

SLOW TOURISM IN SLOW COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF LATVIA

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Abbreviations

DMO	Destination Marketing Organization
LTDA	Latvian Tourism Development Agency (in Latvian – <i>Tūrisma Valsts Attīstības Aģentūra, TAVA</i>)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
TIB	Tourism Information Bureau
TIC	Tourism Information Centre
TIP	Tourism Information Point

Abstract

Slow tourism has emerged as a counter reaction to increased competition and acceleration in today's world and can be interpreted as both an emerging tourism niche as well as an overall approach to travel. While the literature on slow tourism is still evolving, Latvia with its present tourism marketing brand "Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly" is officially promoted as an appropriate destination for slow tourism and is currently the only destination that has applied the slow philosophy in destination marketing at a national level making the setting of the research unique.

This study aimed to get an in-depth understanding of slow tourism, slow tourists and the application of slow philosophy in destination marketing and management. This was achieved by adopting a qualitative approach. Interviews with both the supply and demand side representatives were used to collect data and thematic analysis was employed to analyse them.

This study makes the following original contributions. In terms of the theoretical contributions the findings confirm the previous concept of slow tourism as experience-based tourism but argue that slow tourism practices are influenced mainly by external factors especially in relation to mobilities. In particular, the findings show that the mindset of the tourist is the key criteria for identifying slow tourists. This study also suggests that a slow destination brand has the capacity to work not only as a pull factor but also as a push factor especially for local tourists. In addition to the push and pull factors already described in the literature, nature and patriotism were identified as important pull factors for slow tourism. In terms of the policy recommendations the thesis highlights the need to develop a practical toolkit for implementing a slow destination brand. The methodological contribution is to use specific criteria to identify people engaging in slow tourism rather than look for self-identified slow tourists in non-English speaking countries.

Key words: slow tourism, slow tourist, slow destination brand, slow philosophy in destination marketing, slow philosophy in destination management.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter outlines the context and the motivation of the research by briefly describing the background of the research, giving an overview of the situation in tourism in Latvia where the research takes place, and justifying the viability of the research topic. The scope of the research as well as the research aim and objectives are set out. Finally, the thesis outline is presented.

1.1 Background to the study

In today's competitive environment destinations need to find ways to differentiate their tourism offerings by finding their competitive advantages and carefully choosing how they are positioned in the global market in order to attract a larger market share (Gomezelj & Mihalič, 2008). Image and identity play an essential role in differentiating similar destinations, therefore the branding of destinations has become increasingly important (Baker & Cameron, 2008). Slogans and logos are often used as practical tools to make the destination product more tangible (Bayrak & Kozak, 2013). Tourism success depends both on the destination itself in terms of its products, services, quality visitor experiences, and community support, as well as the activities and structure of its destination management organization (Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie, & Sheehan, 2010).

However, increased competition and acceleration in today's world has led to a counter-reaction, which in the travel and tourism industry translates as 'slow tourism'. It can be interpreted as both an emerging tourism niche as well as an overall approach to travel. Historically, slow tourism has evolved from a wider slow movement that has originated from two interrelated initiatives in Italy: the Slow Food movement and the Cittáslow (or Slow Cities) movement. While the first was born in 1986 as a protest against fast food, globalization and the loss of traditional and regional cuisine, the latter was founded in 1999 with the aim of improving the quality of life in towns by slowing down their overall pace. Over time, both movements have spread into other areas of life such as living, parenting, doing business and also travelling. In the meantime, Latvia with its

present tourism marketing brand “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” is officially promoted as a slow tourism destination making the setting of the research unique.

1.1.1 Tourism in Latvia

The Republic of Latvia (for the rest of the text *Latvia*) was founded in 1918. It was under foreign control for many years (by the Soviet Union 1940-1941 and 1945-1991; by Nazi Germany 1941-1945), until, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 it became an independent country once again. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – three neighbouring countries – are also called the Baltic States. The territory of Latvia covers 64,562 km² of which nearly 30 thousand km² is covered by woods, making it one of the greenest countries in the world. Around one fifth of the territory is protected. The territory is 450 km wide (West to East) and 210 km long (North to South). There are five planning regions in Latvia – Riga region, Kurzeme, Zemgale, Vidzeme and Latgale. Each of the regions has its own characteristics and cultural elements. This division is also topical in tourism planning. The total length of the border is 1,866 km of which 498 km is sea border and 1,368 km is land border – 343 km with Estonia (in the north), 276 km with Russia (in the east), 161 km with Belorussia (in the southeast) and 588 km with Lithuania (in the south). Currently, the population of Latvia is just 2 million, of which around one third lives in Riga, the capital of Latvia (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2014).

The new Latvian tourism brand was introduced during the time when tourism statistics had been showing rather poor results. Over many years, there has been an increase in the number of inbound day trip tourists but a decrease in overnight stays. By 2013, the number of border crossings had reached 5.8 million while the average length of a visitor’s trip remained only 1.4 visitor nights due the high number of transit passengers (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2014). With a population of just 2 million, the number of border crossings constitutes almost three times more than the whole population of Latvia. Foreign travellers have spent 608.4 million Euros in 2013 which is an 11.5% increase compared with 2012. The average daily expenditure per foreign traveller was 75 Euros. The majority of foreign travellers come from the neighbouring countries:

more than a third of foreign travellers come from Lithuania, followed by Estonia and Russia.

However, only one third of foreign tourists who come to Latvia stay overnight. If only those tourists who stay overnight are taken into account, then their average length of stay in Latvia is 4.6 days, with their spending reaching 481.5 million Euros in 2013. Figures for foreign travellers who stayed in Latvia in 2013 show that the top three inbound travel markets are Russia, Germany and Lithuania, followed by Estonia, Norway and Finland. These top six countries are also the high priority markets defined in the Latvian tourism marketing strategy.

In 2013, there was a 22.0% increase in the number of overnight travellers from Russia compared with 2012. The second biggest increase was from Estonian travellers (20.9% increase) followed by visitors from Norway (11.6%) and Finland (9.9%).

However, the increase of travellers from Russia might be influenced by the current political situation in Russia. As mentioned, Russia currently represents one of the major inbound travel markets for Latvia: in 2013, around 10% of all foreign travellers were from Russia making Russians the third largest inbound market. Visitors from Russia constituted 25% of all overnight visitors in Latvia, making Russia the largest foreign overnight market. While there is still an increase in the number of Russian overnight travellers in the first and second quarter in 2014 (19.8% and 6.1% respectively) compared with the similar period in 2013, the growth is slower. Currently, it is impossible to predict the full extent to which Russia's political activities will have an influence on the number of inbound travellers from Russia to Latvia in the long term.

In general, two thirds or 68% of overnight stays are generated by foreign travellers and only one third or 32% of overnight stays were generated by local travellers in 2013. Foreign overnight travellers preferred to stay in Riga while local travellers chose other destinations in Latvia. The majority – almost 80% – of those foreign travellers who did stay overnight chose the capital Riga. The second most popular city for overnight stays was Jūrmala with 9%. The rest of the cities received less than 2% of all the foreign overnight travellers. Most local travellers on the other hand – again a figure of almost

80% – preferred to stay in tourist accommodation outside Riga (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2014).

The main purpose of visiting Latvia for foreign overnight travellers was recreation (39.0%), visiting friends and relatives (27.8%) and business (24.7%). In terms of the transport used to reach their destination, foreign overnight travellers in 2013 came to Latvia by air (50.3%), motor transport (34.1%), railway (9.1%), and sea (6.3%) (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2014).

In relation to local travellers in Latvia, around 1.25 million people went on recreational and other private trips in 2013. Around 1.19 million of these travellers have made 11.4 million trips in Latvia: 8.4 million same-day trips and 3.0 million overnight trips. If compared with 2012, the number of same-day trips has increased by 17.6% while the number of overnight trips has decreased by 17.1%. However, the average length of trip has increased from 2.1 visitor nights in 2012 to 2.3 visitor nights in 2013. The most popular regions were Riga and Kurzeme. The average daily expenditure during recreational and other private trips was 17.4 Euros per person in 2013 (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2014).

The survey carried out by LTDA in 2012 in co-operation with an independent market and opinion research agency “Latvian Facts” and Latvian universities at the time of the research was and still is the largest study among foreign tourists. It gave insights into qualitative aspects of travelling in Latvia such as overall satisfaction with travel, the image of the country, sources of information and willingness to recommend Latvia as a travel destination to friends and relatives. Such data cannot be found in official statistical data provided by Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia. Similar studies have been done in 2007, 2009 and 2010. Altogether 3,076 foreign tourists were surveyed during face-to-face interviews in visitor attractions all across Latvia. The survey participants were mostly from Russia (23%), Lithuania (14%), Germany (14%), Estonia (6%), and Great Britain (5%) which partly corresponds with the countries that statistically are the top inbound tourism markets. The survey also showed that around three quarters come to Latvia to spend their vacation (60%) and holidays (14%); 14% have mentioned visiting friends and relatives as their main purpose of travel and almost 13% for business and work. The survey reveals that 36% of tourists arrived by car, caravan or motorbike and 34% by

plane, while only 17% came to Latvia by bus and around 8% by train. It should be noted that bus transport is more popular among travellers from Estonia, Lithuania, Germany, Finland and Eastern Europe. Travel by train is more popular among travellers from Russia: almost 30% used the train to come to Latvia. Ferries are popular among travellers from Sweden: 67% of them had arrived in Latvia by ferry. For travelling around Latvia the majority (55%) use cars, caravans and motorbikes; 29% travel around by bus, 12% by train and 8% use public transport in the cities. Only 5% travel around using bicycles (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2012).

In terms of travel frequency, the survey results revealed that more than half of respondents (52%) were first-time visitors to Latvia. Two thirds of these first-time visitors had chosen Latvia as a part of a wider holiday, usually visiting the Baltic States. However the majority of repeat visitors (58%) had chosen Latvia as their only destination. Another conclusion was that every third visitor from Estonia, Lithuania and Russia can be called a frequent visitor to Latvia since around 30% of respondents from these countries had visited Latvia more than four times. Travellers from Western countries also tend to return to Latvia – around 50% of visitors from the UK and 40% from Sweden were repeat travellers. Repeat travellers are more likely to be found in Jūrmala city and Latgale region. In Latgale two thirds of visitors were repeat visitors and in Jūrmala every third traveller is a frequent visitor (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2012).

As regards the level of income and expenses during travel, visitors from Sweden, Finland and Western European countries (e.g. Germany and the United Kingdom) were relatively wealthier than travellers from Lithuania, Estonia and Russia. Relatively, the wealthiest travellers were from Sweden while the most price-sensitive traveller was from Lithuania. The average expenditure per person per day was around 100 Euros including transport to and from Latvia. Travellers from Sweden spent the most: on average 143 Euros per day, followed by travellers from the UK (123 Euros) and Finland (117 Euros). Travellers from Lithuania tend to spend the least – on average 53 Euros per person per day (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2012).

1.1.2 Tourism policy in Latvia

Tourism policy in Latvia falls under the competence of the Ministry of Economics and at the time of the research and until 2016 its implementation was delegated to Latvian Tourism Development Agency (in Latvian – *Tūrisma attīstības valsts aģentūra, TAVA*; for the rest of the text – *LTDA*) (see Appendix 1 on the history of LTDA). The LTDA is a state agency that is responsible for the advancement of tourism development in Latvia. The main functions of the LTDA are the following:

- Ensuring implementation of Latvian tourism development policy;
- Implementing tourism advertising and PR activities in Latvia and abroad, as well as activities for promoting the sale of tourism products;
- Implementation of state and private partnership tourism development projects;
- Attraction of financial resources for tourism development (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2014).

In 2010, the LTDA approved two important strategic documents in the area of tourism marketing: Latvian Tourism Marketing Strategy 2010-2015 and a Latvian tourism brand communication platform. The latter introduced the new Latvian tourism brand “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” (see Figure 1.1). It popularizes Latvia as a place where “tourists have an opportunity to change the tempo of their lives and enjoy unhurried leisure, thus tasting new experiences, aspiring to harmony and revealing true values” (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2010, p. 15). It should be noted that the Latvian tourism brand and slogan were designed by an advertising agency.



Figure 1.1

Latvian tourism brand and slogan in English, German and Russian (Source: Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2011)

As Kotler and Gertner (2002, p. 256) have emphasized, “tourism requires image making and branding grounded in the place’s reality.” Similarly, Bayrak and Kozak (2013, p. 22) highlight the necessity for destinations to differentiate themselves from others “by fostering their unique identity or personality, which is based on their core values.” The new tourism brand claims to follow these principles since the “basic values of the Latvia tourism brand are characterised by truthfulness, profoundness, easiness and confidence grounded in the Latvian environment, culture and people” (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2010, p. 15). The strategy envisages that “the development of Latvian tourism as a product is based on five core values: 1) quality, 2) sustainability, 3) individualisation, 4) high added value and 5) tourist participation and experience-building” (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2010, p. 27). In terms of the strategic products, it is acknowledged that cultural tourism, nature tourism and products with high added value such as medicine tourism, wellness tourism, sports events and business tourism are compatible with these core values (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2010).

The overall aim of the strategic place marketing is “the enhancement of a country’s position in the global market-place” (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 253).

In order to implement the Latvian Tourism Marketing Strategy 2010-2015, the LTDA has developed the Latvian Tourism Marketing external communication strategy 2011-2014 which outlines the marketing activities as well as specific target segments in high priority target markets. In general, Latvia's inbound travel markets are divided into four categories based on geographic segmentation: High priority (Lithuania, Estonia, Germany, Russia, Sweden and Finland); Priority (Norway, Great Britain, Italy, Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands); Secondary (all other European countries); and Prospective (markets outside Europe – USA, Japan, China India) (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2010). These categories determine how much resources are allocated for marketing activities in each particular country. In addition, the priority target audiences in each high priority market are identified. The target audiences are based on socio-demographic segmentation and Client life-cycle models. From five possible segments, namely; young people and students, young professionals, families with children, middle generation and silver generation, the last three segments are chosen as the most appropriate for further Latvian tourism brand communication activities. This choice is based on the suitability of actual Latvian tourism offerings as well as the tourism brand's "Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly" appeal to these segments. Furthermore, two target segments for each high priority target market are chosen: the middle generation and silver generation for Germany, families with children and middle generation for Russia, middle generation and families with children for Finland, middle generation and silver generation for Sweden and families with children and middle generation for Lithuania and Estonia (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2011).

The strategy to attract people with a higher income and from the middle and silver generations is consistent with studies showing that these factors contribute to an increased length of stay at the destination (Machado, 2010). That is, older and more affluent people tend to stay longer at the destination. However, it is interesting to note that slow travel is considered to be relevant and appealing, and thus is emphasized in the communication of activities mainly for the silver generation from Germany and Sweden and the middle generation from Germany, Finland, and Sweden - but not however for the middle generation from Lithuania and Estonia.

Since slow travel is associated with Slow Food - which means higher quality but also higher cost – one explanation for this could be the fact that the disposable income and consequently purchasing power of middle generation and silver generation differs across the geographical markets. That is, the financial resources that these market segments can afford to spend on travelling are much higher in the Scandinavian and western European countries than in Latvia's neighbouring countries. Another possible explanation is that the authors of the document translate slow travel literally and understand it as a physically slow activity, as opposed to 'active' travel. Consequently, it is assumed that physically slow travel is more appropriate for elderly people who might have less mobility.

The new brand aims to encourage people to stay longer in Latvia and to redirect the tourist flow into the countryside. Stays in rural areas tend to generate more expenditure per person in comparison with stays in urban areas due to longer stays, greater use of accommodation and the purchasing of more products and services during rural stays (Bel, Lacroix, Lyser, Rambonilaza, & Turpin, 2015). An increased length of stay at the destination is more sustainable not only economically but also environmentally (Gössling et al., 2005). It is also acknowledged that longer vacations have a positive impact not only on the supply side of tourism but also on tourist themselves. People who stay on vacation for seven or more nights have higher levels of satisfaction regarding their leisure life and life in general (Neal, Sirgy, & Uysal, 2004).

One of the factors contributing to the length of stay is a favourable image of the destination (Machado, 2010). That is, the better the image tourists have of the destination, the longer they tend to stay there.

Although as Pike (2009, p. 857) argues, the position change of a destination in a very competitive market "will only occur slowly over a long period of time," the new tourism image of Latvia fits well with its tourism offering. A survey among foreign tourists in Latvia carried out in 2012 shows that 75% of respondents agree that Latvia resonates with its new brand "Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly." The biggest agreement was observed among elderly travellers; travellers who had spent more time in Latvia, those whose actual experience exceeded their expectations and travellers from Russia and Germany (Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2012).

The current tourism situation in Latvia raises several questions in the context of this research. Firstly, to what extent can the new Latvian tourism brand influence tourism flow? Can the 'slow destination' image work as a 'pull' factor? Secondly, what do Latvian destination marketers understand of the 'slow' concept – and how do they interpret it? Thirdly, what are the implications of applying the slow concept in destination marketing? These are some of the questions this research will address. More detail on the specific focus of the research is provided at the end of literature review.

1.2 Justification of research

There are several reasons that justify the viability of the research topic.

1. The slow movement itself, calling for a more mindful approach not only to travelling but to life in general (Honoré, 2005), is growing at an accelerating rate. Accordingly, the number of supporters and advocates for this slow philosophy increases, broadening the demand for slow tourism which seems to provide a solution for those who want to incorporate the principles of economic, environmental and social sustainability in their travel and at the same time gain authentic and meaningful experiences. All in all, slow tourism can be regarded as a growing trend, the importance of which will increase in the future.
2. A second factor is the increasing emphasis on tourism experiences, which is growing in importance (Mei, 2014). Since "the experiences of consumers play an increasingly important role in economic and social life" (Quan & Wang, 2004, p. 297), it is suggested that in the next decade "experiences will become of far greater value to many travellers" (Heitmann, Robinson, & Povey, 2011, p. 125). A recent study indicates that the slow tourism process positively contributes to the tourists' satisfaction, future return intention and referral/recommendation intention that result from positive tourist experiences (Oh, Assaf, & Baloglu, 2014).
3. Several authors note that current tourism patterns are not sustainable (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012) because the number of tourists is growing every year causing higher levels of pollution. In 2012, international

tourist arrivals surpassed the one billion mark for the first time in history, and forecasts show that tourist numbers will continue to grow in the future (UNWTO, 2013). The latest international tourism forecast *Tourism Towards 2030: Global Overview* states: “International tourist arrivals are set to increase by 43 million a year between 2010 and 2030” (UNWTO, 2011, p. 5). In fact, it is forecast that between 2016-2017 the estimated number of tourist arrivals (international and domestic overnight visitors) will exceed the global population for the first time (Hall, 2015). Consequently, greenhouse gas emissions associated with travel, accommodation and related activities are predicted to grow as well. Therefore, the tourism industry has to react to these changes and find innovative answers if this growth is to be sustained. Although slow tourism is not a panacea to all the problems the tourism industry is facing, it offers an alternative approach to travel and at the same time fits well within the Green Growth 2050 roadmap for tourism proposed in the Rio+20 Earth Summit (G. Lipman, Delcay, & Whitelaw, 2013).

4. While several authors are talking about the potential of using “slow” in destination branding and promotion (Conway & Timms, 2010; Pecsek, 2016), Latvia is among the few destinations actually using “slow” in its tourism destination marketing slogan and probably the only one using “slow” in destination branding at the national level. This provides opportunities to explore the application of a slow philosophy in destination marketing and management and examine whether “slow” is a viable promotional tool for tourism destinations. Besides, Latvia is still under-researched as a tourism destination in an international context.

The research was also driven by the personal interest of the researcher. A few weeks after attending the presentation during which the new Latvian tourism brand was launched in 2010, the researcher came across the book by Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) “Slow Travel and Tourism” at the university library and started to flick through it out of curiosity wondering how the “slow” that Latvia as a destination was promoting was related to the “slow” concept described by academics and known elsewhere in the world. Both events sparked interest in the slow approach to tourism and a willingness to explore further the application of slow philosophy in tourism, destination marketing and

destination management. While Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) was the first source of information on slow travel and tourism and so is frequently cited in this study, the author is aware of possible bias related to it and acknowledges alternative viewpoints.

1.3 Scope of the research

The gaps in the literature in relation to slow travel and slow travellers have been identified in the previous sections; this section now highlights the theoretical contribution as well as the managerial implications of this study.

Since slow tourism has different meanings in different contexts and is interpreted differently according to the context, it is important to regard slow tourism as an actual practice of the tourists who engage in it. Therefore, this research looks at slow tourism from the perspectives both of tourist and destination marketer. It considers actual slow tourism practices and the experiences of slow tourists in Latvia, officially promoted as a slow travel destination, and also the perception and understanding of slow tourism from the point of view of the Latvian tourism destination marketing organization, namely the Latvian Tourism Development Agency and Tourism Information Centres.

