economic and production systems to territorial tourist planning. We take this eclectic meaning of slow tourism as we are interested in finding out the implications between slowness and changes in tastes, trends and desires on the part of the tourism demand system and study whether or not the slow movement is modifying the preferences of tourist consumers. In fact, changes in tourist consumption often express social and cultural variations. An alternative understanding of travelling, one which respects the environment, tourist ethics and above all the human and cultural content of mobility can indeed become the main element of a new way of tourism. Slowness is seen as an element of social richness. According to Honoré (2009), the slow movement philosophy provides the things that really make us happy: good health, a well-kept environment, communities and strong relationships.

FROM THE REPELLENT TOURIST TO THE "SLOW" TOURIST.

The development of an alternative tourist system such as slow tourism cannot dispense with a favourable attitude from the public towards it. In fact, the current tourist systems see research on this variable as the basis of innovation in the supply system (Faulkner and

Valerio, 1995; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010), increasingly oriented to the market rather than to the product. In this context, detailed and deep knowledge of the needs and desires of consumer-tourists is required in order to set up a supply system consistent with consumers' expectations. The hegemonic position of a consumer-tourist who sets changes in the tourist system according to their tastes and whims does not seem to hold in the case of slow tourism. The slow tourist actually feels - or wants to feel - as an active and constituent part of the system with which they get in contact in their free time. Thus, slow travellers play their consumer-tourist role, but they would rather identify themselves as “temporary members” (Dall’Ara, 2008) of the community and stay away from the typical alienation experienced by the tourist in “artificial”, custom-made places. Their attitude becomes *permeable* to the *genius loci* and open to relationships and contact with the “other”, as anthropology of tourism (Canestrini, 2004) defines it. The slow tourist is not content with a fake experience of the destination by means of custom-made activities which usually consist in commercial recreations of the local reality. A desire to establish relations with the local residents and not feel a “consumer-tourist” defines the slow traveller mainly through two particular characteristics: desire for authentic experiences and the taking on of a set of responsibilities with regard to destinations. We will focus on these two elements in this part of our study. The interpretative paradigm of slow tourism will be shaped over the need for authenticity and ethical and environmental responsibility. Prior to going further into these two aspects, we will make an *excursus* on the various profiles which have characterized the tourism demand system and have led to the constitution of a new emergent category: slow tourists.

Introduction to slow tourists.

It is particularly difficult to define the modern tourist profile in the current tourist market. This difficulty comes mainly from the kaleidoscopic character of this type of consumers, increasingly eclectic and complex. The modern tourist represents many tourists at once. These days we find much work attempting to categorize tourists in the literature (Cohen, 1988; Dall’Ara, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2010). Cohen (1988) proposes three different “traditions” in qualitative sociology of tourism identifying distinct tourist typologies. They are originally attributed to Boorstin (1964), MacCannel (1976) and Turner (1973). Boorstin says that a tourist is not interested in the reality of a place but rather in “pseudo-events”, which turns them into a passive observant of reality, a beholder of alien extravagance from the safety of his familiar context (Boorstin, 1964). Boorstin’s tourist remains isolated

from the environment hosting them and from the local community, enjoys attractions in organized programmes and ignores all about the local reality around him (Cohen, 1988). MacCannell's tourist is developed following the same idea of lack of authenticity in society, but unlike Boorstin's, he proposes a vision of a tourist in search of authentic experiences who sees in tourist attractions a social symbolism which becomes evident in the eyes of the beholder. The wish for authenticity is clear evidence of the fake and superficiality defining the modern person's everyday reality, from which they try to escape during holidays (MacCannell, 1976). MacCannell (1973) introduces yet another problem related to authenticity: the difficulty to approach it on the part of tourists who wished to do so. In fact, the popular habit of preparing special "tourist places" where attractions are reality "in disguise" turns fake into authenticity, which causes a degeneration of the tourist experience and forces the traveller to look for local identities in the "back region", as MacCannell (1976) defines it and to strive to find them. This vision of tourism reveals that lack of authenticity in tourist systems is not dependent only on the superficial and passive attitude of consumers, but is rather an inevitable consequence of tourist development (Cohen, 1988). Finally, Turner proposes the image of the wandering tourist in search of freedom. According to Turner, a traveller needs to discover an alternative time and space away from the social and institutional context of everyday life and sees in travelling the escape valve for their desire of personal and social regeneration. The tourist experience seems to take place within boundaries, which allows the traveller to go beyond the line that separates the ordinary from the extraordinary dimensions, or rather, between daily routine and the center out there, to use the terminology proposed by Turner (1973). An alternative categorization to that in Cohen (1988) which we consider useful to the aims of this study is proposed by Dall'Ara (2010); it divides travellers into first, second, third and fourth generation tourists. The first generation tourist is found within the historical and social reality of WWII post-war and is an undemanding consumer looking for standardized services and paying little attention to accommodation. Their main conquest and preoccupation is access to leisure time. In the 1960s, however, the second generation or standardized tourist appears, one wishing to find the same comfort of their familiar dimension in holiday destinations. This is the "no-surprises traveller, going from Sheraton to Sheraton, to the same rooms, the same cocktails and the same impeccable waiters" (Ferrarotti, 1989). The third generation is born between the 80's and 90's and is constituted by more mature, informed and specialized consumers. Dall'Ara (2010) defines this generation through five determining elements: the wish for service personalization, the need for authentic experiences, the search for