The conceptual framework in Figure 1.2 summarizes the relationship between the variables that will be examined and analysed in this study.

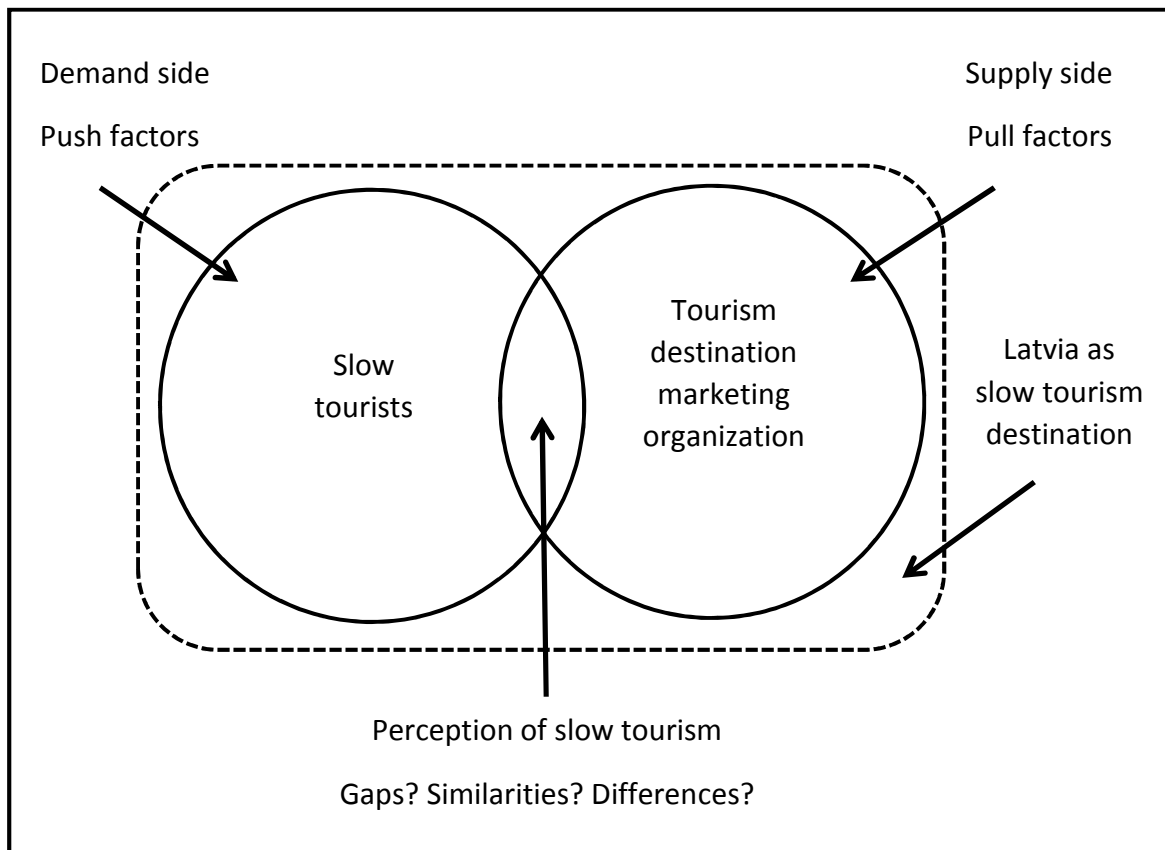


Figure 1.2

Conceptual framework of the research (Source: author)

This research is innovative in this subject area in three ways. Firstly, it focuses on and analyses the actual slow tourism practices and experiences of slow tourists within a particular destination thereby contributing to the broader literature on slow tourism and slow tourists. Secondly, it will explore slow tourism from both supply and demand sides by examining the perspectives of slow tourists and the tourism organization marketing that destination. This dual approach will help to identify and evaluate the similarities and differences in the perception of slow tourism in practice from both sides that could be further used in a destination marketing context. Thirdly, since there is no existing in-depth study of the factors which influence the decisions of slow tourists, slow tourism will be analysed using the push and pull factor model in order to develop our understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for this tourism practice.

The research has both theoretical and managerial implications. In terms of theoretical implications, the research contributes to the existing gap in knowledge about slow tourists and provides a better understanding of their actual slow tourism practices and experiences. In terms of managerial implications, it seeks to answer questions about the role of a slow destination image as a pull factor and the application of the slow philosophy in the destination marketing and management context.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

The aim of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of slow tourism and its antecedents through the motivations and experiences of slow tourists and the strategic marketing activities of tourism destination marketing organizations (specifically in the context of Latvia, which is officially and deliberately positioned and promoted as a slow travel destination). Therefore, the research explores actual slow tourism practices and experiences, by studying slow tourism from the perspectives of both slow tourists and the tourism organization marketing the destination. A push and pull factor framework is employed, using an interpretivist approach, in order to structure the analysis of slow tourism.

This research has the following objectives:

1. To identify and evaluate the interpretation and understanding of the slow tourism concept in Latvia by tourists and destination marketers
2. To identify the characteristics of slow tourists in Latvia
3. To identify and evaluate similarities and differences in the perception of slow tourism practices and experiences from both the supply and demand sides in Latvia
4. To identify and understand the key push and pull factors for slow tourism from the perspective of tourists and tourism destination marketers in Latvia
5. To identify and examine the role of the slow destination brand as a pull factor in Latvia

6. To evaluate the implications of applying the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management in Latvia

Chapter 2 will highlight the existing gaps in the literature justifying research objectives and establish the research questions that need to be answered in order to achieve each research objective.

1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis “Slow tourism in slow countries: the case of Latvia” consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 establishes the context of the research by providing the background and justification of the study. It outlines the scope of the research as well as the research aim and objectives.

Chapter 2 discusses the existing theoretical and empirical studies in relation to slow tourism as well as the application of slow philosophy in destination marketing and management and lays out the theoretical dimensions of the research. The chapter concludes by highlighting the existing gaps in the literature and justifying the research questions that need to be answered in order to achieve each research objective. In addition it identifies the constructs that need to be examined for each research objective.

Chapter 3 outlines and justifies the methodology used to achieve the research objectives. The choice of research paradigm and method are discussed and the particular approach to collect and analyse data for this study is justified.

Chapter 4 presents the results and discusses the findings of the study. This chapter addresses the research question formulated earlier in this study through the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the research participants during the semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis is used to identify the themes in relation to the constructs examined in this study.

Chapter 5 concludes the study by providing a short summary of the main results for each of the six research objectives. The theoretical and methodological contributions of this study are outlined and the recommendations for tourism policy makers and

tourism service providers are given. The limitations of the study are discussed and suggestions for future research are provided.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

2.1 Slow travel and tourism terminology

Many authors have attempted to conceptualise and define slow travel and tourism from a theoretical perspective, but, since it is still in an early stage of development, there is no universally adopted definition of the term. There is even some opposition to put slow travel in a defined framework. As Lumsdon and McGrath (2011, p. 273) point out, “the concept is still emergent and thus needs to be allowed to grow without constraints and definitions.”

A part of the problem is the confusing terminology. Often, the terms ‘slow travel’ and ‘slow tourism’ are used interchangeably within academic literature, mass media and travel blogs and a clear distinction between the two is lacking. In the academic literature for instance, some authors refer to either ‘slow travel’ (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) or ‘slow tourism’ (Matos, 2003) while others use both terms together and refer to ‘slow travel and tourism’.

Several authors have acknowledged the need to differentiate between ‘slow travel’ and ‘slow tourism’. For instance, Heitmann et al. (2011) separate both concepts although a clear distinction between the two is not made. However, the authors talk about different forms of transport when referring to ‘slow travel’ and tourism activities, experiences and characteristics when referring to ‘slow tourism’ – indirectly implying that ‘slow travel’ is a part of a wider ‘slow tourism’ concept. A much clearer distinction between the two concepts is provided by Conway and Timms (2012) who ask to differentiate between ‘slow travel’ and ‘slow tourism’ since both terms have different rationales although they have emerged from the same concept – the Slow Food movement. The authors observe that in ‘slow travel’ the emphasis is more on the journey travelled and the modes of transport that are used in this journey. Hence, slow travel represents a demand-side perspective. ‘Slow tourism’ on the other hand links “the slow traveller’s qualitative experiences and enjoyments on the journey and at their destinations with the benefits they provide for local stakeholders” (ibid., p. 72). As such, ‘slow tourism’ focuses on activities at the holiday destination (Guiver & McGrath, 2016)

and represents a supply-side perspective where emphasis is placed on issues at the tourism destination level. Similarly, Matos (2003) uses the term 'slow tourism' when talking about the destination. Likewise, Di Clemente, Hernández-Mogollón, De Salvo, and Campón-Cerro (2014) differentiate between the two concepts. According to the authors, 'slow tourism' is a broader concept where slowness is the underlying factor in the overall tourist experience. While 'slow travel' also recognizes slowness as an integral part of the trip, it underlines the environmental responsibility that the tourist exhibits, especially in relation to the environmentally friendly means of transportation they may use while on their slow journey.

In addition, there might be some regional preferences in how the terms are used. For instance in the USA the term 'travel' is often used instead of 'tourism' (Page, 2011). It is also considered that the slow travel concept has developed and is understood differently in Europe and the USA due to the "spatial, cultural, psychological and infrastructural differences" (Robbins & Cho, 2012, p. 114). In the USA the focus of 'slow travel' is solely on destination experiences while in Europe its understanding is multi-dimensional, underlining both the journey and its environmental impacts (ibid.).

There has even been debate that the main emphasis should be on the word 'slow' and not on the words 'travel' or 'tourism' since people can also have slow day trips and slow afternoons (Caffyn, 2012). Although slow travel and tourism is typically used when referring to holidaymaking, it can also be used to describe day leisure visits (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

While the debate continues on 'slow travel' versus 'slow tourism', for the purposes of this thesis the term 'slow tourism' will be used, referring to the activities and overall experience of tourists while at the destination. This allows both demand and supply side perspectives to be incorporated. At the same time, the original terminology used by the authors will be preserved.

2.2 The slow movement, its predecessors and underlying philosophy

Although philosophers, poets and travel writers have been advocating a slower approach in various areas of life throughout the last century (for discussion see Honoré, 2005; Matos, 2003), it is widely acknowledged that the Slow Food and Cittáslow (or Slow City) social movements have been the most successful in the past decades in gaining acceptance around the world and consequently playing an important role in the development of a wider slow movement that is popular today (Heitmann et al., 2011); therefore, both will be discussed in more detail below.

2.2.1 Slow Food

The idea of Slow Food was born in 1986 when Carlo Petrini and his confederates protested against the opening of the first McDonald's 'fast food' restaurant in an historic part of Rome. In 1989, the Slow Food movement was officially founded in Paris, and the "Slow Food Manifesto" was signed. The Slow Food Manifesto states that the human lifestyle in the industrialized world is modelled according to machines and that the majority of people today "mistake efficiency with frenzy," which is a result of the modern virus – the fast life. Therefore, according to this movement, the resistance to it should start at the table and in the kitchen with Slow Food (Slow Food, 1989). Slow Food is a non-profit member-supported organization with more than 100,000 members in 150 countries. Its core values are Good, Clean, and Fair food for all. The movement counters "the rise of fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people's dwindling interest in the food they eat" and promotes "linking the pleasure of good food with a commitment to their community and environment" (Slow Food, 2013). Preserving local food traditions and supporting locally grown foods that are associated with particular geographical regions are at the core of the Slow Food philosophy (Mayer & Knox, 2006).

Over the years the Slow Food movement has transformed from a small group promoting gastronomy in 1986 into a broader social movement promoting eco-gastronomy after 2000 (van Bommel & Spicer, 2011). This transformation has been

achieved through three processes. Firstly, the strategies of autonomy (for Slow Food members at local level) and engagement (involving powerful political entities) were used by Slow Food to become a social movement that appeals to activists and larger organizations. Currently, the movement operates at both infra-political and political levels. Secondly, the language used to represent the movement has been expanded. Analysing discourses on Slow Food in UK newspaper articles, van Bommel and Spicer (2011) found that initial floating signifiers ('meaningful' words – the sense of which depends on the context) employed in language which represented Slow Food – such as taste, slowness, artisanal traditions and traditional, local products – were later complemented by new signifiers such as biodiversity, sustainability and social justice. This allowed the movement to gain acceptance within broader popular discourses. Finally, it has also transformed through the use of nodal points (nodal points are “grand terms that bring together a series of more minor terms or themes” (ibid., p. 1722)). An initial nodal point of 'gastronomy' was abstracted and replaced with a nodal point of 'eco-gastronomy'. This shifted the focus from simply food quality to wider environmental and fair trade issues. Together, these three processes have enabled the Slow Food movement to become a social movement appealing to a wider audience today (ibid.).

2.2.2 Cittáslow or Slow City

Cittáslow or the Slow City movement, a derivative movement of Slow Food, was born in 1999 when the Mayors of four Italian towns – Greve, Bra, Orvieto and Positano – in conjunction with Slow Food decided to take the philosophy of Slow Food into everyday life in local towns. Since then the network has expanded throughout the world and so far 199 cities in 30 countries have joined the Cittáslow International Network as of July 2015. The membership is open to relatively small cities that have up to 50,000 inhabitants and comply with at least 50 per cent of the requirements in the following areas: environmental and infrastructure policies, technologies and facilities for urban quality, safeguarding autochthonous (indigenous) production, hospitality and awareness (Cittáslow, 1999). Local distinctiveness coupled with a sense of place in Slow Cities is promoted through urban design and planning strategies (Knox, 2005).

Slowness in Cittáslow is implemented in various ways. Miele (2008, p. 135), for instance, refers to Cittáslow as “a set of technologies for producing slowness.” According to the author, slowness is enacted through objects (local food and wine, eco-compatible building materials), practices (taste education in schools, wine making), and spaces (The Palace of Taste building in Orvieto city in Italy, for instance). In addition, slowness can be enacted in other ways such as culinary events, music festivals and initiatives aimed at improving the life of local inhabitants (ibid.).

Moreover, slowness in a Slow City can also serve as a tool for local sustainable development. An example of this can be seen in the study of Mayer and Knox (2006) who examine the Slow City movement in the context of alternative economic development in two cities in Germany: Waldkirch and Hersbruck. They argue that the development in both cities focuses on such areas as economy, sustainability and social equity; therefore, it can be said that the Slow City movement provides “a viable model for alternative urban development” (ibid., p. 321). The authors also point out that it is the focus on local products that distinguishes Slow City ideas from other concepts of sustainability. Similarly, Pink (2008, p. 97) refers to Cittáslow as “both an urban social movement and a model for local governance,” while Ekinci (2014) further links the Cittáslow philosophy with sustainable tourism development.

Making a city into Cittáslow is a long and time-consuming process. While there should be a number of programs and policies already in place implemented by local government before a city can be certified as a Cittáslow, the process does not end with an application for membership – it is just beginning. As mentioned, applicants do not have to fulfil all the requirements, but they have to comply with at least 50 per cent of them. Depending on individual circumstances and particularities, there might be requirements that cities are not implementing and not planning to implement in the future (Miele, 2008). On the other hand, cities might implement a range of policies that go beyond the official Cittáslow requirements. This indicates that in practice there are no pure slow cities and that Cittáslow should be regarded as an ideal to strive for, but that it is up to every individual Cittáslow to choose its own individual way to produce a version of slowness (ibid.). Therefore, it is possible to affirm that Cittáslow status provides a unifying

theme that brings together existing and new development strategies in the city (Mayer & Knox, 2006).

A common critique of Slow Cities is that they are “living mausoleums where the puritanical zealotry of Slowness has displaced the fervent materialism of the fast world” as observed by Knox (2005, p. 7). This, however, is not the case. Slow City is not only about the preservation of the old but also about creation of the new. In addition to supporting local arts and crafts, Slow City must also support modern industries that have the capacity to deliver products that are distinctive to that particular place (ibid.). Innovation and technology can and should be used in areas like pollution control or waste management systems (ibid.).

In fact, the philosophy of Cittáslow envisages slow living by combining “the best of the knowledge of the past” with “the best possibilities of the present and of the future” (Cittáslow, 2013). Therefore, joining Cittáslow means that along with preserving old slow objects, practices and spaces, the cities can produce new slow objects, practices and spaces (Miele, 2008). As a result, Slow City can be described as a fluid object – one that is constantly changing and evolving – with fluidity being a key to its success (Miele, 2008).

Although both Slow Food and Cittáslow movements operate as separate international networks, there are close links between the two. While Slow Food has emerged as a counter-reaction to fast food, the Slow City movement has emerged as a counter-reaction to fast life (Knox, 2005; Mayer & Knox, 2006; Miele, 2008). The main motivation behind both movements is ecological and humanistic, and not so much political (Knox, 2005), although later studies suggest that Slow Food has grown from a civic movement into a broader social movement employing infra-political and political approaches (van Bommel & Spicer, 2011). Probably the biggest similarities between both movements are in the area of their heritage politics; that is, their aspiration to preserve local traditions and culture (Nilsson, Svärd, Widarsson, & Wirell, 2011). One of the compulsory requirements for joining the Cittáslow network is the presence of a Slow Food Convivium (an organizational structure or ‘local chapter’ within Slow Food aiming to provide food education) in a particular town – or a future commitment to establish one (Miele, 2008). Therefore the Slow Food movement can be regarded as “the ideological platform” on which the Slow City movement is founded (Mayer & Knox, 2006, p. 325).

However, Cittáslow is about much more than just preserving local food traditions. One of the aims of Cittáslow is to improve the quality of local life and of the local residents (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Knox, 2005; Pink, 2008).

2.2.3 Slow movement

The Slow Food and Slow City movements, as mentioned before, are considered to be the predecessor of a wider slow movement which has originated as a response to fast living, eating, travelling, parenting and doing things in general fast and advocates the slowing down of the pace of life (Honoré, 2005).

Fast living as a result of globalization (Knox, 2005) is characteristic in contemporary Western societies and highly developed countries in general, where time means money, where recognition can be achieved by hard work and where people strive for success and accumulation of wealth. Innovations in transportation and communications are often mentioned as the main facilitators of speed (O'Regan, 2012) and the resulting increased mobility is not only a characteristic of a modern economy, it is also a driving force for it (Nijkamp & Baaijens, 1999). Scarcity of time, stress, unhappiness and hostility are often listed as consequences of hurried lifestyles, particularly in America (Andrews, 2006). On a broader scale it leads to a decline of social capital and the destruction of the environment (ibid.). Consequently, there is both a need and a call to slow down.

The philosophy of the slow movement can probably be best described through the words of Honoré (2005, p. 13) who states that: "The Slow movement is not about doing everything at a snail's pace. [It is about seeking] to live at what musicians call the *tempo giusto* – the right speed." He talks about the cult of speed: the accelerated way of living that many in today's Western society are aiming for, noting that:

Most of us do not wish to replace the cult of speed with the cult of slowness. Speed can be fun, productive and powerful, and we would be poorer without it. What the world needs, and what the Slow movement offers, is a middle path, a recipe for marrying *la dolce vita* with the dynamism of the information age (Honoré, 2005, pp. 238-239).

The main idea then of the slow philosophy is to find the right balance between fast and slow; so therefore the slow philosophy can be summed up in one word – balance (Honoré, 2005). At the same time, the slow movement is also described as “a lifestyle revolution” (ibid., p. 15) that allows people to live, work and also travel differently from the established norms of fast life (Fullagar, Markwell, & Wilson, 2012). Similarly, other authors note that the slow movement is about a change of mindset and a re-evaluation of priorities in life (Heitmann et al., 2011). One of the new priorities includes a slower approach to life; one that strives for simplicity, mindfulness and embodied experience to facilitate personal reflection, renewal and growth (Howard, 2012). In the context of tourism, new priorities are emerging as well: low impact tourism, engaging with people, giving something back to the communities visited and being aware of carbon footprints (Gardner, 2009).

While parallels can be drawn between the Slow Food and Slow City movement and the wider slow movement, there are some differences. As such, the slow movement and its underlying philosophy is more about an individual’s relationship with the world which differentiates it from the Slow Food and Slow City movements that are mostly focused on bringing together local residents at the community level (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Moreover, the slow movement as such is not institutionalized in a single organization, and the slow philosophy is formed from a collection of ideas rather than a set of prescribed rules. Although the slow movement has no formal structure and its brand recognition is low, it is argued that it has the necessary appeal to be called a movement (Honoré, 2005).

One conclusion that can be reached is that the contemporary slow movement has emerged as a counter-reaction to speed and fast life, globalization and homogenization. Yet while the Slow Food and Cittáslow movements can be seen as catalysts for further initiatives where the main concepts of slow ideology are adapted, these concepts can seldom be transferred directly into other areas and are therefore adjusted individually to each particular case. However, the main idea – “addressing the issue of time poverty and fast solutions by encouraging more thorough connections to people, places and life” (Heitmann et al., 2011, p. 117) – remains the same across areas where the principles of slow philosophy are applied. One such area is slow travel and tourism.

2.3 Slow travel and tourism – conceptualization and dimensions

A wide range of people across different sectors have contributed to the understanding of slow travel and tourism. Since, historically, small-scale travel companies and travel writers were among the early advocates of slow travel and tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010), the concepts of slow travel and tourism as well as slow travellers and tourists are illustrated not only from the viewpoint of academics but also from the viewpoint of travel writers and practitioners.

It has been acknowledged that Slow Food has contributed to the development of slow travel and tourism (Conway & Timms, 2010; Hall, 2006; C. M. Hall, 2012; Timms & Conway, 2011) and vice versa – slow travel and tourism has also been associated with Slow Food (K. H. Lee, Scott, & Packer, 2014) and visiting Cittáslow (Robinson, 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). Yet, while the Slow Food movement and slow travel concepts have much in common such as experiencing local food and beverages and respect for local culture and heritage (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010), the direct application of Slow Food principles to slow travel and tourism can be problematic. For example, decreasing the distance that food travels is relevant in the context of Slow Food and consequently means producing locally; in the context of slow travel and tourism this would imply travelling locally which can prove economically disastrous for those rural and peripheral regions that are far away from metropolitan areas (Hall, 2006). Therefore, the set of principles that plays a role in the context of slow travel and tourism needs further discussion. The following section will provide analysis of the slow travel and tourism concept and position it in relation to other more established types of tourism.

2.3.1 Overlap between slow travel and tourism and other types of tourism

There are various interpretations of where slow travel could fit in the overall tourism system and whether it can be seen as a guiding principle for travel or a particular tourism niche, and whether it can be used as an umbrella term encompassing various tourism

types. The differences and similarities between slow travel and other types of tourism will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.1.1 Slow travel and tourism – approach, umbrella or niche?

Firstly, slow travel and tourism has been defined as an overall approach to tourism. It has emerged as a reaction to fast travel or mass tourism and many authors refer to slow as the opposite of fast (Andrews, 2006; Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson, Lumsdon, & Robbins, 2011; Groenendaal, 2012; Honoré, 2005; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Timms & Conway, 2011), whereas others refer to slow as the antithesis of speed (Matos, 2003), or hectic lives (Richards, 2012; Slow Movement, 2013; Slow Travel Europe, 2014). Slowness is understood as “being unhurried, tranquil, serene, chilled out, seeking simplicity and switching off from everyday life” (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011, p. 271). It is associated with “a slowing down of the holiday process in relation to travel, distance and the activities pursued en route and at a destination” (ibid., p. 271). However, slow is about the “lack of speed rather than slowness per se” (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011, p. 265). This indicates that almost any type of tourism that is not mass tourism and is approached in a slow way can consequently be called slow.

Secondly, some authors refer to slow travel as an umbrella brand that encompasses various tourism types. For instance, Woehler (2003) refers to the wellness trend and sustainable tourism as examples of “slow leisure.” Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) refer to slow travel as an umbrella term with its low-carbon approach being a differentiating factor. Further, Conway and Timms (2010) also argue that slow tourism can be an umbrella brand for different types of tourism – sports, heritage, agro and ecotourism. In a later study, Timms and Conway (2011, p. 405) refer to slow tourism as an inclusive alternative tourism model that “encompasses the environmental sustainability concerns of ecotourism, addresses the social and cultural sustainability interests of community-based tourism and pro-poor tourism, and advances economic sustainability ideals such as maximizing local linkages through agri-tourism.” Next, Murayama and Parker (2012) refer to slow tourism as an umbrella term or brand that could encompass the following types of tourism – ecotourism, green tourism, agri-tourism, health tourism,

cultural tourism and food tourism. Similarly, Singh (2012) suggests that slow tourism is a broad concept that includes a wide spectrum of activities and tourism products. He refers to pilgrimage, religious, cultural and agri-tourism, as well as ecotourism, volunteer tourism, village tourism and pro-poor tourism as different forms of slow travel (ibid.). Finally, slow travel and tourism is regarded as an umbrella for “new tourism” (Conway & Timms, 2010; Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

Finally, several authors contextualize slow travel as a separate tourism niche (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Moore, 2012) that appeals to a particular tourist segment (Matos, 2003). It is argued that slow tourism can be categorized under wellness tourism and is characterized by simple accommodation, healthy diet, peaceful leisure, local culture, services provided in a peaceful atmosphere and respecting the natural environment (ibid.). Further, slow tourism is considered to be a niche market that incorporates green travel, i.e. green travel is a part of, or is embedded in, slow travel (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). However, while green travel is focused on the transport element, slow travel refers to the whole tourist experience (ibid.).

2.3.1.2 Links with other types of tourism

Often, the links between slow travel and tourism and other types of travel and tourism are provided in the literature. For example, slow travel is linked with pilgrimage which represents “a paradigmatic form of slow travel” (Howard, 2012, p. 17). Slow travel and pilgrimage have many things in common, like simplicity, mindfulness and embodied experience as well as a quest towards one’s valued ideals. In addition, common characteristics for slow travellers and pilgrims is their desire for deeper and more authentic experiences in relation to oneself and the world (ibid.).

Further, similarities are drawn between slow tourism and volunteer tourism. One such case is a work exchange programme “Willing Workers on Organic Farms” (WWOOF) in Australia (M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012). The program envisages that travellers spend from four to six hours per day working in farms in exchange for food and shelter. One of the main benefits for the travellers is the opportunity to engage with locals, which

otherwise could be a problem as locals often treat tourists as outsiders. In addition to meeting and engaging with locals working outside the tourism industry, the programme also helps travellers to overcome other obstacles to slow tourism like using shared surface transport to access rural areas and facilitating “a more sustainable approach to tourism among those not explicitly interested in ‘slowness’” (ibid., pp. 84-85). Overall, reduced mobility, a shift in modal choice and engagement with local communities are considered to be the main areas where slow tourism and volunteer tourism overlap (ibid.).

Another example linking slow tourism and a community-based volunteer tourism is the Tribewanted project which “fosters a more sustainable travel experience both in terms of the visitors and the indigenous host community” (Gibson, Pratt, & Movono, 2012, p. 186). Tourists go to the island of Vorovoro, Fiji for a week or longer, live along indigenous people according to their customs, norms and rules, and participate in different volunteer activities. Instead of being just tourists, they become active tribe members and try to live as Fiji villagers do. Apart from the real tribe on the island there is also an on-line community that is involved in discussions and decision-making. The Tribewanted project was launched in 2006 and Vorovoro Island, which was not inhabited before that, has now become a real life “playground” for visitors and locals where they can see the direct consequences of the decisions they make in everyday life. It is suggested that the tourism experience in the Tribewanted project has many elements of slow tourism, such as staying in one place for a longer time, engaging with local culture, heritage, and people, authentic experience, bringing economic benefits to a local community and taking time to relax and recharge oneself (ibid.).

Parallels are also drawn between slow tourism and ‘wandering’ which is a slower way of moving through the world and also represents a more mindful approach not only to travelling but also to living (Tiyce & Wilson, 2012). The similarities between slow tourism and wandering are best described in the following passage:

[T]ravelling slowly, these wanderers consciously shape their experiences and timespace practices in ways that nurture and enhance their sense of well-being and the quality of their lives. They allow their journeys to unfold serendipitously, revealing in the detail and the surprise. They privilege the present, over the past and future, and more often follow timespace markers of nature, events and

experiences. These attitudes and practices allow for a slower pace of life and a life more meaningful, what they perceive as “the good life” (ibid., p. 125).

Although wandering is essentially different from slow travel (since wandering means going from one place to another without a definite destination or purpose), there are several aspects of wandering that are also relevant in slow travel: wanderers shape time and space in their own way; making conscious choices about where they travel. Wandering can be done by budget travellers carrying a tent, but can also be practised by wealthier travellers towing a caravan or driving a campervan. Wanderers are open to serendipity and adventure even if it means embracing uncertainty; and wandering and consequently slow travel provides ways of escaping rules and obligations of modern life that make people unhappy (ibid.).

Furthermore, the mobility aspect of slow tourism – slow mobility – is used to link it with hitch-hiking which represents an alternative form of mobility culture. It has been suggested that slow mobility and also hitch-hiking resists contemporary tourism mobilities (O'Regan, 2012). Although hitch-hikers do not associate themselves with the Slow movement directly, it is argued that hitch-hiking has the attributes of the Slow movement and contributes to its ideas since hitch-hikers resist “placelessness” and the loss of human interaction while at the same time appreciating the distance travelled and travel time (ibid., p. 139). However, there are doubts about whether hitch-hiking will contribute to the slow travel framework in the foreseeable future taking into account its negative image in contemporary western society, although it is acknowledged that hitch-hiking can contribute positively to reduced carbon footprints and travel experiences (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

In addition, implicit links between slow tourism and other types of tourism can be found in the literature. An example of this is antinomian travel, which is another type of budget travel performed by people visiting the island of Gavdos in Greece (Andriotis, 2012). The remote island is only accessible by ferry and most of its beaches have no electricity, running water or modern facilities making it a perfect place for those wanting to get off the beaten track and withdraw from their social milieu. In terms of their travel practices, antinomian travel is independently organized long-term travel with flexible schedules; its practitioners oppose materialism, mainstream activities and the established

norms of society and travel on a limited budget (ibid.). While antinomian travel is not implicitly linked with slow travel, both concepts overlap in many areas: antinomians are flexible in terms of their travel itinerary and timetable; they have anti-commercial attitudes and reject materialism; exhibit environmentally sound practices by trying to live sustainably and have a very strong sense of community and intense social interaction which can be explained by the abundance of time that antinomians spend communicating with each other (ibid.). However, antinomian travel differs from slow travel; for example antinomians have much less interaction with the tourism industry than any other types of tourists and do not have much interest in local culture. Among the reasons cited explaining why people engage in antinomian travel are going through a transitional phase in life, the economic crisis or societal alienation from the mainstream world. Many travellers have identified 'escape' as their travel push factor, be it a life crisis, or escape from society, a failed relationship or the material world (ibid.). The travel practices and behaviour of antinomians as well as their lifestyle resemble those of the hippies (ibid.).

Finally, there are also clear statements about the types of tourism that are not compatible with slow tourism. Many authors refer to slow travel and tourism as an antidote or antithesis to mass tourism (Conway & Timms, 2010; DELTA 2000 Soc. Cons a r.l., 2012; Gardner, 2009; Heitmann et al., 2011; Timms & Conway, 2011). To clarify, mass tourism is understood as "the production of industrially organized tourism that supports the movement of large numbers of people" (C. Cooper, 2008, p. 62). Mass tourism is characterized by the following indicators: highly seasonal tourism demand, middle and low class tourists from urban-industry areas, large number of tourists in relation to locals, spatial focus on a few areas within the destination, spatial concentration of facilities, exploitation of local values, behaviours, and languages; organization by international tourism operators, exploitation of natural resources, undifferentiated products, origin-packaged holidays, and a reliance upon developed generating markets (ibid.). Consequently all these characteristics are regarded as incompatible with slow tourism.

2.3.1.3 Critique of slow tourism

Despite the advocates for slow tourism, critics of the concept also exist. For instance, Weaver (2012b, p. 1032) refers to slow tourism as a “transformational approach” in tourism but also voices doubts about its application in a wider context. Instead, ‘sustainable mass tourism’ is regarded as the desired outcome for destinations, although there is still a debate on how this is to be achieved and the role that slow tourism can play in it (Peeters, 2012; Weaver, 2012a, 2012b).

Probably, the biggest debate is whether slow travel is a viable concept on its own or whether it is part of a wider sustainable tourism concept and just “an old wine in a new bottle.” One argument is that slow tourism is an aspect of sustainable tourism, not its replacement:

Since the debate over sustainable tourism began, ecotourism, green tourism, pro-poor tourism, geotourism, slow tourism, community-based tourism, carbon friendly tourism and many others have entered into the debate. All these specific genres identify specific issues and offer specific solutions. All, however, are sub-genres of the larger sustainable tourism concept (Dodds, 2012, p. 81).

Although it is noted that many elements of slow tourism and sustainable tourism are similar, there is resistance to recognizing slow tourism as an important term. Instead, there is a call for the tourism industry to focus on implementing the goals of sustainable tourism rather than arguing about another term of tourism classification (ibid.).

In addition, slow tourism as a concept has to compete with other forms of travel and tourism that are more popular in certain destinations. Often there are other local alternatives that are more attractive or are more deeply embedded in the local culture. One such example is the concept of ‘friluftsliv’ in Nordic countries (e.g. Norway, Sweden) which encompasses the ideas of outdoor recreation, nature experience, philosophy and lifestyle (Beery, 2013). Another example is the South Korean concept of ‘leiports’ which has been derived from the English words leisure and sports and incorporate aspects of leisure, sports, travel and tourism (Y.-S. Lee & Jennings, 2010). It should be noted that often particular concepts might be context-specific and country-specific. Therefore, it might be better to integrate slow tourism philosophy and practice into other types of

tourism (Guiver, McGrath, & Torkington, 2016) rather than develop and promote slow tourism as a distinct type of tourism.

Finally, there is an argument that slow tourism might not be an emerging concept but rather “the phenomena that has existed ubiquitously without being properly recognized” even as “a quintessential part of mass tourism” (Oh et al., 2014, p. 12). In fact, nearly 30 years ago Krippendorf (1987, p. xxi) advocated “the humanization of travel” which bears much resemblance to what is today called slow travel and tourism.

From the above discussions, it can be seen that there is a lack of uniform agreement as to whether slow travel and tourism can be regarded as a separate tourism niche or an umbrella term, or rather as an overall approach to travel. In addition, attempts to link slow travel with other forms of travel and tourism indicate that certain elements of slow travel and tourism exist within other tourism frameworks.

As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of a consensus on definitions of slow travel and tourism. Because of this, different interpretations of the concept from academics and non-academics have been gathered and further analysed using In Vivo and Descriptive codes (Saldaña, 2009). The codes have been grouped into four categories, representing four dimensions of slow travel and tourism: environmental, experiential, economic and ethical. The following sections provide a summary of the main criteria included in these various definitions and interpretations of slow travel and tourism.

2.3.2 Environmental dimension

Environmental consciousness is one of the dimensions of slow travel and many authors agree that slow travel should be environmentally friendly (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar, 2012; Moore, 2012; Slow Travel Europe, 2014) and a low carbon activity (Dickinson, Robbins, & Lumsdon, 2010; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012) with low impact on the environment (Markwell, Fullagar, & Wilson, 2012; Singh, 2012; Timms & Conway, 2011).

The increasing ecological footprint of fast life and consequent environmental concerns are one of the major reasons for the growth of slow movement and slow travel. Several authors note that current tourism patterns are not sustainable (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Gössling et al., 2005; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012), and tourism growth at a global level intensifies this problem. Ironically, tourism is both sensitive to climate change and at the same time contributing to it (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Moreover, it is projected that emissions from the tourism sector will continue to grow in future (ibid.). Yet the tourism industry is already experiencing some structural adjustments as a response to increasing tourism demand globally. Several initiatives committing to low-carbon economy in the areas of operations optimization, retrofitting and recycling, as well as preserving the environment, have been reported among tourism industry players (*The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2013: Reducing Barriers to Economic Growth and Job Creation*, 2013). However, it can be questioned whether these adjustments are sufficient to withstand the critique of the increased environmental footprint that the tourism sector is creating.

Environmental issues have been discussed mostly in relation to the transport sector since carbon emissions from transport contribute greatly to the carbon footprint and concurrent environmental damage (Gössling et al., 2005). The recent studies confirm that transportation leaves the largest carbon footprint in holiday travel (Filimonau, Dickinson, & Robbins, 2014). Since transportation is an essential prerequisite for tourism (Burkart & Medlik, 1981), the future of transport at the global level will certainly influence the future of tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

One of the biggest debates among practitioners and academics is about the actual modes of transport compatible with slow travel. In general, there are three types of transport modes: self-propelled modes (walking, running and swimming); augmented modes that require amplified bodily effort (rowing, cycling and skiing) or a focus on natural resources (sailing, paragliding); and fuelled modes – hay-powered (horse-drawn carriages and farm wagons) or motorized modes (car, van, motorbike, bus, lorry, tram, ferry, train and aeroplane) (Stradling & Anabele, 2008). While self-propelled and augmented modes are certainly compatible with slow travel principles, fuelled modes –

and motorized modes in particular – cause much disagreement between academics, industry representatives and travellers themselves.

Most agree that, in general, low carbon modes of transport should be used (Dickinson et al., 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012). These usually include travel by train, coach and bicycles, as well as on foot (for discussion see Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2011). Others say that any mode of transport can be used (Conway & Timms, 2012; Mintel Group, 2011), especially when travelling to remote destinations. However, aeroplanes and cars are considered to be the main contributors to CO₂ emissions (M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012) and consequently to climate change. It is estimated that the amount of CO₂ per passenger km in air and car travel is four times higher if compared to rail travel and five times higher if compared to coach travel (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Whilst theoretically in some cases cars might have the same low-carbon impact as trains, in practice they are rarely full and the average car is not fuel efficient (ibid.).

Several recent studies also confirm the negative impact of air and car travel on the environment. The study of Borken-Kleefeld, Fuglestad, and Berntsen (2013) compares the specific climate impact of long-distance (from 500 to 1000 km) car travel with coach, train and air travel looking at both CO₂ emissions and short-lived climate forces. The vehicle fuel efficiency and occupancy is taken into consideration when comparing modern aircraft, gasoline and diesel cars, coaches and diesel and electric trains in Germany. It is concluded that the highest impact on the climate is caused by air travel followed by car travel. Train and diesel coach travel in comparison has, on average, the lowest impact on the climate (ibid.). The fuel efficiency and occupancy of cars are two main variables which determine whether the impact on the climate from car travel is high or low (ibid.). Cars with three or more passengers do have as little impact on climate as trains while cars with one or two passengers are causing as much impact on the climate as aircraft. The exception is for the small diesel cars that with two passengers have a lower impact on the climate than the average coach or train journey (ibid.). In order to minimize their impact on the climate travellers are recommended to increase the occupancy of cars (from 1-2 people to more) and switch from air and car travel to trains and coaches. For wider climate change mitigation, improvements to fuel economy as well as the development of

low-carbon fuels are suggested (ibid.). Another study of Filimonau et al. (2014) shows that in the context of short-haul tourism to Southern France by British holiday tourists, air and car-based travel are the most carbon-intense means of travel while train and coach travel produce a significantly lower carbon footprint. The modal shift from air and car travel to train and coach travel is proposed as the main climate change mitigation strategy (ibid.). Because of the considerations above, some argue that car and air travel as well as cruise liners should be excluded from slow travel (Dickinson et al., 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010). Some sources even condemn the use of planes (for example, FlightlessTravel, 2013; Gardner, 2009).

There are also authors who suggest de-emphasizing the importance of a carbon footprint when defining slow travel (Conway & Timms, 2012; Tiller, 2012). It is argued that “both slow and fast modes of travel coexist and indeed constantly interplay within the same unit of travel, within the same traveller, and both within and across destinations” (Oh et al., 2014, p. 2). This disagreement, as Conway and Timms (2012, p. 74) has pointed out, is therefore the slow tourism construct’s “Achilles heel.”

Another aspect of slow travel directly related to carbon footprint and environmental concerns is the geographical component, i.e. which destinations are suitable for slow travel. Several authors mention that remote, underdeveloped or marginal locations facilitate slow tourism (Conway & Timms, 2010; de la Barre, 2012; Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Timms & Conway, 2011) because they are not spoiled by mass tourism or are relatively untouched, and authenticity is still preserved. Besides, geographical margins are neither dependent on, nor damaged by, mass tourism (Timms & Conway, 2011). Slow travel is sometimes also associated with less developed countries where it provides viable tourism alternatives and at the same time reduces their dependence on international air travel, since it stimulates demand from the domestic market and provides more sustainable development opportunities (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

Remoteness, underdevelopment and the marginality of some destinations make them more difficult to reach in environmentally friendly ways, i.e. with a low carbon footprint, because of the travel-related carbon emission that is generated to reach the destination (de la Barre, 2012). For example, geographically marginal locations in the

Caribbean, where slow tourism is proposed as an alternative to mass tourism, are currently dependent on international air travel (Timms & Conway, 2011). Therefore, although remote destinations might facilitate slow tourism upon arrival, it might be difficult to reach them in an environmentally friendly way.