further information on travelling and destinations, good predisposition to build relationships and the intention of bonding with the local culture. The fourth generation tourist is defined as “liquid” and represents the current consumer of tourist services. All philanthropic, emotional, permeable travellers belong in this category (Canestrini, 2004; 2008) as well as slow tourists (Dall’Ara, 2010) and they are in possession of extreme adaptability for different tourism “styles”. The liquid tourist turns into multiple types of tourists, even contradicting kinds. It is the kaleidoscopic expression of a paradoxical complexity. According to Dall’Ara’s categories (2010), slow tourism will then constitute one more angle of this “schizophrenic” tourist. The slow traveller is found within broad and not clearly defined margins. Dickinson (et al., 2010) calls them soft and hard slow travellers and thus identifies this new tourist class as a continuum between both extremes and highlights the variety of tourist profiles that can coincide in the same traveller depending on circumstantial factors.

Who is the slow tourist?

Lumsdon and McGrant (2011) state that slow tourism is a way of understanding holidays that represents today 10% of the European tourist market and is seen as a segment on the rise. Rather than insisting in numerical considerations on slow travel, we acknowledge that they allow us to underline the need to do further research on a new “tourist mentality” (Lumsdon and McGrant, 2011). We are more interested in understanding slow tourists’ motivations, their likes, their expectations with regard to tourist destinations and the reasons why they opt for certain services than in finding out the number of slow tourists today. In short, we want to get to know the slow tourist by getting in contact with their social and cultural background. Therefore, it is safe to state that a tourist becomes a slow traveller when they search, demand and choose a set of services capable of satisfying their wish for authenticity and which allows for responsible consumption of the tourist product both from the environmental and social ethics point of view.

Authenticity

Authenticity is a concept well studied by anthropology of tourism (MacCannell, 1973; 1976) but nonetheless not clearly defined (Cohen, 1988a). MacCannell (1976) says that the modern tourist, a victim of social alienation, looks for authenticity in the primitive, in virgin spaces and in nature. As to the slow tourist, while it is appropriate to characterize their travelling experience in terms of the same human alienation

MacCannell writes about, it is at the same time necessary to put it in a more substantial and credible dimension that can no longer set aside the inevitable massification of tourist flows which in turn bring about an insurmountable distance between the tourist and the authenticity component MacCannell proposes. This means the slow tourist has to search for modern authenticity, characterized by access to the identities of a place and its community, perfectly localized at the present historical moment. Any approach to authenticity based on an anachronistic reconstruction of past historical and social contexts inevitably leads to a “staged authenticity”, (MacCannell, 1973), i.e. a fabricated and thus commercialized authenticity. If the alienation of individuals from their human and social context makes the ludic and extraordinary time of holidays an occasion for mobility, not only spatial but also personal and introspective, we can then see the search for authenticity as the main motivation of the slow tourist, understood as a treatment for the individual’s increasing isolation, an individual dominated by stressing lifestyles, by technology and its illusion of a deceitful power of pervasiveness and by ultra fast means of transport.