Besides, slow travel is not only about tourism in developing countries or remote destinations but also about travelling shorter distances. If physically slower tempos of travelling are taken into account, then geographically slow travel is limited to intra-continental travel of up to 2,000kms due to time and comfort concerns (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). As such, slow travel is mostly suited for travel within Europe, North America, South America and South East Asia but not so much for travel from one continent to another (ibid.). Furthermore, if the higher carbon footprint that results from longer travel distances is taken into account (Gössling et al., 2005), it is suggested that slow travellers should travel less distance and focus on interesting destinations closer to their home (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2010; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Moreover, when at their destination, slow travellers are recommended to start by exploring the immediate area (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Oxford University Press, 2013; Slow Europe, 2015; The Independent Traveler, 2013).

In addition, staying longer at the destination is also encouraged in slow travel (Dickinson et al., 2010; Matos, 2003; Mintel Group, 2011; Oxford University Press, 2013; Slow Travel Berlin, 2013; The Independent Traveler, 2013). The case studies undertaken by Gössling et al. (2005) reveal that longer stays at destinations positively influence eco-efficiency (the ratio of greenhouse gas emissions to economic turnover). Another recent study shows that non-transit, destination-based elements can be significant contributors to a carbon footprint and consequently represent the main carbon challenges (Filimonau et al., 2014). Longer stays at a destination are therefore preferable, at the same time focusing on more environmentally friendly accommodation and activity elements in order to mitigate the carbon footprint of tourism (ibid.).

Finally, less energy-intensive forms of accommodation (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) as well as 'degrowth' are suggested in slow travel and tourism. Degrowth is understood as "the acceptance of a more localized and limited mobility at territorial

level” that brings not only environmental but also economic benefits (Di Clemente et al., 2014, p. 31).

Altogether the main aspects of slow travel’s environmental dimension are considered to be a reduced carbon footprint and low carbon modes of transport while travelling shorter distances and staying closer to home as well as staying longer at a destination. Environmental consciousness is also one of the key elements in the conceptual frameworks of slow travel proposed by Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) and also by Lumsdon and McGrath (2011), and environment is one of the three core dimensions proposed by Dickinson et al. (2011) that will be discussed in section 2.3.7.

However, it has to be noted that the main advocates for a reduced carbon footprint and the exclusion of air and car travel in the context of slow tourism are mostly academics. Travel writers and practitioners, on the other hand, place more emphasis on longer stays and exploring the immediate surroundings.

[2.3.3 Experiential dimension](#)

The experiences of slow travel by slow travellers are probably the most discussed area among travel writers, academics and practitioners.

One of the distinguishing aspects of slow travel is the combination of journey and destination experience in the overall travel experience (Dickinson et al., 2011; Gardner, 2009; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Mintel Group, 2011; Slow Travel Europe, 2014; Timms & Conway, 2011). Traditionally, authors like Burkart and Medlik (1981) suggested that tourism comprises of two elements – the journey to the destination and the stay at the destination, including activities undertaken at the destination. Dickinson et al. (2011) object to this traditional division and argue that the journey to the destination and the subsequent stay there should be regarded as one whole. The integration of travel experiences into the overall tourism experience is what differentiates slow travel from other types of travel and tourism (ibid.). Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) also emphasise the integrity of one whole travel experience, referring to slow travel as an ‘holistic

approach' incorporating the outward journey, the experience at the destination and the return journey.

The slow travel experience is associated with physical slowing down (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Locke, 2011; Matos, 2003; Mintel Group, 2011; Page, 2011; The Independent Traveler, 2013; Timms & Conway, 2011) and moving at physically slower tempos (Conway & Timms, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2010; Gardner, 2009; Heitmann et al., 2011; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Oxford University Press, 2013; Richards, 2012; Slow Travel Berlin, 2013). The physical slowness is important for people who want to take time while travelling and is certainly perceived as a travel benefit rather than a cost (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). This also implies 'no rushing and running around' in order to see as much as possible while on a journey (Bradt, 2010; Locke, 2011; Richards, 2012). Physical slowness is further associated with quality since it leads to better experiences (Conway & Timms, 2010, 2012; Dickinson et al., 2010; Heitmann et al., 2011; Matos, 2003; Singh, 2012; Timms & Conway, 2011).

Slow travel experience is relaxed (Bradt, 2010; Richards, 2012; Slow Travel Europe, 2014) and neither fast (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Groenendaal, 2012; Slow Travel Berlin, 2013; Timms & Conway, 2011) nor hectic (Richards, 2012; Sawday, 2010; Slow Movement, 2013). It has to be noted that physical slowness does not always lead to longer journey times since travelling by train can be as quick as travelling in a car or by air, especially in most short-haul international travel (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

Many travel writers note that part of the slow travel experience is gathering a deep understanding of the area being visited (Bagshaw, 2010; Bradt, 2010; Richards, 2012). Understanding requires time and learning which cannot be achieved through superficial dashing around (Bagshaw, 2010; Locke, 2011; Sawday, 2010) and needs some preparation and research beforehand (Heitmann et al., 2011). Understanding also includes engagement; it is widely acknowledged that slow travel involves engagement with people and places visited (Caffyn, 2007; De Salvo, Mogollón, & Di Clemente, 2013; Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fergusson, 2012; Gardner, 2009; Heitmann et al., 2011; Mintel Group, 2011; Moore, 2012; Richards, 2012; Slow Movement, 2013). Engagement with people can take different forms: engaging with local people, travel companions and even oneself.

Engagement with places can be achieved through trying local food and drinks (FlightlessTravel, 2013), learning a local language (Gardner, 2009) and living like locals (Slow Movement, 2013; Slow Travel, 2014). In the academic literature, engagement with 'place' is often discussed in the context of a sense of place that encompasses the "idea of emotional attachments to physical place" (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010, p. 20). Further, it is observed that "sense of place is always socially constructed" – both by insiders or inhabitants as well as simultaneously by outsiders; tourists and visitors (Knox, 2005, p. 1). Societal norms and structures, everyday practices and representations of the world by insiders form shared experiences and shape the sense of place that impacts outsiders visiting this particular place (ibid.).

Engagement with local people is acknowledged to be one of the core elements in slow travel. The involvement of the local community and partnerships are essential in slow travel since local people can create a welcoming atmosphere and environment for tourists. In turn, the feedback from those tourists can help to raise awareness and appreciation of local culture in the local community itself; therefore, "the concept of slow is also a useful internal marketing tool" (Heitmann et al., 2011, p. 121). Further, engagement with local people helps to avoid feeling like a "consumer-tourist" (De Salvo et al., 2013). Not everybody from the local community, however, is willing to engage with tourists. As pointed out earlier, tourists are usually treated as "outsiders" by the locals, therefore it is difficult for tourists to engage with locals working outside the tourism industry (M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012). This is considered to be one of the obstacles to slow tourism but it can be overcome by participating in community-based volunteer tourism initiatives such as "Willing Workers on Organic Farms" (ibid.) or the Tribewanted Project (Gibson et al., 2012). Likewise, the co-creation of experiences is relevant in a slow travel context: people are actively involved in constructing their travel experiences (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010) and co-producing their journey with others (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

Authenticity is acknowledged to be another focal point of slow travel (Bagshaw, 2010; Conway & Timms, 2010; De Salvo et al., 2013; Dickinson et al., 2010; Heitmann et al., 2011; Howard, 2012; Timms & Conway, 2011). Recent reports on trends in consumer behaviour show that tourist demand for authentic experiences is increasing (*Overseas*

Visitors to Britain: Understanding Trends, Attitudes and Characteristics, 2010). However, it is argued that one cannot talk about artificial experiences since all experiences created within an individual are real, whether simulated or natural (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Authenticity however should be preserved first of all with local communities in mind, and only then consider visitors (Parasecoli & de Abreu e Lima, 2012). In fact, artificially sustained authenticity can hold back potential visitors, since slow tourists search for modern authenticity which is embedded in the present historical moment (De Salvo et al., 2013). Therefore local gastronomy should not be conserved for the sake of past authenticity, but rather should be developed naturally at its own pace, taking into consideration the needs and wants of today's local community. Besides, it is pointed out that the local community should understand, be proud of and communicate its identity and values in order to enrich its culture and enhance tourist experience (Wearing, Wearing, & McDonald, 2012).

An important aspect of the slow movement which is often overlooked by other researchers is the desirability and preference of sustainable leisure over other forms of travel. As Fullagar (2012) shows, most women cycle (and consequently engage in sustainable leisure and slow travel) because they find it a desirable and pleasurable activity. Similarly, a study of Ho, Liao, Huang, and Chen (2015) indicates that people engage in leisure/recreational cycling activity that the authors link with slow tourism not only for its environmental benefits but also for the health, social and psychological benefits. In fact, people practising slow travel should be willing to do it not only because of environmental concerns or ethical considerations, but also because they think it is enjoyable, fun and makes them happy. Other sources also emphasize that slow travel must be fun (Sawday, 2010; Slow Travel Europe, 2014). Pleasure, however, is not the main goal in slow travel – pleasure is a result of slow travel and not at the centre of it (Moore, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, slow travel is also associated with less speed and an unhurried pace, which – one assumes – would lead to less stress. However, slow travel does not necessarily mean stress-free travel. If slow travel involves travelling without strict itineraries or planning ahead, and caring only about being here and now (Tiyce & Wilson, 2012), then it encompasses the unexpected, unforeseen and unknown elements

which might be rather alarming and stressful for people who like order and certainty. Slow travel might involve getting out of one's comfort zone in order to reach a higher level of personal well-being. While some consider that slow travellers are delighted by the unexpected (Gardner, 2009), not everybody is ready to step out of their comfort zones or face uncertainty, and thus want to engage in slow travel.

In terms of actual sights, slow travel involves taking the back roads, exploring off the beaten track (G. Hall, 2012; Slow Travel Berlin, 2013; The Independent Traveler, 2013) and learning to find the extraordinary in the commonplace (G. Hall, 2012; Mitchell, 2010). Slow travel is not about catching a glimpse of a highlight and then rushing to the next one, and there is no pressure to visit must-see places (Bradt, 2010; Gardner, 2009; Richards, 2012; Slow Movement, 2013). Slow travel experiences might be less exotic (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010) but they are better (Singh, 2012; Timms & Conway, 2011) since slow travel is about the quality of the experiences (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2010) rather than the quantity (Heitmann et al., 2011).

In summary, the main areas of focus in the experiential dimension are physical slowness, authenticity, quality time, a desirable and pleasurable way of spending leisure time, considering customers as co-producers and incorporating the experience of travel into the overall travel experience.

2.3.4 Economic dimension

The economic dimension of slow travel has not been widely researched so far; therefore, there is limited evidence about the economic contribution of slow travel, and it is uncertain whether or not slow travellers spend more in total when compared to other travellers.

Since slow travel is more individual and not collective (Groenendaal, 2012), small-scale (Markwell et al., 2012), and advocates against commercialism (Sawday, 2010) and highly consumerist practices (Fullagar, 2012), it is hard to withstand the criticism that slow travel generates less income if compared to mass travel. There is a clash of opinions between supporters of slow travel and advocates of mass tourism. For example, while

researchers talk increasingly about the carbon or ecological footprint, aviation industry representatives talk about “the economic footprint of aviation,” i.e. its economic as well as social benefits for nations - thus justifying the need for even further development of the aviation sector (Perovic, 2013, p. 58). The main argument for this is that nations can increase their standards of living and aviation is an important source of economic growth. This illustrates how the interests of those working in the tourism business clash with those pursuing an environmental approach to tourism (Tribe, 2004). Although both are operating in the tourism sector, these different camps hold different values and different interests and speak different languages when referring to the same issue (ibid.).

However, since slow travel implies choosing local service providers, there are economic benefits for local communities (Conway & Timms, 2010). Although “slow travel is not about money or privilege” (Gardner, 2009, p. 12), it involves paying a fair price (Fergusson, 2012; FlightlessTravel, 2013; Heitmann et al., 2011) that seldom is the cheapest option available. In other words, by choosing local service providers, slow travellers choose to give back to the communities visited (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Gardner, 2009). Additionally, slow travel encourages more spending in a broader area. For example, the use of public transport provides an economic benefit not only for local communities and those working in the vicinity of the main tourist attractions, it encourages tourist spending in the wider economy (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

Slow travel is also linked with the ‘soft growth’ concept. Timms and Conway (2011) in their study of tourism development opportunities in geographically marginal localities in the Caribbean argue that soft tourism growth, which they propose to incorporate into slow tourism, is economically beneficial for the local community since it helps to reduce capital leakages and generates income stays for the local service providers. The authors refer to American ecological economist Herman Daly’s concept of ‘soft growth’ where the emphasis is on economic development or quality as opposed to ‘hard growth’ where the emphasis is on physical growth or quantity (ibid., p. 398). A qualitative improvement also means community development from which those communities are more likely to benefit in the long run. If local community benefits are to be maximised, it is suggested that participatory planning, co-management and small-scale tourism projects are facilitated (ibid.).

The economic aspect of slow tourism is also discussed by Groenendaal (2012) who indicates that many of the small-scale Dutch tourism entrepreneurs in rural France are non-commercial and are driven by non-economic motivators, such as a willingness to create tourism demand in line with their personal values and to share those values with their guests. Although these entrepreneurs do earn money from tourists, the money itself is not the primary motivator for doing business.

In terms of accommodation, slow travellers would choose self-catering accommodation (Mintel Group, 2011) or cottages and apartments (The Independent Traveler, 2013) rather than all-inclusive resort-type accommodation, since the latter brings little economic benefit to the local communities (Heitmann et al., 2011).

Altogether, the economic aspects of slow travel include ensuring an economic contribution to the local community by choosing local service providers so that money spent stays at the destination. Moreover, slow tourism is considered to fit in with the slow growth approach and consequently the quality development of destinations.

2.3.5 Ethical dimension

Finally, the ethical considerations of slow travel are emphasized in some sources (Clancy, 2015; De Salvo et al., 2013; FlightlessTravel, 2013; Howard, 2012), yet the forms in which they are expressed vary.

Although slow travel might not seem a rational decision, “slow travellers do not ignore price and time, but apply additional criteria during decision-making” (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010, p. 49) – they include ethical considerations. Slow travel is a deliberate and conscious choice by travellers, who are aware of their decisions and their impact on the wider social and economic environment (Clancy, 2015; Gardner, 2009; Groenendaal, 2012; Timms & Conway, 2011).

Slow tourism is referred to as an ethical consumption movement or an alternative consumption movement (Clancy, 2015). It is argued that instead of giving up tourism completely, the only way to reduce the negative impact of tourism is to choose

alternative products that provide the opportunity to enjoy a holiday while at the same time respecting the environment and local communities (ibid.). Therefore, by pursuing ethically sound tourism, namely slow travel, tourists can reduce “harm within neoliberal markets” (ibid., p. 23). It is even suggested that ethical and environmental responsibility is one of the defining characteristics of slow tourism (De Salvo et al., 2013). Responsibility implies “willingness to subordinate the individual act of consumption to collective interest.” Therefore slow tourism is linked to responsible consumption with regard to the destination visited (ibid., p. 143). Consequently, care for others is an important aspect of slow culture (Tam, 2008).

Ethical purchasing behaviour and consumption practices are further linked with ideas of slow consumption and sustainable consumption that are incorporated into the slow philosophy. Overconsumption of renewable natural resources is an increasing problem in today’s modern society; therefore, sustainable consumption is proposed as a remedy (T. Cooper, 2005). Since overconsumption also affects the tourism industry, there are two ways to reduce its environmental footprint: 1) an efficiency approach and 2) slow consumption (Hall, 2009). It is suggested that both eco-efficiency and slow consumption must be present at the same time in order to reach sustainable consumption as proposed by T. Cooper (2005) in his theoretical model of product life spans and sustainable consumption. Eco-efficiency (the efficiency driver) can be achieved through more productive use of materials and energy, whereas slow consumption (the sufficiency driver) is understood as reduced throughput of products and services. Together these factors lead to increased product lifespans which, in turn, result in sustainable consumption. Slow consumption alone, which is understood as “slowing the rate at which products are consumed by increasing their intrinsic durability and providing careful maintenance” (ibid., p. 54) would lead to recession; therefore it could not be regarded as sustainable. Similarly, Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) also link together the concepts of slow travel and sustainable consumption noting that slow travel represents a change in the tourism consumption patterns; this change is associated with reducing the level of tourism consumption. It is suggested that slow travel as a broader, generic term would encompass not only sustainable consumption but also the nature of the travel experience and a reconfiguration of destination management (ibid.).

However, although it is acknowledged that Slow Food has contributed to slow consumption and sustainable consumption ideas, it is doubtful whether Slow Food can encourage more sustainable consumption patterns in the context of travel (C. M. Hall, 2012). The movement is actually criticized for not recognizing the contradictions that exist between the mobility that it is supporting and sustainability. Therefore the critical consumption approach is better suited to characterize slow travel than the sustainable consumption approach (ibid.).

An example of slow being a quality that is associated with social sustainability and thus more ethical tourism practices is discussed by Wearing et al. (2012) who look at slow ecotourism and suggest that it needs to include the principles both of social justice and sustainability to achieve the participation of the local workforce and ensure equity for host workers and their communities in the developing and developed world. They note that ecotourism, which is regarded as one of the most sustainable forms of tourism in general, is becoming too commodified as outside agents bring in the rules of capitalist markets, which is usually the case in developing countries. If local communities do not possess the knowledge of how to deal with these circumstances, tourism development brings few economic and social benefits to them. Therefore there is a need for slow ecotourism that has the potential to deliver both environmental protection and sustainable economic growth for local communities – and better experiences for tourists (ibid.). The idea of incorporating a sustainable development approach into slow travel is also mentioned by other authors (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Heitmann et al., 2011; Timms & Conway, 2011).

Further, it is argued that slow travel should include social responsibility (Heitmann et al., 2011; Timms & Conway, 2011) and social sustainability (Conway & Timms, 2010). It is even suggested that the most important function of slow travel is the social one since it advocates mutual respect among different societies and cultures. As observed by Singh (2012, p. 224) “it is only through slow travel that other cultures can be properly understood, an essential process for globalisation and localisation.” As such, slow travel advocates for a more mindful and careful approach to travel.

Finally, it has also been acknowledged that slow travel stands against ‘mere gazing upon people and places’ (Howard, 2012), the commodification of local culture (Heitmann

et al., 2011) and experiences (Markwell et al., 2012), which are regarded as unethical practices.

On the whole, slow travel involves such ethical considerations as slow and sustainable consumption practices and ethical purchasing behaviour, and it disapproves of such practices as the commodification of local culture and experiences. Slow travel is a conscious and deliberate choice of travellers, who are aware of, and informed about, their decisions.

2.3.6 Slowness

Slowness in the context of slow travel and tourism is discussed from two perspectives – the physical mobility of a tourist and the perception of time while on holiday. Therefore, both physical and mental slowness will be discussed in the following sections.

2.3.6.1 *Slow mobilities*

One approach in defining slowness is related to human mobility. The mobility of tourists is “the capacity of individuals to move from one location to another” (C. Cooper, 2008, p. 14) and is influenced by various aspects: income, time, political rights, health, information and education, safety and security, family, legislated holidays, work, location, gender and culture. It is acknowledged that globally tourism-related mobilities are increasing both over time and space (Hall, 2015). Moreover, mobility – and consequently tourist mobility – has become a criterion that along with income distinguishes rich from poor (ibid.).

In the context of slow travel and tourism, mobility is often discussed in relation to transportation used as a means to reach the destination and as a tourism attraction in itself (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). It is even suggested that slow travellers think of tourism differently than non-slow travellers (Dickinson et al., 2010). Non-slow travellers tend to choose the destination first and then find out how to get there, very often by

flying. Slow travellers, on the other hand, tend to choose the mode of transport first and then find out where they can go.

Water-based slow travel can include particular types of boats such as canal boats, canoes, kayaks and ferries. It is suggested that canals are the perfect location for experiencing slow travel due to speed limits and surroundings that provide many opportunities for observing and interacting with bypassing landscapes and people. The principles of slow travel are in common with canal tourism which makes slowness and canals synonymous (Fallon, 2012). Moreover, canal tourism encompasses both environmental concerns and slow travel experiences, therefore it can be regarded as one of the forms of slow travel (ibid.). Similarly, canoe and kayak tours on the Gudenå River in Denmark are illustrated as a good practice of water-based slow travel (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Ferries are also included in slow travel since they provide a better alternative to air travel, but speedboats and cruise ships are usually excluded because the former is by definition a fast means of transport and the latter is considered a source of pollution and thus not compatible with the environmental principles of slow travel (ibid.).

Train travel is another example of slow travel (Bagnoli, 2016; Noor, Nair, & Mura, 2014), both as a means of getting to the destination and as a tourism product itself. Train travel is acknowledged for a number of reasons: firstly, it is considered to be an environmentally friendly means of transport, and secondly, travelling by train allows engagement with other people and the co-production of travel experiences (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). However, there are still contradictory views about whether high-speed trains are appropriate for slow travel. Although high-speed trains by definition are the opposite of slow modes of transport, they still allow tourists to appreciate the passing landscape while travelling in a more environmentally friendly method, compared to air and car travel (ibid.).

Cycling is another example of slow travel (Fullagar, 2012; Ho et al., 2015). The cycling network EuroVelo is even referred to as “the world’s first continental slow travel tourism network” (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Cyclists exhibit the most spontaneity. They can stop on the way if they see something interesting and they can make a detour from the intended route whenever they feel like it (Dickinson et al., 2011). However, although cycling as such is a low-carbon activity, the overall conformity of cycling with

slow travel depends very much on how the start and end points of cycling tours are reached (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

Buses and coaches are compatible with slow travel. Although it might be seen as a high-carbon mode of transport, this method allows the carrying of many passengers; therefore the carbon footprint per passenger is rather low. Besides, bus and coach travel allows passengers to appreciate the scenery and engage with other people during the journey.

Finally, walking and wandering is definitely associated with slow travel since it does not involve any mode of transport (Tiyce & Wilson, 2012). One of the best known walking trails is the Appalachian Trail in the USA which has been promoted as a slow travel experience (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

In addition to walking, the particular modes of transport compatible with slow travel are trains, coaches and buses, bicycles and some types of boats. However, while particular modes of travel are appropriate for slow travel, concerns are raised about how the start and finish points are reached by cyclists, kayakers or walkers.

2.3.6.2 Time and temporality

Another approach to define slowness is related to perceptions of time and ways of doing things (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Time is an important factor in slow travel and many note that slow travel means taking time (Bradt, 2010; DELTA 2000 Soc. Cons a r.l., 2012; FlightlessTravel, 2013; Howard, 2012; Locke, 2011; Matos, 2003; Slow Europe, 2015). Matos (2003, p. 100) explains the concept of taking time as follows:

Taking time means modification of the daily time relationship, specifically a different perception of nature and living in harmony with a place, its inhabitants and their culture. The environment is not merely perceived by sight, but by using all five senses. Tourists must be able to change pace, to look rather than to see; to experience the area rather than to endure it.

Time is intrinsic to the human and social being (Hassard, 1991). While people as human beings experience natural times from birth, people as social beings adopt to social times later in their lives (ibid.). Time in the Western culture is regarded as “scarce, valuable,

homogeneous, linear and divisible” (ibid., p. 116), and a person’s success in industrial societies is judged according to “the timing of personal accomplishments;” in other words, their career (ibid., p. 111). Hence, people subordinate their time according to their work life, which has led to the situation that workplace organizations are both regulators of social time and its main claimants (ibid.).

Since external organizations regulate and even dictate not only working time but also time that is free from work (e.g. how many holidays people have), it has a direct impact on the leisure industry (Woehler, 2003). Consequently, time is perceived as scarce not only in everyday life but also while on holiday which is one of the paradoxes in modern society:

Time scarcity during vacations stems from the pressure to consume as many options (offers) as possible in order to find self-fulfilment. The fact that experiences can be made successively but not simultaneously creates a lack of time and a “fast-forward” consumption of standardized tourism products in destinations. Tourists lose their time autonomy, and holidays are no longer a contrast to daily life, without any room for real self-fulfilment (Woehler, 2003, p. 90).

People feel pressure to fulfil their expectations while on holidays which leads to the feeling of a constant lack of time and consequently increased speed (ibid.). As a result, many people choose standardized offerings provided by the leisure industry in destinations in order to avoid time costs searching for alternative offerings to ‘save’ as much time for themselves as possible. The tourism industry is also under pressure to offer as much sensation as possible in the shortest possible time (Matos, 2003).

Consequently, the rise of the slow movement in general and slow travel in particular has come as a reaction to this crisis of modernity and the constant lack of time (Clancy, 2015). Slow travel envisages different perceptions of time (Groenendaal, 2012), an appreciation of ‘personal time’ (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011), and combating “the conundrum of time-space compression” (Timms & Conway, 2011, p. 407). Different perceptions of time are described as the re-engineering of time, i.e. transforming a lack of time into an abundance of time (Gardner, 2009). Some authors suggest this transformation through deceleration and point out that essentially slow travel is about deceleration (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Tiller, 2012). Only when one slows down can

one reduce the stress during vacations (Woehler, 2003) and genuinely savour the moment (Mitchell, 2010; The Independent Traveler, 2013). Different perceptions of time have also led to the notion of “slow time” which has been used to describe the change of pace in everyday life as illustrated in the case of working holidaymakers from Britain who participate in working holiday programmes in Australia (Clarke, 2004). While life in Britain is characterized as speedy and stressful, life during working holidays is the opposite, resulting in time that can be used to reflect and think about the essential things in life.

In order to avoid ‘fast leisure’ and regain one’s time autonomy, there is a call to free vacation time from time pressure (Woehler, 2003). One of the possible solutions is to incorporate natural time in leisure tourism (ibid.). In such a way, slow tourists can follow the natural rhythm of things and achieve slowness during vacation (Heitmann et al., 2011).

Recently however, there has been the rise of “a new time phase” where time is not constrained (Dickinson & Peeters, 2012, p. 18). Yet more time on its own, i.e. more clock time, does not always lead to slow travel and more sustainable mobility. It is argued that these new time structures might lead to both sustainable and unsustainable tourism consumption since people might choose more distant and fast travel more, often instead of using time for slow travel (ibid.).

2.3.6.3 Slow vs. fast

While slow is not associated with fast, slow travel might involve some fast elements, especially when it comes to technologies and transportation. Although slow travellers might reject mindless speed, they do not reject technology (Germann Molz, 2009). Today’s slow travellers often use the fast tools and methods (like the internet and air travel) of the modern world to reach authentic destinations, which represents a contradiction in terms of temporality (Howard, 2012). Tourism consultant Alison Caffyn suggests that technology – immediate access to information and the ability to make tourist bookings – is an area where speed is essential even when talking about slow travellers (Tourism Partnership North Wales, 2007). In fact, slow tourism practices can

even rely upon fast communication technologies in cases where international tourists use aeroplanes to get to the starting point of their slow travel and sometimes even buy vehicles upon arrival to help them move around (Markwell et al., 2012).

Slow travel practices can co-exist with fast travel practices within the same journey. Fast means of transport are often used to get to a destination where people experience slow travel (Lannoy, 2016; Singh, 2012). Fast travel – which is understood as travel to far, exotic and wild destinations – is regarded as complementary by environmentally active travellers who engage in sustainable lifestyles both at home and while on holiday (Barr, Shaw, Coles, & Prillwitz, 2010). Besides, fast and slow travel modes are considered complementary rather than exclusive since both can be used to realize slow tourism motivations and attain slow travel goals (Oh et al., 2014).

Another paradox is the fact that many slow travellers take their laptop computers, tablets or phones with them while travelling in order to communicate with the world from which they are trying – temporarily - to escape from (Markwell et al., 2012). The number of websites, blogs and forums dedicated to slow travel indicates that “slow travellers see the Internet as an ally in achieving their social goals” (ibid., p. 277). From the supply side, information technologies and communication media play central roles when it comes to the promotion of slow tourism’s offerings (Conway & Timms, 2010). These examples show the blend of traditional (or historical) and modern aspects of travel resulting in what is called slow tourism today.

[2.3.7 Existing conceptual frameworks on slow travel and tourism](#)

Currently there are only a few conceptual frameworks relating to slow travel and tourism. These frameworks summarize the dimensions and aspects of slow travel already discussed in the previous sections.

Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) in their conceptual diagram of slow travel (Figure 2.1) propose the following ingredients:

1. Low-carbon tourism as an outcome of slow travel;

2. The choice of carbon neutral (walking and cycling) or less carbon-intensive (rail and coach) modes of transport;
3. The exclusion of car and air travel as carbon-intensive modes from slow travel;
4. Travel experiences that includes engagement with people and places and travellers as co-creators of their experience during the whole holiday; and
5. The exhibition of environmental concerns by slow travellers.
6. The destination experience and travel experience is regarded as one whole touristic experience.

It has to be noted that while the authors talk about slow travel, the framework involves different aspects of tourism; therefore, it can be argued that the model represents slow tourism.

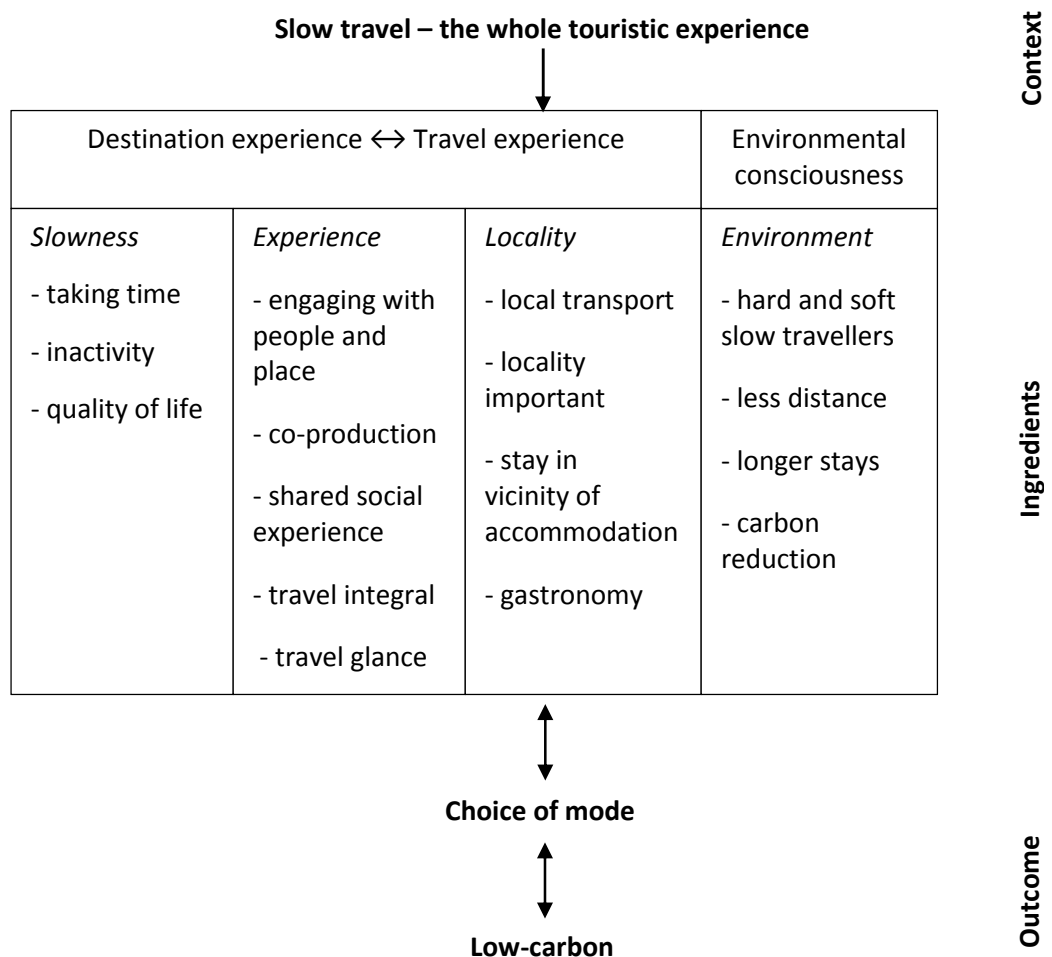


Figure 2.1

Conceptual diagram of slow travel (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010, p. 192)

The conceptual framework of slow travel proposed by Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) (Figure 2.2) builds on the conceptual model of slow travel proposed by Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010). The framework includes the following slow travel characteristics: mode of travel, slowness, travel experience, environmental consciousness and sense of place. The authors see slowness as the integrating element in the framework and argue that its three core categories – slowness, travel experience and environmental consciousness – set it apart from other forms of tourism (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). The framework also shows how the ‘slow travel experience’ which consists of travel experiences and destination experiences is contrasted with fast travel experience.

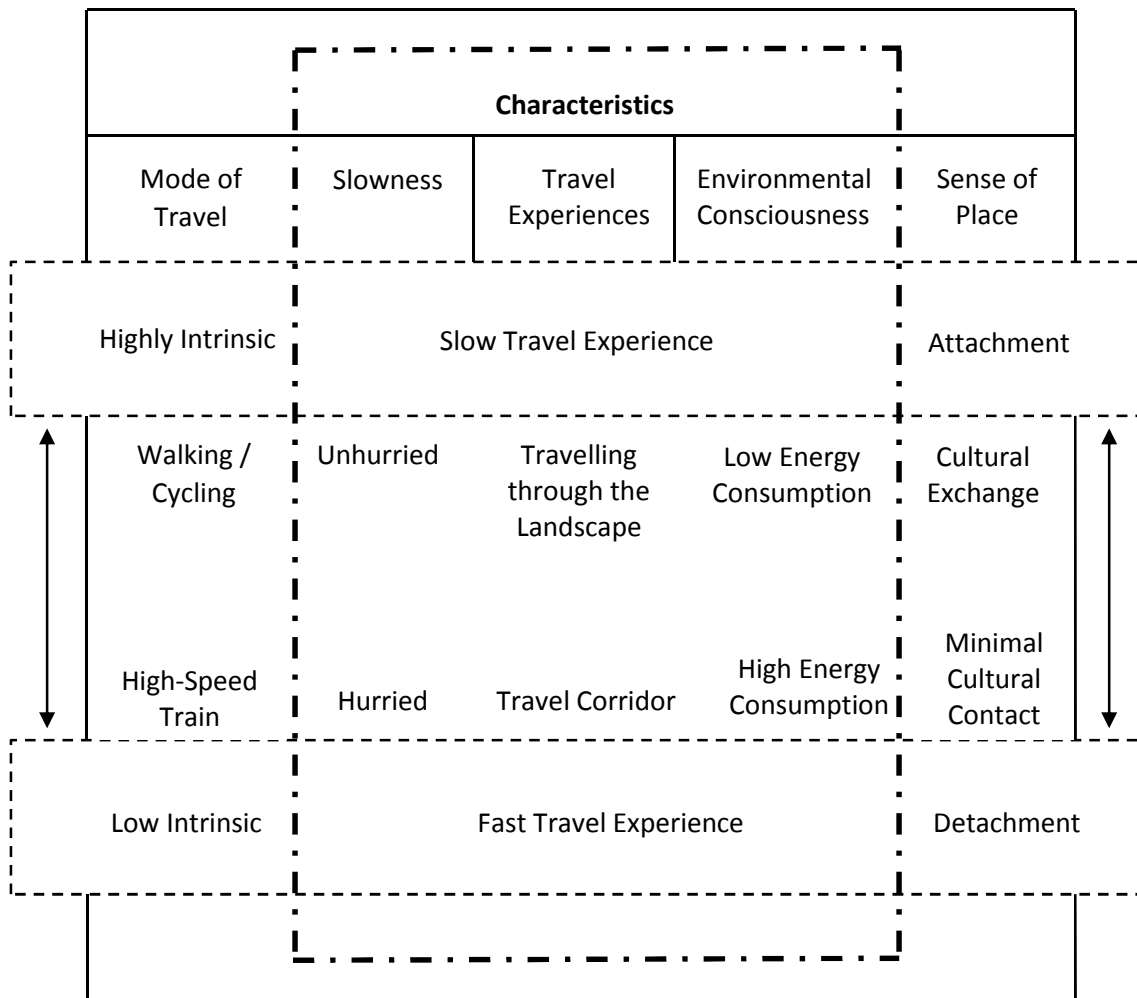


Figure 2.2

Slow travel conceptual framework (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011, p. 276)

The three dimensions of slow travel – environmental, experiential and the mode of transport (Figure 2.3) – are further discussed in the research of Dickinson et al. (2011). They differentiate between “hard slow travel” and “soft slow travel” and argue that in the first case, the environmental dimension is the most important while in the latter case, the mode of transport and experiential dimensions are dominant.

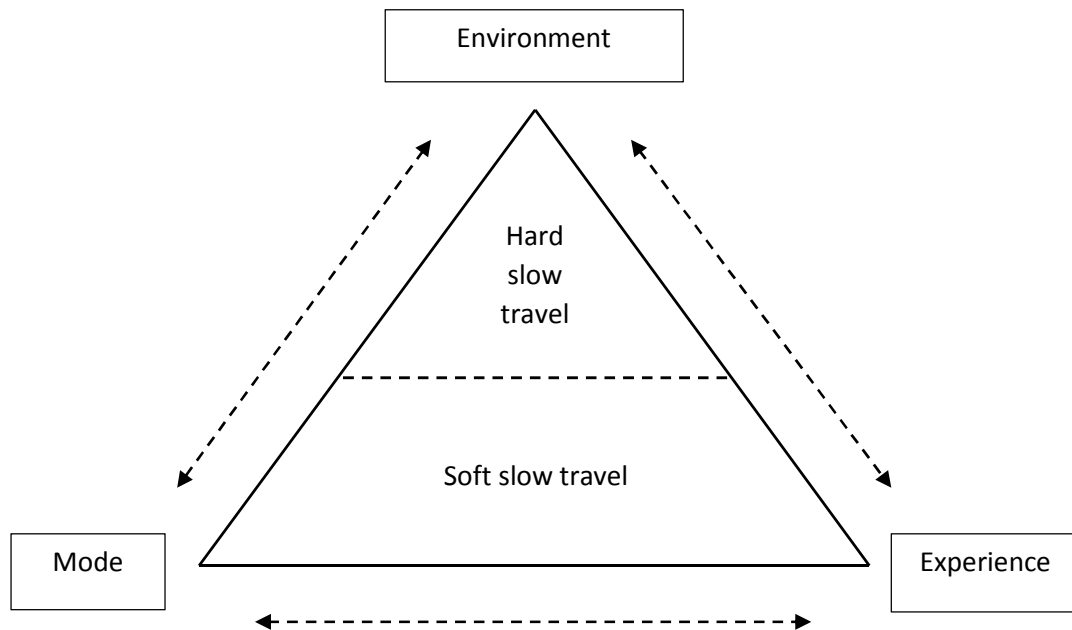


Figure 2.3

The three dimensions of slow travel interpretations (Dickinson et al., 2011, p. 287)

It has to be noted that the three frameworks above are developed by the UK-based researchers and are based on empirical results that have originated from research involving participants primarily from the UK. Therefore, the application of these frameworks to other contexts or geographical areas can be challenging.

While the above frameworks focus on slow travel with an emphasis on mode of transport and consequently environmental sustainability, the more recent work of Oh et al. (2014) offers a conceptual framework of slow tourism that is based on tourists' perspectives (Figure 2.4). Goal-driven consumption theory is employed to explain the slow tourism process. The authors argue that fast and slow travel modes are complementary rather than exclusive and both can be used to realize slow tourism

motivations and attain slow travel goals. While slow travel mode significantly contributes to positive slow tourism goal attainment, the fast travel mode does not affect slow tourism goals although it has a negative impact on the overall slow tourism experience outcomes. It has to be emphasized that fast and slow travel modes are defined not by the means of transport but more attitudinally as “the mental tempo of movement” or the mental speed or tempo of travelling that is subjectively determined by tourists themselves (ibid., p. 5).