In this light, the slow tourist can be matched to Redfoot’s (1984) “tourist- anthropologist”. According to this author, the anthropologist is in fact the traveller who digs further than other social classes in their search for authenticity. He had identified in them “the third order of tourists”, who reject fake in their own culture and look for authenticity in alternative realities. We can thus conclude that, given the attention paid to experiencing local realities and to the identities of the territory they are in, the slow tourist is a “tourist- anthropologist”.

Tourist awareness.

The problem of a tourist’s ethical, social and environmental awareness appears in relation to two different aspects. One has to do with the use of scarce and vulnerable goods which can suffer irreversible damage as a result of tourist exploitation; the other is connected to the impossibility of eliminating the consumerist component of tourist practices as the tourist achieves satisfaction not only in the moral dimension, but also in the material one. Responsible use of tourist resources then automatically implies the acceptance of limiting consumption levels. This acceptance leads to the slow tourist’s willingness to subordinate the individual act of consumption to collective interest. In this sense, slow travellers take a responsibility that can be identified with the Stakeholder Responsibility concept, which involves two dimensions: the awareness that there exist positive and negative consequences for their consumption choices and making themselves personally responsible for them, which coincides with the concept of

accountability (Goodstein and Wicks, 2007). Slow tourists cannot be contented with playing a passive role before the consumption preferences of somebody else; they should rather star in new models of resource exploitation, oriented to slowness and quality (Savoja, 2009). Respect for resources is seen as one of the determining aspects of a slow tourist's environmental ethics. However, we should not overlook the fact that in many cases the unsustainability of tourist practices is determined by the conflict generated between tourists and local residents seen as two social categories. A less frantic attitude on the part of the traveller towards tourist destinations has also inevitable and positive repercussions over this relationship in which both subjects are active and independent. Slow tourists abandon their hegemonic position over local communities and a bilateral dialogue is opened.

CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REFLECTIONS.

To conclude, we can point out some fundamental findings from this research in relation to the slow tourist's profile. First, it is noteworthy that the characteristics of the slow traveller need more attention in the literature since, as some authors highlight, it is a segment on the rise (Lumson and McGrath, 2011) in European markets. Next, we can state that it is possible to reach an interpretative paradigm of slow demand by looking into its sociological and anthropological components. To this end, qualitative studies are considered more suitable than statistical and quantitative analyses. Finally, and prior to concluding the study with a review of the characteristics of slow tourists, it is worth noting that slow tourism should be understood as a new way of travelling that imposes a new mentality on the tourist in terms of consumption and travelling. This is precisely the aspect which Savoja (2011) identifies as the innovative component of slow tourism. The challenge is to try and find new characterizations of the tourist experience which are not based only on the peculiarities of the product but rather in relation to new models of behaviour on the part of tourists (Savoja, 2011). Throughout the study we have had the chance of pointing out the cornerstones of a new angle of the tourism demand system, so, based on what we have exposed so far and thanks to the existing contributions in the literature in this sense, we can state that the slow tourist is distinct from the other tourist categories due to the following elements: (a) They are travellers who prefer quality to quantity, that is, they look to fill in their leisure time with contents rather than symbolism. Therefore, holidays are a moment of personal and social uplift. (b) They are *permeable* (Canestini, 2004; 2008) rather than *repellent* towards the local culture and the *genius loci*. They travel with a positive predisposition towards the “other” and to diversity. (c) They

are sensible consumers. They collect information on their destination before travelling and above all they are in possession of the necessary tools to understand, assess and choose the products that best adjust to their tourist experience ideal. Said tools derive from a high cultural level and a significant travelling history. They know perfectly what they DO NOT want. (d) They look for authentic relationships and contexts and stay away from touristification and commercialized environments (Jensen- Verbeke, 1998; MacCannell, 1976). (e) They have a high sense of tourist responsibility as consumers of vulnerable and scarce resources and act according to social and environmental ethics principles. (f) Not only are they the antithesis of fast tourists in terms of their slow behaviour and their options for certain holiday destinations and styles; they are also “fast” when taking weekend trips to any European capital (Savoja, 2011).

The behaviour models of slow tourists are then proposed as a credible way of combining tourist consumption and sustainability. Therefore, research on this field also allows us to shape tourist and territorial development policies explicitly set on valuing slowness in those “minor” territories which have managed to stay away from strong production systems and thus protect local identities.

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