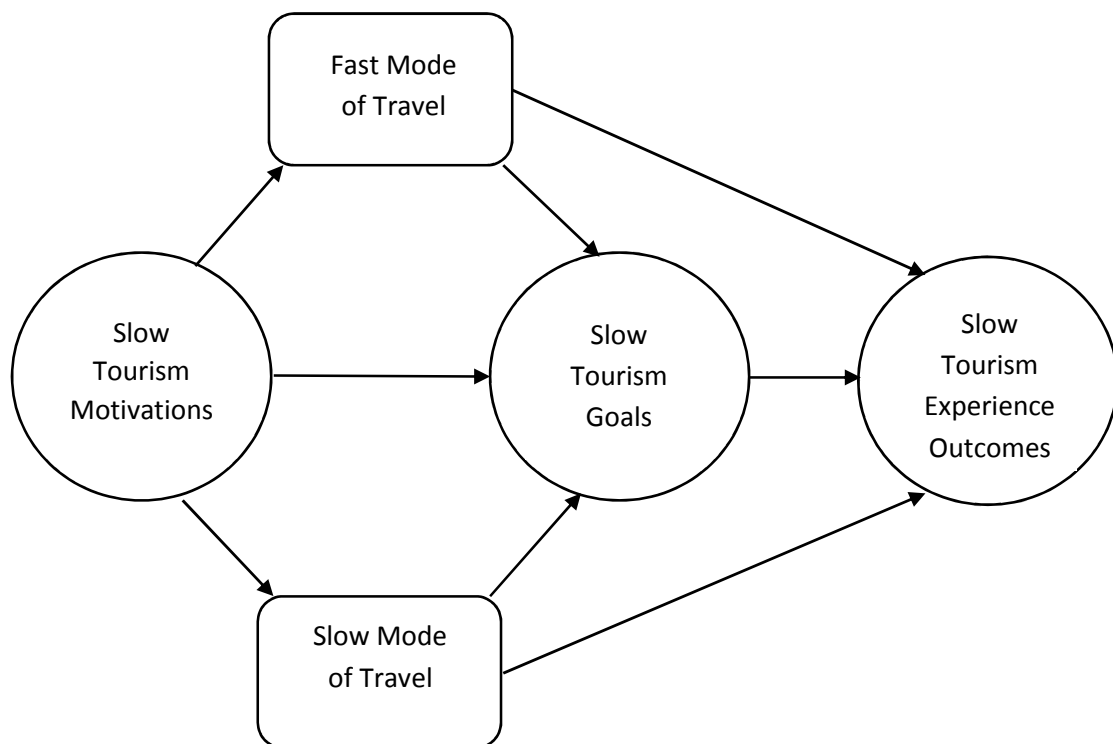


Figure 2.4

A conceptual framework of slow tourism (Oh et al., 2014, p. 3)

Finally, Di Clemente et al. (2014, p. 29) have identified four key determinants for a slow tourism development approach based on selected academic literature: 1) Degrowth – less is better; 2) Sustainability – environmental management and protection, conservation of local resources and opportunities for local communities; 3) Slow areas – off the beaten track, areas at the edge of the industrialization process and mass tourism itineraries and rural and mountainous areas; 4) Quality – time as a tool for quality. An integral part of the

model is slowness which is attitudinal rather than physical. Their approach represents the perspective of the supply side system and can be used in territorial management and marketing.

The existing frameworks of slow travel and tourism depict the concept from the perspectives of either the supply side or the demand side. While different aspects of slow tourism are highlighted in each model, they all have one thing in common – slowness – which in the context of slow tourism can be both physical and attitudinal.

2.4 Slow traveller and tourist concept

Of the current studies on slow travel and tourism, only a handful focuses on the slow travellers and tourists (Robbins & Cho, 2012; Robinson, 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011) (see Appendix 2). Only one study has been carried out among self-identified slow travellers (Dickinson et al., 2011); another study has used users' posts in online slow travel forums to conceptualize slow travellers (Robbins & Cho, 2012). Others have tried to discern the characteristics of slow tourists in the visitors of Cittáslow (Robinson, 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). However there are doubts as to whether unintentional slow tourists who are practicing slow tourism without recognizing or adopting the label can be classified as slow tourists (Guiver & McGrath, 2016). There is a lack of a consensus on definitions of what is a 'slow traveller' and a 'slow tourist', and differentiation between both concepts is still lacking. As with 'slow travel' and 'slow tourism', the terms 'slow traveller' and 'slow tourist' are often used interchangeably.

Tourism literature provides discussions about differences between travellers and tourists in general (Boorstin, 1962; E. Cohen, 1974, 1982). For instance Boorstin (1962, p. 85) refers to the traveller as "an active man at work" while the tourist is described as "a pleasure-seeker." While the traveller is actively seeking adventure, experiences and contact with people, the tourist is more passive, expecting that things will happen to him or that somebody else will do them for him (ibid.). Similar ideas are used when describing the slow tourist as "a traveller who rejects the tourism infrastructure with Western amenities, commodified products, standardized services and the focus on consumption"

(Heitmann et al., 2011, p. 121). E. Cohen (1974), however, argues that pure travellers are wanderers, hobos, tramps and nomads; other travellers possess varying degrees of 'touristic component'. He defines a tourist as "a voluntary, temporary traveller, travelling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively long and non-recurrent round trip." Seeking novelty and change is emphasized as the main purpose for a tourist trip (ibid., p. 533). Here, tourists are classified in a broader category of travellers; all tourists are travellers but not all travellers are tourists (ibid.).

Most authors, however, do not differentiate between the two concepts, and often both terms are used simultaneously. An example of this is the definition provided by the Latvian Tourism Development Agency (2014):

A slow tourist is an environmentally friendly and responsible traveller, who stays in one place for a longer period of time, gets to know the culture of the country and style of life of its population, acquires authentic experience, treats the environment and its diversity with responsibility and discovers objects unfamiliar for other travellers.

Therefore, rather than focusing on an exact definition, both terms are used to describe a person engaging in slow travel and tourism.

2.4.1 Segmentation

While some argue that slow travel can suit everyone (Mintel Group, 2011; Slow Travel, 2014), the majority of authors try to characterize slow travellers as a distinctive market segment. 'Slow tourist' is described as a new style for the tourist who wants "to give up fast, stressful tourism, in favour of an interlude of quiet serenity to recollect energies and genuinely enjoy the holiday" (Matos, 2003, pp. 95-96). The slow tourist is contrasted with the "repellent" tourist who is "a rushed customer, indifferent to establishing relationships with the territory and the local residents, and trapped in stereotypes" (De Salvo et al., 2013, p. 133). The attempt to understand people engaging in travel and tourism has led to the application of various segmentation, clustering and classification approaches and these different methods to identify slow travellers and tourists will be discussed below.

One of the basic approaches to segmentation is made on the basis of the purpose for travel: the first group, comprising business people and those visiting friends and relatives, and a second group, consisting of holiday tourists (Burkart & Medlik, 1981). While the first group has a somewhat limited choice in terms of their travel destination, the second group has freedom of choice. Slow travellers in this context can be regarded as holiday tourists who travel for leisure purposes and who have the freedom to choose where and how to spend their leisure time. However, visiting friends and relatives or returning to childhood locales can potentially be linked with slow travel. For instance, it is suggested that the Caribbean diaspora and returning nationals could be potential slow tourists in the Caribbean due to sentimental and patriotic reasons (Conway & Timms, 2010). Furthermore, this market segment is seen not only as slow tourists but also as small business owners (ibid.).

In the context of slow travel, several segmentation approaches are possible. For example, Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010, pp. 98-100) propose the use of the following criteria for segmenting slow travellers: environmental concern, travel mode, distance travelled, tourist transport experience and tour operator involvement. However it is questionable whether a particular form of travel can be used to distinguish slow travellers if slowness is perceived as an intrinsic and not extrinsic quality (Oh et al., 2014).

Slow travellers are often linked with Slow Food (Heitmann et al., 2011). Therefore it can be assumed that slow travellers may possess similar characteristics to supporters of Slow Food. The study of Frost and Laing (2013) shows that the language used in the official websites of five international food festivals, which are branded as 'slow' or which incorporate Slow Food elements, conveys the message of 'prestige and status' and 'elitism' indicating that Slow Food is appealing for those with higher incomes. Similarly, another study by Germov, Williams, and Freij (2011) on the portrayal of the Slow Food movement in the Australian printed media also shows that many articles reflect "the movement's bourgeois appeal" (p. 98). However, it is noted that many articles also promote reasonably priced events and community-oriented activities making Slow Food an inclusive rather than an exclusive group (ibid.).

Similarly, slow travellers are also linked with Cittáslow. Yurtseven and Kaya (2011) classify visitors to Seferihisar – the first Cittáslow in Turkey – according to the Cittáslow

principles. They suggest three different categories of slow tourists – dedicated, interested and accidental - although the authors have failed to acknowledge the limitations of such a site-based segmentation approach. In fact, visitors to slow cities very often do not adopt slow principles – as demonstrated by the study of Robinson (2011) – although they do exhibit concerns about the environment and support sustainable practices in general. Moreover, there is a danger of possible errors when identifying tourists based on a single trip or a specific location visited as illustrated by Deng and Li (2015) in the case of ecotourists. While ecotourism is associated with visiting nature-based sites, it is noted that motivation would be a much better criterion for identifying ecotourists than locations visited, since the concept of ecotourism is value-laden rather than descriptive (ibid.). In fact, the application of multiple criteria for identifying tourists is suggested, since their activities and motivations, and the perception of tourist typologies by tourists and researchers, are interrelated (Hvenegaard, 2002).

One suggestion is that slow travel is practiced by two different segments: those who deliberately choose slow travel and those who participate in slow travel due to budgetary limitations (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Those engaging in slow travel and tourism due to budgetary constraints are referred to as budget-driven slow travellers (Mintel Group, 2011). The recession in 2006 in Wales, UK, weakened the local currency but facilitated the growth of slow travel, because many families chose to spend their holidays in the UK instead of booking long-haul flights to countries which had a much stronger currency (Tourism Partnership North Wales, 2007). However, it is uncertain whether this group would still engage in slow travel if budgetary constraints were removed.

Studies show that a deliberate engagement in slow travel is attributed to the middle class in developed economies (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson & Peeters, 2012). These are well-educated people who value their free time and spend a considerable amount of money on their hobbies and interests, such as travel, food, wine, fashion, culture and history (Mintel Group, 2011). Similarly, in drawing links between Slow Food and slow tourism, Heitmann et al. (2011, p. 119) note that slow travel is “the preserve of the educated and travelled.”

Living a slow life and pursuing slow activities in general can be considered a privilege for the middle class since such a lifestyle requires financial stability (Lamb, 2013). A study investigating the slow living practices of ten families from Fremantle, Australia, shows that the main reason why these Australian families have chosen to adopt a slow lifestyle is that they wish to improve their quality of life by taking control of it (ibid.). The study demonstrates that slow lifestyles can be adapted by diverse family units (heterosexual, homosexual; families with and without children). At least one of the family members had a full-time job and many had flexible working practices. Slow living also means buying or growing organic food, which all of these families did. Buying organic food, clothes and household items was said to be more expensive than buying “normal” alternatives, so the planning of the family budget was an important practice for all the participants. Technologies were used as a tool rather than for entertainment. Most of the families pursuing slow living gave up international holidays and chose to travel locally. Many said their friends displayed a lack of understanding and acceptance of their slow lifestyles (ibid.).

There are also other criteria considered to characterize slow travellers and tourists. One suggestion is that slow travel would appeal to a small number of independent tourists (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). If slower modes of transport are included in slow travel, then it can be practised by people who have ‘time to spare’ (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). In addition, since slow travel and tourism emphasize “quality of life,” it would appeal to “mature and seasoned visitors’ perspectives” (Conway & Timms, 2012, p. 74).

However, slow travel might not appeal to everybody since many tourists do not want to experience local culture and interact with locals, or they simply have limited time to spend on vacation (Dodds, 2012).

There are also doubts about whether slow travellers and tourists can be considered as a distinctive segment. It is argued that slow travellers use car and air travel when it is convenient for them; therefore they cannot be considered as an exclusive group (Tiller, 2012). In fact, evidence suggests that travellers who adopt the full slow philosophy are rare (Robinson, 2011). This is in line with studies in different tourist segments, e.g. that ‘purposeful’ or ‘deep’ cultural tourists represent only a small niche

market within a general cultural tourist segment (McKercher, 2002). Consequently there are very few who would correspond to the definition of 'an ideal' slow traveller, and even if they did, then that would apply only to a particular journey and not for all their lives (Tiller, 2012).

2.4.2 Behaviour

2.4.2.1 *Environmental practices*

There is limited research into the actual behaviour of slow tourists, and most of the studies focus on their behaviour in relation to their environmental considerations. In general, environmentally conscious behaviour is associated with such activities as travelling less often and staying longer, minimising air travel, rewarding airlines with sound environmental management, offsetting flights that cannot be avoided, rewarding pro-environmental and pro-development tour operators and choosing certified destinations or accommodation (Simpson, Gössling, Scott, Hall, & Gladin, 2008). While all of these activities are relevant in a slow travel context, only some have been discussed in the context of slow tourists.

One of the earliest references to slow travellers and their behaviour is found in the study of Nijkamp and Baaijens (1999) who refer to them as people travelling in 'slow motion', i.e. choosing slower modes of transportation and accepting longer travel times. The authors also link the 'slow motion' travellers with the concept of 'time pioneers' (Hörning, Gerhard, & Michailow, 1995). In the context of travel, 'time pioneers' are prepared to give up income for more leisure time and choose slower modes of transportation that allow more relaxed travel time and consequently contribute to their well-being (Nijkamp & Baaijens, 1999). Although environmental considerations influence the choice of transport mode to some extent, 'time pioneers' choose slower modes of transport primarily because of its cost, comfort and personal health aspects. While 'slow motion' travellers exist, such behaviour is very rare among travellers (ibid.). Similar results are reported in the netnographic study among slow travellers which confirms that the

choice of particular mode of transport, which sometimes includes car and plane, is driven by 'convenience, comfort and enjoyment' and not so much by environmental concerns (Robbins & Cho, 2012).

In fact, even self-identified slow travellers exhibit varying degrees of environmental practices while on holiday. A study among eleven self-identified slow travellers from the UK reveals that there is a continuum between 'hard slow travellers' and 'soft slow travellers' (Dickinson et al., 2011). 'Hard slow travellers' are those who deliberately avoid flying unless it is necessary. They are consistent in exhibiting environmentally conscious behaviour both at home and on holiday and it corresponds to their lifestyle. 'Soft slow travellers', on the other hand, are environmentally aware but at the same time use different modes of transport while on holiday, including air travel. This group chooses slow travel for experiential reasons or because they prefer a particular travel mode (ibid.). Consequently, the individuals' life narratives and the identity of 'hard slow travellers' are more coherent than those of 'soft slow travellers', at least with regard to environmental practices.

Environmentally conscious behaviour while travelling is also linked with environmentally conscious behaviour at home, as in the case of hard and soft slow travellers (Dickinson et al., 2011). The correlation between slow travellers' behaviour on holiday and at home is far from clear, however. On one hand it is suggested that people have coherent identities and therefore their behaviour on holiday would be similar to their behaviour in everyday life (Dickinson et al., 2011). On the other hand, several authors point out that slow travel provides a means of escaping the duties and obligations of everyday life (Groenendaal, 2012; Tiyce & Wilson, 2012) and that the slow travel experience takes place outside everyday life (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

The link between home-based and tourism-based environmentally conscious behaviour is explored in the general literature. It is suggested that the behaviour of people on holiday is related to how they behave at home (Brey & Lehto, 2007). However, the study of Barr et al. (2010) shows that people who engage in environmentally sustainable practices in their everyday life have contrasting views on sustainable holidays and low-cost air travel. While some are aware of the negative impact of flying on climate change and are ready to accept flight taxes as a mitigation strategy, others contest the

link between flying and climate change. Hence, the level to which environmentally active people are ready to transfer their sustainable lifestyle at home to their holiday context varies. Regardless of their stance on this issue, none are ready to give up flying in any significant way, and many use their environmentally conscious behaviour at home to justify the lack of it while on holiday (ibid.). According to a recent study, even self-identified 'green consumers' who are aware of the negative impact of aviation still continue flying due to its ease, cost and social importance (McDonald, Oates, Thyne, Timmis, & Carlile, 2015).

Similarly, empirical evidence shows that most of the slow travellers consider their environmental practices at home a justification for their behaviour on holiday (Dickinson et al., 2010). Although the participants admit their holidays have a carbon footprint, they assume that their green practices at home balance out the negative aspects of their holiday and therefore they are unwilling to modify their travel arrangements (ibid.). This can be explained by the fact that although values are linked to social and cultural motives, they might not drive tourist behaviour (Pearce, 2011). This implies that environmental concerns might be valued by travellers in their everyday lives but this might not motivate their travel choices. In addition, discursive mechanisms are used in order to present positive images of themselves, such as following environmentally friendly practices in everyday life, for example, when talking about their choice of particular transport modes (Dickinson et al., 2010).

There are three prevailing 'denial discourses' used by travellers in order to deny their responsibility for climate change: 'politics preventing progress', when participants blamed governments for taking little action in facilitating slow travel; 'scientific scepticism', when participants displayed doubts about the scientific justification of climate change; and claims of having limited awareness of climate change (Dickinson et al., 2010). It suggests that travellers' decisions "are far from rational, as behaviour is often justified post hoc to the specific context, and attitudes are far from stable" (ibid., p. 483).

The fact that people exhibiting environmental concern do not translate it into positive behaviour has been explained using Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory (i.e. inconsistency between attitudes and behaviour) (McDonald et al., 2015) and social representation theory (i.e. inconsistency of attitudes) (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). One

theory is that people exhibit “dilemmas rather than fixed attitudes” (ibid., p. 53) and that they “draw on pervasive arguments to justify their behaviour relevant to the particular context” (ibid., p. 54). Therefore, travellers might display different behaviour throughout their travelling careers, and each travel episode should be regarded as a set of independent decisions.

Similar attitude-behaviour gaps are also frequently reported outside the slow tourism context. Although many people are aware of climate change, they are not willing to change their behaviour in order to mitigate or avoid its impact (Weaver, 2012b). This attitude-behaviour gap is explained from an identity perspective since the way people perceive themselves influences their travel choice and behaviour (Hibbert, Dickinson, Curtin, & Gössling, 2013). A gap between climate change awareness and travel behaviour appears because people hold multiple identities (ibid.). This mirrors the idea that slow travellers might construct alternative identities while travelling rather than have coherent identities (Dickinson et al., 2011). The introduction of a counter identity that would show those travelling sustainably in a favourable light is suggested as a possible solution (Hibbert et al., 2013).

Consequently, it is acknowledged that it will be difficult to achieve a voluntary change in tourist behaviour in relation to their tourism mobility (Hibbert et al., 2013). Yet, involuntary green travel – any government intervention aiming to reduce CO2 emissions and resulting in increased costs of air travel – is said to have a negative impact on tourist happiness since such activities limit their freedom in choosing a destination (Nawijn & Peeters, 2010). Moreover, the empirical research even shows the emergence of a new behaviour addiction – “binge flying” which is “excessive tourist air travel” (S. A. Cohen, Higham, & Cavaliere, 2011, p. 1071). In fact, people use strategies of guilt suppression and denial to justify flying (ibid.). The aviation industry and its lobby organizations encourage such behaviour. Analysis shows that in their discourses they “support attitudes justifying non-action on the individual level” (Gössling & Peeters, 2007, p. 414). It is acknowledged that existing structural barriers within the tourism industry support flying and consequently hinder slow travel (Dickinson et al., 2010). However, it argued that tourists who are aware of climate change will modify their travel habits as a consequence (Simpson et al., 2008). If flying cannot be avoided, travellers are recommended to

participate in carbon compensation or carbon offsetting and invest in mitigation activities such as energy-efficient measures, renewable energy, or carbon sequestration (ibid.). However, it has to be noted that such pro-environmental consumption is often driven by social rewards, e.g. peer-recognition rather than a willingness to reduce the impact on the environment (Dessart, Andreu, Bigné, & Decrop, 2013).

Each new experience brings a new perspective and thus influences travel identity. Gibson et al.'s (2012) case study of the Tribewanted project on Vorovoro Island, Fiji, shows that many visitors continue sustainable practices learnt during their stay on the island in their everyday environment after returning home. In fact, travel influences how people perceive themselves and consequently modifies travel identities (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Socially constructed memories of past tourism experiences have the power to influence both future experiences and the way people approach the present day (Wright, 2010). Therefore, slow travel and tourism has the potential to encourage more sustainable lifestyles and alter highly consumerist practices (Fullagar, 2012).

2.4.2.2 Other practices

There is not much research on the behaviour of slow tourists that is related to practices other than environmental practices. However, references are found about the behaviour of Slow Food members who do engage in slow travel while on holiday.

The empirical study of K. H. Lee et al. (2014) among Slow Food members from Argentina, Australia, Italy, Taiwan and Hong Kong shows consistency between the behaviour that members exhibit while at home and on holiday. This consistent behaviour is attributed to the fact that members adhere to the values of Slow Food not only at home but also while travelling (ibid.). They like cooking, buying fresh ingredients and buying from small-scale producers while at home and they indulge themselves in the same activities while on holiday. Consequently, many chose to stay in apartments with kitchens, learn about local cooking styles and ingredients and even attend cooking classes while on holiday. This confirms results from other studies exploring activity-loyalty patterns and linkage between daily leisure and tourism. It is suggested that people are

more likely to engage in a certain activity on holiday if they are involved in it in a daily setting (Brey & Lehto, 2007). However, that is not true for all activities, and there are exceptions to this rule. The findings show three types of loyalty relationship: positively correlated activities, when high participation in daily activities positively correlates with high participation in vacation activities (golfing, fishing, hunting, visiting theme parks and attending concerts); activities with no specified pattern, when participation in daily activities have no significant correlation with participation in vacation activities (going to the opera, for instance); and negatively correlated activities, when participation in daily activities negatively correlates with vacation activities and leads to non-participation (mostly with team-related activities like football, basketball) (ibid., pp. 169-172). In general, more skill-based activities have a higher positive correlation between daily and vacation participation than less skill-based activities (ibid.).

It was also observed that the Slow Food members practice slow travel while on holiday – which manifests itself as staying longer at the destination and interacting with local people. The study also suggests that the destination was the main pull factor and not the particular activity, although Slow Food influenced what members did while at the destination (K. H. Lee et al., 2014). It is also noted that ‘escape’ was not among the travel motivations for Slow Food members. They travelled for work purposes, to visit family and friends and for other reasons, such as participation in Slow Food events and activities like camping, trekking, biking and learning a new language.

It has to be pointed out that Slow Food members exhibit different travel-related lifestyle preferences and participate in different activities at their destination if compared to non-members. The study of K.-H. Lee, Packer, and Scott (2015) shows that Slow Food members are more interested in local and new cultures and less interested in activity and adventure while on holiday; familiarity and comfort in travel are less important for Slow Food members than non-members. Additionally, Slow Food members show higher interest in food and travel-related activities and are more likely to savour local flavours and immerse themselves in the destination than non-members (ibid.). It has to be noted that immersion in a destination is characterized by interacting with the local community and “enjoying the destination slowly” (ibid., p. 8).

2.4.3 Motivation

Motivation is “the sum of biological and cultural forces that drive behaviour,” i.e. a particular reason for certain actions (Pearce, 2011, p. 42). It is important to understand tourist motivation since it influences visitors’ perceptions of destinations and can be further used by destination marketers in destination promotion (ibid.). As noted earlier, motivation is also one of the criteria used to classify tourists and travellers.

2.4.3.1 Slow tourists within existing tourist typology and motivation frameworks

There have been various attempts to fit slow travellers and tourists into the existing tourist typology and motivation frameworks. One of the approaches to tourist motivation is a needs-based approach which employs Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs. It is presumed that tourists would choose destinations that would best satisfy their needs (ibid.). Slow travel is linked with Maslow’s higher level needs since it allows slow travellers to pursue their “quest for self-actualization” (Germann Molz, 2009, p. 281).

E. Cohen (1972) further distinguishes between four types of travellers on the basis of their motivation – the organized mass tourist, the individual mass tourist, the explorer and the drifter. The latter two are also referred to as “non-institutionalized types” in comparison with the mass tourist (Goodall, 2004, p. 175). It is suggested that the slow tourist partly resembles the explorer and the drifter type because they are independent and flexible in terms of planning their experiences (Heitmann et al., 2011). However, slow tourists also share some similarities with mass tourists since, for example, they use the same facilities (ibid.).

Another division is provided by Plog (1974) who has developed a classification of travellers based on their psychographic types. According to this model, travellers can be placed on the continuum from allocentric to mid-centric to psychocentric. Slow travellers best fit with the allocentric traveller who is an independent traveller, seeks more adventurous experiences and has an interest in travel and adventure. However, it is pointed out that some characteristics of allocentric travellers are in conflict with the slow

philosophy – for instance, allocentric travellers prefer long-haul travel and look for exciting experiences; characteristics which are considered to contradict the principles of slow travel (Heitmann et al., 2011).

One of the earliest studies looking at why travel was conducted was by Dann (1977) who identified two types of tourists based on their underlying motivations or 'push' factors. They were categorised as the anomic tourist and the ego-enhancement tourist. While the anomic tourist went on holiday in order to have a break from work, to relax and engage in social interaction, the main motivations of the ego-enhancement tourist were prestige and socio-economic status (ibid.). In this division, slow travellers and tourists bear a greater resemblance to the anomic rather than the ego-enhancement tourist.

2.4.3.2 Push and pull factors

The push and pull factor model is one of the early paradigms for understanding tourist behaviour and motivation. Push factors drive people away from a place. Since tourists seek activities to satisfy their needs, these can be classified as internal factors. Push factors "refer to the tourist as subject and deal with those factors predisposing him to travel" (Dann, 1977, p. 186). Since push factors refer to internal needs and desires, they can be considered as "the true motivational forces" (Pearce, 2011, p. 44). Typical push factors are escape, socializing, fun/excitement, relaxation, prestige and educational motives (Page, 2011). Pull factors are associated with "the object of travel" and refer to the destination attributes; they draw people to a new location (Dann, 1977, p. 186). Pull factors include such things as ease of access, cost of travel, promotional images of a destination, tourist attractions/events, as well as sun, sea and sand (Page, 2011). These are destination-generated forces and from the tourist perspective can be classified as external motives. Therefore the pull factors cannot be considered as "the true motivational forces," although they might play an important role in attracting people to a certain destination (Pearce, 2011, p. 44).

The push and pull factor framework has been widely used in tourism studies. The majority of studies have been quantitative in nature and have used factor analyses to identify the key dimensions (Klenosky, 2002; You, O'Leary, Morrison, & Hong, 2000). However, the application of the framework can be found in qualitative studies as well (Crompton, 1979; Prayag & Ryan, 2010).

Nine motives that influence the destination choice for pleasure vacationers have been identified in a study by Crompton (1979). Seven motives are socio-psychological and include: escape from a perceived mundane environment; exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships and facilitation of social interaction. Two motives are cultural: novelty and education. Socio-psychological factors were found not to be place-specific, i.e. were unrelated to destination attributes, while cultural factors were found to be partially aroused by what was on offer at that destination. Since motives are multi-dimensional, more than one motive can influence the destination choice (*ibid.*).

The relationship between push and pull factors is explained in the model of Goodall (2004) which links needs, motivations, preferences and goals in an individual's holiday choice (Figure 2.5). Motivations work as push factors and emerge from personal needs. There are also extrinsic motivations that are shaped by an individual's social and cultural environment. Since motivations drive behaviour and holiday choice, they are regarded as important factors that help to explain holiday patterns (*ibid.*). In order to decide which type of holiday to select from a variety of competing destinations, holidaymakers must decide on their preferences, which work as further filters for holiday choice. In addition, holidaymakers have to set goals representing their expectations in order to choose the best option from the available alternatives. Goals are generated from motivations and preferences and represent their expectations from a holiday. Yet, "needs, preferences and goals are multiple for any individual and may also be conflicting" (*ibid.*, p. 176); therefore, holiday goals are structured in a hierarchy depending on which needs are more intense and which preferences have priority. The model also includes feedback or learning mechanisms since one holiday experience informs the next holiday choice. While the personality of a holidaymaker determines their individual preferences and goals, the other factor influencing holiday choice – and which works as a pull factor –

is the holiday product itself. Holidaymakers hold mental images about a destination which work as pull factors when choosing a particular destination. These images are formed from attitudes that holidaymakers hold about the holiday's perceived attributes; these images can be both resource-based and facility-based as well as tangible or abstract (ibid.). Often "consideration of the *push* factors precede considerations of the *pull* ones" (Goodall, 2004, p. 174; original emphasis).

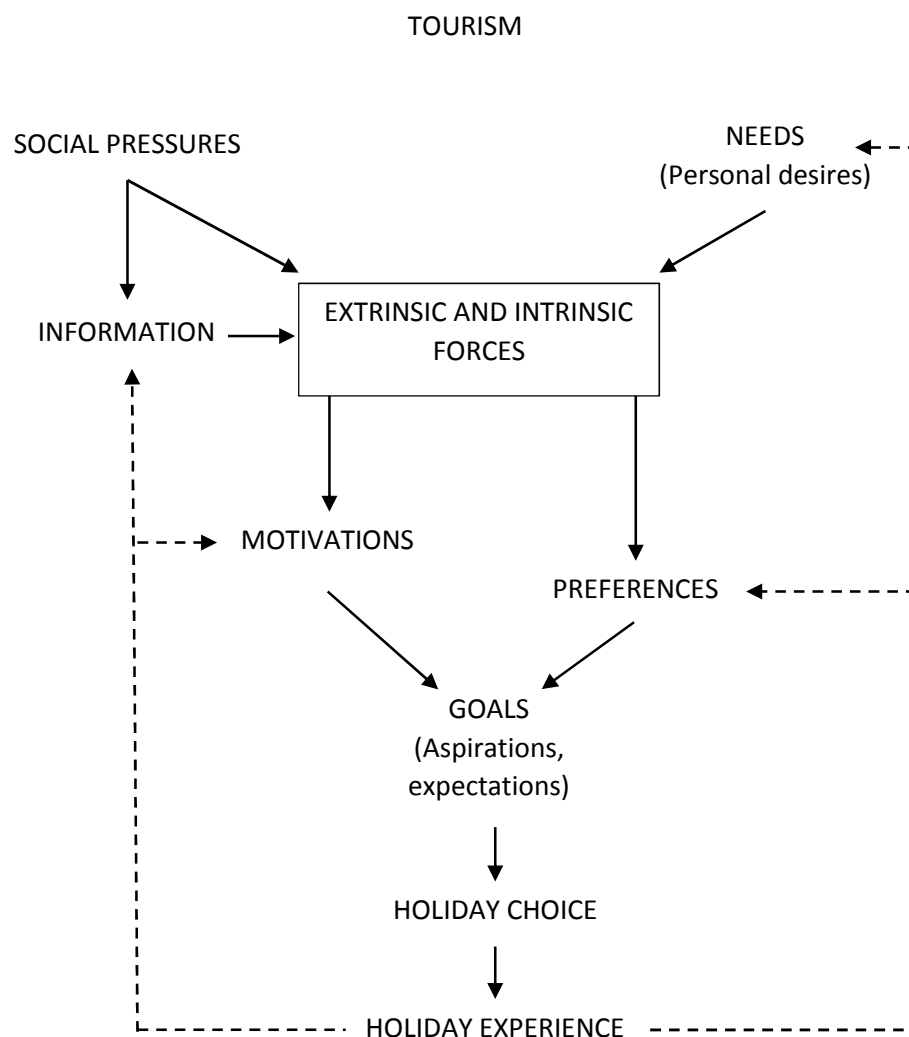


Figure 2.5

The relationship between needs, motivations, preferences and goals in individual holiday choice (Goodall, 2004, p. 174)

In this context, destination marketers can shape mental images that holidaymakers hold about the destination. While there are attempts to address both the push and pull factors of potential tourists through advertising, it is acknowledged that destination marketers have little influence on push factors although they can influence pull factors and destination choice (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004).

Moreover, it is argued that push and pull factors are “culture sensitive” since travellers from different cultures have different motivations to travel (You et al., 2000, p. 23). A study of UK and Japanese long-haul travellers shows that push and pull factors differ significantly among both groups (ibid.). Likewise, the study of Prayag and Ryan (2010) illustrates that nationality influences push factors and consequently destination choice.

Several authors also link motives with travel experience and argue that more experienced travellers have different motives compared to less experienced travellers. For instance, Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) demonstrate how Maslow’s hierarchy of needs can be used to construct “motivational career in travel.” The results show that more experienced travellers tend to report experiences containing self-actualization need while less experienced travellers tend to report experiences containing physiological need. It is assumed that motivations, as with needs, do change over time and as a result of past travel experiences (ibid.).

More popular however is the concept of the travel career ladder (later reformulated as the ‘travel career patterns’ (TCP) conceptual scheme which includes the notion that travellers’ motives change with travel experience (Pearce, 2011). Fourteen travel motivators are divided into three layers: core motives (novelty, escape/relaxation and relationships); middle layer extrinsic motives (kinship, self-development through host-site involvement and nature) and middle layer intrinsic motives (self-actualization and self-enhancement); and outer layer motives (isolation, stimulation, social status, romance, autonomy and nostalgia).

The core motives are said to be unaffected by the traveller’s experience. Middle layer motives are more important than outer layer motives for the most experienced travellers, while less experienced travellers regard all motives as important (ibid.). An

individual's travel career is dependent both on their previous holiday experiences as well as the current life cycle stage. Pearce (2011) suggests that, in addition to exploring travellers' motives, it is important to look at their relative importance.

2.4.3.3 Push and pull factors in slow tourism

Several attempts have been made to identify whether slow tourists have unique motives to go on holiday and visit a particular destination or their motivations overlap with those of the general tourist.

Many of the general tourist motives discussed in the previous section have been identified in relation to slow travellers and tourists. Heitmann et al. (2011) in their overview of slow travellers suggest that they are motivated by 'physical' pull factors such as local food and absence of stress and noise as well as activities that engage body and spirit. However, 'non-physical' motivators also play an important role, and other pull factors can be considered, such as an interest in local culture, heritage and personal development (a desire to understand the places visited or to develop new skills through learning a local language or cooking courses). Overall, slowness is considered as a push factor (ibid.). Further, it is argued that the search for authenticity is among the main motivations for slow tourists (De Salvo et al., 2013). Since slow tourists are interested in experiencing local realities, the authors compare them with what Redfoot (1984) describes as the 'third order tourist' or 'tourist-anthropologist' – a tourist who stays longer at the destination and therefore better understands the communities visited, and whose main aim is a search for authenticity while travelling. However, the 'tourist-anthropologist' keep a subjective detachment and distancing from the communities visited in order to avoid 'going native'; therefore, their quest for authenticity results in failure (Redfoot, 1984).

The number of empirical studies shows multiple push factors in relation to slow tourism. A study among self-identified slow travellers reveals that discourses used by participants to describe their slow travel follow a dominant tourism narrative (Dickinson et al., 2011). Push factors for slow travel include "flexibility, freedom, independence,

away from constraints of daily life, relaxation, achievement, a story to tell and engagement with people and place” (ibid., p. 293). The case study of the Tribewanted Project on Vorovoro Island, Fiji, by Gibson et al. (2012) with regards to slow travel shows that cultural experiences – school visits, learning and performing traditional dances, specific cultural activities and interaction with locals – are rated very highly in post-experience visitor surveys and are among the main motivations for visiting the island. Another important motivator for visitors is the attempt to live as sustainably as possible for a longer period of time, paying attention to water usage and waste management as well as producing and consuming their own food (ibid.). The empirical study of Oh et al. (2014) has identified six general motivations for slow travel – relaxation, self-reflection, escape, novelty-seeking, engagement and discovery, although the authors acknowledge that these motivations are not unique for slow travel and overlap with general tourism motivations. Similarly, by analysing messages of self-identified slow travellers on slow travel forums Robbins and Cho (2012) conclude that the major motivations for engaging in slow travel include novelty, escape/relaxation and social interaction.

It is also suggested that travelling at a slower tempo or in ‘slow motion’ can be appealing and motivating for some travellers who value relaxed ways of travelling and consequently experience increased personal satisfaction and well-being. Relatively low levels of convenience and unfavourable price-quality ratios compared to high-speed modes of transport are considered to be the main obstacles for ‘slow motion’ (Nijkamp & Baaijens, 1999). Similarly, the study of Larsen (2016) among Danish conventional or mass tourists shows that although they value slow travel behaviours due to better travel experiences, the main obstacles hindering engagement in slow travel is the travel cost and time limitations.

As discussed earlier, environmental consciousness is often mentioned as one of the motives to engage in slow travel (Dickinson et al., 2011). However, it is acknowledged that environmental consciousness – although important – is not the main motivation for slow travellers (Dickinson et al., 2010; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) and that the environmental benefits of slow tourism are at best a bonus rather than a motive for slow tourism (Guiver & McGrath, 2016). In fact, people engage in slow travel mainly for travel experiences that enrich them (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011), and that allow taking time to

enjoy the journey, engage with people and to explore destinations in a less superficial way (Dickinson et al., 2011). However, it is argued that travel experiences, environmental concerns and modes of transport are important elements of slow travel and many slow travellers “embraced all three elements to some extent” (ibid., p. 287).

In terms of the pull factors, it is argued that certain destinations attract tourists with particular motivations, e.g. tourists who are motivated by escape tend to choose tourist resorts while tourists motivated by ego-enhancement are more likely to choose cultural destinations (Nikjoo & Ketabi, 2015). Yet, there is far less empirical evidence on pull factors than push factors in slow travel, i.e. why slow tourists go to particular destinations and whether they prefer certain destinations over others. It is also suggested that slow travellers conceptualize tourism differently from non-slow travellers, as discussed earlier, by choosing the mode of transport first and then deciding where to go (Dickinson et al., 2010). This implies that there is no particular pull to a single destination for slow travellers (ibid.).

However, some of the factors can work as both push and pull. Many authors and sources indicate that slow travellers are particularly interested in local heritage and culture (Caffyn, 2007; FlightlessTravel; G. Hall, 2012; Heitmann et al., 2011; Mintel Group, 2011; Moore, 2012; Richards, 2012; Singh, 2012; Slow Movement, 2013; Timms & Conway, 2011) while others refer to a more general interest in locality (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Markwell et al., 2012). However, since some factors can work as both at the same time, it can be argued whether interest in culture is more of a push or pull factor for slow travellers. In fact, one factor can initiate the decision or push a person to travel and the same factor can also influence the choice of a particular destination (Klenosky, 2002). Therefore, cultural experiences can be identified as a push factor while an interest in particular culture can be identified as a pull factor for slow travellers. In addition, the study on the pull factors of tourism destinations shows that “a single pull factor can serve different and possible multiple ends for travellers” (ibid., p. 394). However, it is suggested that pleasure vacationists travel for socio-psychological and not for cultural motives; the destination is only “a medium through which these motives could be satisfied” (Crompton, 1979, p. 415).

2.4.4 Slow mindset

While slow travel is a way of life in physical terms for many tourists in the southern hemisphere and in developing countries in particular where walking and travelling by train, coach and ferries are the main travel modes (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010), travelling using slow travel modes per se just because there are no other realistic alternatives does not make people slow travellers. It is argued that there should also be a slow mindset while travelling in order to define a slow traveller (ibid.).

Various authors note that instead of talking about slow travel, it is necessary to talk about the way a slow traveller approaches that travel, that is, the slow mindset. Both academics and practitioners point out that a slow mindset (Fergusson, 2012; Fullagar, 2012; Gardner, 2009; Heitmann et al., 2011; Locke, 2011; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Mintel Group, 2011; Sawday, 2010; The Independent Traveler, 2013; Tiller, 2012; WHL Group, 2012) or “a slow frame of mind” (Honoré, 2005) is a particular way of thinking that distinguishes slow travellers from other types of travellers. One suggestion is to define slow travel by the way the tourist approaches that travel and not by the mode of transport or destination (Mintel Group, 2011). As such, slow travel is described as “a mental, psychological and behavioural process” (Oh et al., 2014, p. 11) that “represents a way of consumer thinking about tourism” (Dickinson et al., 2011, p. 282). Similarly, De Salvo et al. (2013) refer to the new mentality of the slow tourists in terms of their consumption and travelling practices while Di Clemente et al. (2014) argue that slow tourism as an alternative mindset or mentality is adopted not only by tourists but also by tourist planners and tour operators.

Moreover, many believe that ‘slow’ is more than a mindset while travelling – it is a way of life (DELTA 2000 Soc. Cons a r.l., 2012; Fergusson, 2012) or a particular way of viewing the world (Tam, 2008). Drawing links between Slow Food and slow travel and tourism, slow is also described as “a careful way of living” (Tam, 2008, p. 214).

However, not everybody with a slow mindset can be called a slow traveller. Several authors of Slow Travel Guides mention somebody that they know who has never been outside their hometown or vicinity, because they like the place where they live and do not have a need or willingness to travel somewhere else (Bagshaw, 2010; Mitchell,

2010; Richards, 2012). Indeed, some people do not travel because they have little or no interest in travelling (McKercher & Chen, 2015). Although these people might have a slow mindset, they cannot be called slow travellers since they do not travel.

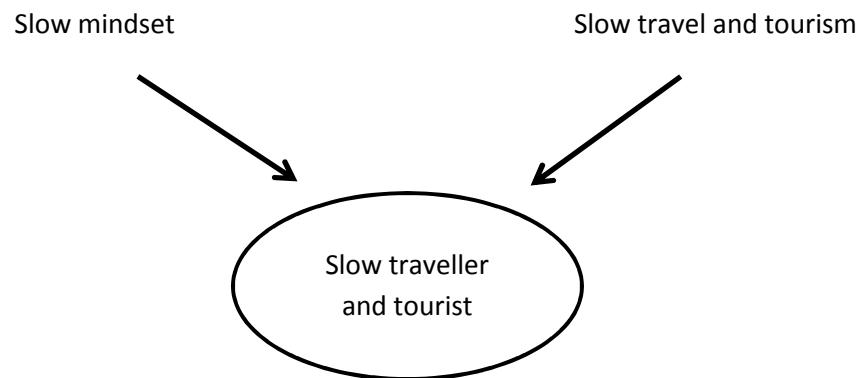


Figure 2.6

The concept of slow traveller and tourist (Source: author)

Therefore in order to call somebody a slow traveller, two factors have to be in place – a slow mindset and actual slow travel (see Figure 2.6).

2.4.5 Bringing it together – slow tourist concept

To summarize, slow tourists are characterized as independent tourists although they have some similarities with mass tourists (Heitmann et al., 2011). While slow tourists share some characteristics with other tourists, they do not fit one particular tourist type provided by existing tourist typologies (ibid.). The deliberate engagement in slow travel, usually for holiday purposes, is attributed to the middle class in developed economies (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson & Peeters, 2012). Slow tourists are described as educated and travelled (Heitmann et al., 2011) and mature tourists (Conway & Timms,

2010). However, criteria like site and particular form of travel cannot be used to segment slow travellers; the motivation for engaging in slow travel seems to be better criteria for identification. The motives for slow travel are multiple and not exclusive to slow travel (Dickinson et al., 2011). Slow tourists exhibit environmentally conscious behaviour at home but not necessarily while on holiday (Dickinson et al., 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010). While environmental concerns are important, they are seldom the main travel motivations (Dickinson et al., 2010; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). The main motivation for slow tourists is travel experiences (De Salvo et al., 2013; Dickinson et al., 2011; Gibson et al., 2012; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). They value more relaxed travel time and prefer slower modes of transport (Nijkamp & Baaijens, 1999). Hence, slowness – both physical and mental – appears to be the motivation that is unique to slow tourists. While there are no particular factors that pull slow tourists to certain destinations, it is acknowledged that slow travellers are interested in the local heritage and culture of the places visited (C. M. Hall, 2012; Singh, 2012; Timms & Conway, 2011). Although travel motives can change over time as travellers get more experienced, this phenomena has not been empirically identified among slow tourists yet. Finally, a slow tourist can be characterized as a person who engages in slow travel and at the same time has the slow mindset – although there is no empirical data to support this.

2.5 Slow philosophy in destination management

2.5.1 Slow destinations

In terms of slow travel destinations, it is suggested that few established slow destinations exist (Guiver et al., 2016). However it is acknowledged that many regions and territories have the potential to be slow tourism destinations (Bagnoli, 2016; Georgica, 2015; Pecsek, 2016).

There is an argument that geographical location as well as infrastructure development of the destination are two primary criteria that influence where slow travel can be adopted (Conway & Timms, 2012). If these two criteria are taken into account, then slow travel is appropriate in Europe, Britain, New Zealand and Japan where relatively

large numbers of affluent people live relatively close to destinations and where transport infrastructure is well-developed (ibid.).

The actual examples of slow destinations can be found in both urban and rural contexts. Traditionally, slow travel is associated with rural areas (Murayama & Parker, 2012), remote areas (de la Barre, 2012), and geographical margins (Conway & Timms, 2010; Timms & Conway, 2011). Sometimes even the term 'slow territories' (in Italian – *territori lenti*) is used to refer to rural areas which experience qualitative growth and development and which are far from intensive urban and industrial growth (Lancerini, 2005).

However, slow travel can also be associated with urban context. For instance, the official Cittáslow member cities can be considered as slow travel destinations (Robinson, 2011), although slow tourism can be practiced in any city, even the bigger ones (Slow Travel Berlin, 2013). In fact, world tourism cities like Berlin, London and New York attract people who want to explore and experience the city beyond its traditional tourism offerings and wander off-the beaten track in search of the 'real city' (Maitland, 2013). Often, the everyday life of people in the cities becomes of interest to these tourists (Maitland, 2010). This shows that slow tourism can be practiced in almost any place, even big cities.

In addition, slow destinations can be inter-regional territories. The Alpine Pearls, a network of 24 destinations within the European Alps, is an example of a slow destination where destinations can work together in promoting slow travel through mutual networking and collaboration. The communities involved in the network offer tourists the opportunity to enjoy holidays in an environmentally conscious way, which means travelling without cars (Mintel Group, 2011). Another destination-based example that offers opportunities for slow travel is the Appalachian Trail, the longest marked footpath in the US (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

Altogether, slow tourism can be practiced in many destinations (Heitmann et al., 2011) and even popular tourist destinations can be experienced in a slow manner (Oh et al., 2014).

2.5.2 Destination management practices

Management practices in Slow Cities are outlined in the membership regulations in the “Cittáslow International” Charter. Requirements for obtaining and maintaining Cittáslow status include implementation of practices in the areas of environmental policies, infrastructure policies, technologies and facilities for urban quality, safeguarding autochthonous production, hospitality, and awareness (Cittáslow, 1999). While some requirements are obligatory, the member towns have to meet at least 50% of them and can choose the actual implementation practices (*ibid.*). In fact, towns can develop their own alternative urban development strategies that focus not only on economic development but also on sustainability and social equity issues and use Slow City status as a unifying theme for these strategies (Mayer & Knox, 2006).

The programs, policies and activities undertaken by Cittáslow member cities discussed in the literature fall into one of the six areas mentioned below:

1. Environmental practices: protection of traditional pasture land and orchards, protection of heritage apple trees and discussion and implementation of better uses of local woods in Hersbruck, Germany (Mayer & Knox, 2006); initiatives relating to environmental policies (alternative energies, recycling domestic waste, composting industrial waste, improving quality of air, water and soil) in San Vincenzo, Italy (Miele, 2008);
2. Safeguarding autochthonous production: the promotion of using local produce in traditional dishes in restaurants in Hersbruck, Germany, and organizing the farmers’ markets in the city centre in Waldkirch, Germany (Mayer & Knox, 2006); the promotion of local food and wines in Orvieto, Italy, and safeguarding local fish and traditional ways of fishing it in San Vincenzo, Italy (Miele, 2008); skill-building initiatives in Ludlow, UK, and the Food Network project in Diss, UK (Pink, 2008); promotion of local culinary products, local producers and small retailers in Brá, Abbiategrosso and Lévento, Italy (Nilsson et al., 2011);
3. Infrastructure policies: revitalization of a community house and its public space in Waldkirch, Germany (Mayer & Knox, 2006); programs to preserve and regenerate built heritage, strict traffic planning and the promotion of cycling in Brá,

Abbiategrosso and Lévanto, Italy, and the revitalization of mountain villages around Lévanto, Italy (Nilsson et al., 2011);

4. Technologies and facilities for urban quality: new environmentally friendly technologies (eco-compatible building materials, alternative sources of energy) in Orvieto, Italy (Miele, 2008);
5. Hospitality: initiatives for oeno-gastronomic tourism and slow hospitality (festivals, events) in Orvieto, Italy (Miele, 2008); signed pathways for tourists in Lévanto, Italy (Nilsson et al., 2011); cultural and food-related events in Brá, Abbiategrosso and Lévanto, Italy (Nilsson et al., 2011);
6. Awareness: educating children about food and taste in Hersbruck, Germany, and rebuilding a sense of local community and social networks in Waldkirch, Germany (Mayer & Knox, 2006); revision of school meals and taste education for children, establishing SlowSundays in Orvieto, Italy, and organic school meals, food education and diversification of food retailing and social gardening in San Vincenzo, Italy (Miele, 2008).

Cittáslow status mainly has a positive effect on tourism development and consequently local economy development (Cosar, Timur, & Kozak, 2013; Cosar, Timur, & Kozak, 2015). It is suggested that joining the Cittáslow network can help towns that are threatened by depopulation since the network aims to increase the quality of life for inhabitants as well as to create a visitor-friendly environment (Nilsson et al., 2011). These circumstances make towns into desirable places for living and possibly could prevent people from leaving them (ibid.).

Empirical evidence confirms the positive effect of implementing Cittáslow principles in destination management. The study comparing residents' perceptions of the quality of life in South Korea's Slow City Agyang-myeon and an urban city – Busan – shows that the level of overall satisfaction is higher in the Slow City (Cho, 2011). The perceived quality of life is measured using eight main indicators: health management, public safety, family life, regional environment, economic conditions, social welfare, participation in the community and educational, cultural and leisure. The residents of Slow City were more satisfied with factors such as regional environment, public safety, participation in the community and economic conditions, but less satisfied with educational opportunities,

cultural activities and health care in comparison with urban residents. The level of satisfaction regarding social welfare and family life were similar in both regions. Altogether, the conclusion to be drawn is that Slow City status has a positive impact on the perceived quality of life of its residents (ibid.).

The application of the slow philosophy in destination management can be controversial however, as illustrated by the following examples from Slow Cities. A study among local visitors to Seferihisar in Turkey reports mixed attitudes about its Slow City status (Cosar & Kozak, 2014). The positive impacts since the acquisition of Slow City membership are seen in the areas of landscaping, prioritizing culture and nature. The drawbacks however include overcrowding, problems with car parking and commercialization as well as deterioration in natural and cultural values. It is reported that huge properties have been built to satisfy growing numbers of tourists, that migration has increased, property prices have gone up and that locals have become “eager to turn what they own into cash” (ibid., p. 28). Nevertheless, the acquisition of Slow City status is regarded as a positive move since it has saved Seferihisar from deterioration and decay. Likewise, the desire to survive is reported to be a reason why Jeungdo island – South Korea’s first Cittáslow – has chosen to apply for membership (C. Lee, 2011). Despite such drawbacks as a dramatic increase in the number of visitors and increasing property prices, there are also many positive aspects. These include financial support for renovating private homes into lodging houses, initiatives to create a local travel agency and a campaign to make Jeungdo a non-smoking and environmentally friendly town. These impacts show the tension that the island faces between further development and slowness (ibid.).

Studies analysing destination management practices in relation to slow tourism at a regional level are scarce. The remote Yukon region in Canada is indirectly promoted as a slow tourism destination and is explored in this context, but only in relation to its accessibility and transportation issues which cause problems for the region (de la Barre, 2012). This challenge, however, is approached with marketing and not with management tools using an ‘accessible remoteness’ theme in destination marketing campaigns (ibid.). The lack of appropriate transport infrastructure has also been reported in India but so far the practical response from the Indian government to encourage slow tourism has been

the creation of pathways in remote areas and eco-treks (Singh, 2012). Finally, as a term, slow tourism is used by local government authorities in Japan at regional, prefectural and municipal levels, but mostly without actual strategies or implementation plans (Murayama & Parker, 2012). Yamaguchi prefecture is reported to be the only one which has adopted slow tourism as a main policy approach and uses it for tourism as well as economic development, satisfying both residents and visitors (ibid.). The actual management practices include encouraging sales of locally produced goods, encouraging the creation of attractive tourism resources, encouraging the development of new tourism businesses, investing in human resource development and establishing a support organization that helps promote slow tourism and products (ibid.).

2.5.3 Challenges in applying slow philosophy in destination management

While the application of a slow philosophy in destination management fosters not only sustainable tourism and economic development in the region (Matos, 2003) and also empowers local stakeholders (Conway & Timms, 2012), its implementation can be challenging. Even in countries like India that have philosophical roots for slow travel there are various practical aspects such as the lack of suitable infrastructure and proper promotion that have to be addressed so that slow tourism can contribute to sustainable tourism development (Singh, 2012). Alternative tourism mobilities that correspond to the slow travel philosophy like hitch-hiking, wild camping and even hospitality exchanges often create risks for regulatory authorities and tourism planners who try to eliminate rather than facilitate such practices (O'Regan, 2012). Hence, moving from traditional tourism structures to alternative ones faces much resistance from the large tourism industry players, regulatory authorities and destination tourism planners (ibid.).

In addition, there is often a lack of support from local people for Cittáslow initiatives (Mayer & Knox, 2006; Nilsson et al., 2011) and only a minority of them are involved in Cittáslow projects (Pink, 2008). There are also conflicts about finding the right balance between preservation and development in Cittáslow member cities (Cho, 2011).

Finally, the extent to which destination managers can encourage slow travel practices is questionable taking into account the obstacles within the current tourism and travel structures. Firstly, the existing tourism structures encourage and promote speed, distance and frequency rather than a slower approach to travel (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Secondly, behavioural choices of tourists are limited by tourism structures and consequently behaviour and tourist structures are institutionalized (Dickinson et al., 2011). In fact, there is a notion that “vacation time is externally dictated” by the leisure industry which provides standardized tourism products (Woehler, 2003, p. 89). Package holidays do not offer much choice for slow tourists since slow travel options are seldom available (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Finally, destination managers would need to address socially embedded tourism practices and norms in order to encourage slow tourism. Currently, it is a common practice to choose car and air travel rather than slower modes and approaches to travel (Dickinson et al., 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010). Besides, flying is considered as an important component of holidays (Barr et al., 2010) that even environmentally conscious consumers find hard to resist (McDonald et al., 2015).

2.6 Slow philosophy in destination marketing

2.6.1 Practices related to Cittáslow

The Slow Food logo is an officially registered trademark which can only be used in connection with Slow Food events and initiatives and cannot be used on an individual member's products or in restaurants (Slow Food, 2007). The Cittáslow network allows its members to use the movement's logo and its title in marketing and promotion activities (Miele, 2008). Membership of Cittáslow does not restrict the use of other branding and marketing instruments in destination promotion and is compatible with other destination marketing initiatives. In fact, many Cittáslow member towns use a range of brands and memberships in order to promote the city and attract tourists (ibid.). For example, the cities of Orvieto and San Vincenzo in Italy are members of Cittáslow and are also involved in territorial marketing through the networks Italian Wine Cities and Italian Olive Oil cities (ibid.).

In general, it is acknowledged that the Cittáslow brand is a useful tool in destination marketing (Mayer & Knox, 2006; Nilsson et al., 2011). However, how cities implement it in actual practice differs. Several studies explore the application of the Cittáslow concept in destination marketing. For instance, Hersbruck and Waldkirch towns in Germany are actively using their Cittáslow status to promote their towns not only to tourists but also to businesses (Mayer & Knox, 2006).

A completely different approach is reported in the study of destination marketing practices of three Cittáslow towns in Northern Italy – Brá, Abbiategrosso and Lévanto – which reveals that these towns are more involved in and concerned about sustainable destination development and planning; tourism marketing is said to be of only secondary importance (Nilsson et al., 2011). The ideological standpoint of the respondents (the local officials from Slow Food and the Cittáslow movements in the particular towns), was reported to be the main reason. This included scepticism towards mass tourism, commercialisation and even marketing as such, as well as the limited resources available for promotion in particular towns (ibid.). Although the respondents are interested in attracting more tourists to their towns, their marketing activities are primarily targeted to the local inhabitants. In fact, the prevailing attitude is that the “external market, tourists and visitors, will not be a target of Cittáslow information until the philosophy is implemented in the internal market, in the local population” (ibid., p. 381). It is also noted that Cittáslow as a brand is associated with exclusivity, which makes promotion unnecessary since it can make the brand appear mundane (ibid.).

The aforementioned study shows that the three Cittáslow towns demonstrate “a cautious, almost naïve, relationship towards marketing in general and promotion in particular” because they try to avoid attracting too many tourists and turning the towns into destinations for mass tourism (Nilsson et al., 2011, p. 382). Such practice, however, is not common in destination marketing and not even among Cittáslow member towns. A completely opposite approach to marketing is adopted by another Cittáslow – Seferihisar in Turkey – which is advertised even in easyJet’s in-flight magazine (Tomasetti, 2014). Although exploitation of its Cittáslow status has already “opened the floodgates for tourism,” the city is looking for ways to attract even more visitors (ibid., p. 80).

It is also unclear to what extent the Cittáslow status motivates tourists to visit the destination. The study on domestic tourist motives to visit Seferihisar – Turkey’s first accredited Cittáslow – shows that its Cittáslow status does not have any particular impact on visitor choice due to the fact that many have visited the place before (Cosar & Kozak, 2014). One of the conclusions is that “internal factors, such as previous personal experiences, have a greater influence on visitor behaviour than external factors like brands and logos” (ibid., p. 26). At the same time, it is noted that first time visitors to a slow city learn about the slow city concept, which influences their future behaviour – they are more likely to visit a slow city during their next holiday (ibid.). Many return visits confirm this positive impact on future holiday planning.

2.6.2 Practice at regional level

Several studies link the slow concept with destination marketing and promotional initiatives. One of the earliest conceptual studies on slow tourism explores its opportunities in Alpine regions (Matos, 2003). It shows that several destinations in Switzerland explicitly use “the idea of decelerating daily life” in their promotional materials but there is still little implementation of this idea into practice (ibid., p. 99). For example, the slogan of the holiday region of Gstaad in Switzerland invites tourists to “Come up, slow down” (Gstaad, 2015) but it has little practical application (Matos, 2003).

Another conceptual study examines remote and marginal locations in the Caribbean and proposes the use of slow tourism as a promotional tool for alternative tourist offerings such as sport tourism, heritage tourism, agro-tourism and ecotourism (Conway & Timms, 2010). One suggestion is to use slow tourism as a promotional umbrella to market alternative tourism and quality tourism offerings that would help to diversify already established mass-tourism offerings (ibid.).

Murayama and Parker (2012) conducted a conceptual study exploring the possibilities of applying the slow philosophy at a regional level. They use Japan as an example to argue that a country, which for many years was one of the fastest growing nations in the World, can apply slow tourism principles to stimulate rural development by

attracting both visitors and potential residents. The study analyses the Kagawa and Yamaguchi Prefectures which are two examples from the Chugoku region of Japan where the slow tourism label has actually been applied in destination marketing. The Kagawa Prefecture has used the term slow tourism for a short time on its website, although it has never been recognized or adopted formally by local tourism authorities (ibid.). The Yamaguchi Prefecture, on the other hand, has actively promoted slow tourism since 2007 and uses it as “the main policy approach for tourism and economic development” (ibid., p. 178). In fact, slow tourism is used as an umbrella term to promote activity and experience-based tourism such as agriculture, fishing and forestry that takes place in rural areas.

Similarly, Pecsek (2016) argues that marketing Mezőkövesd town in Hungary as a slow destination would contribute to making its unique cultural traditions more visible and boost the consumption of folklore products. Consequently, applying the slow philosophy in destination marketing would enable the revitalization of tourism in this small regional town and help it to become a high performing destination.

There are also examples of the implicit application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing. One such example is the Yukon region in Canada where slow travel values are embedded in its resident place identity narratives (de la Barre, 2012). These values are further used to market the territory. Analysis of the Yukon’s marketing campaign and promotion materials reveals that these exploit the associations of “remote wilderness and spiritual fulfilment” (ibid., p. 163). The themes used in promoting Yukon as a tourist destination include being lost in time and space, finding one’s soul, slowing down physically and moving around slowly, experiencing a different pace of time, relaxing and interacting with local residents, heritage and culture (ibid.). Although the Yukon region is not promoted directly (explicitly) as a slow tourism destination, the values emphasized in tourism promotion indirectly (implicitly) reveal that the Yukon can be considered as one. However, the Yukon tourism marketers face the challenge of promoting the destination as ‘remote’ but also ‘accessible’ at the same time (ibid.).

As with the Cittáslow brand, slow tourism as a brand can coexist with traditional tourism brands that in some cases even encourage mass-tourism. For instance, Conway and Timms (2010, p. 333) use the example of tourism in the Caribbean and refer to slow

tourism as “a partner to Caribbean tourism’s sun, sand and sea tourism” which enriches and diversifies the overall tourism experience. As such, slow tourism in destination branding is more complementary to, rather than competing with, an existing destination brand.

Altogether, it is acknowledged that slowness is an effective marketing concept (Matos, 2003) and slow tourism can be used as a viable promotional tool in destination marketing (Conway & Timms, 2010; de la Barre, 2012; Murayama & Parker, 2012).

2.6.3 Challenges in applying slow philosophy in destination marketing

One suggestion is that it would be easier to sell slow products than environmentally sound products because slow implies well-being, conviviality and hedonic elements (Caffyn, 2012). However, branding a destination as slow can be risky due to ambiguous understanding of the concept and possible negative connotations (ibid.). In fact, misunderstanding about what the slow brand is, alongside a lack of clear communication about what it encompasses (Murayama & Parker, 2012; Robinson, 2011) poses challenges for the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing.

The risks for the Cittáslow brand include its overexploitation in tourism marketing, and “contradictions between the commercial sides of tourism and the non-commercial ethos of the Cittáslow movement” can already be discerned (Nilsson et al., 2011, p. 373). The increasing popularity of Cittáslow consequently leads to an increased number of tourists which creates a potential risk for the cities, especially if tourist numbers become overwhelming (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). In such cases, there is a danger that the success of Cittáslow will lead to overexploitation of the resources that it aims to preserve and improve in the first place (Nilsson et al., 2011). Knox (2005) also points out the possible dangers associated with the increasing recognition and popularity of the Cittáslow brand: too many tourists, rising prices in shops, loss of authenticity in local cafes and rising property prices since wealthy outsiders might choose small and charming Slow Cities for their second homes. However, Knox’s solution to such problems is quite surprising: the propagation of the slow movement rather than its de-marketing. The

rationale behind this suggestion is that increasing the number of Cittáslow member towns will decrease their exclusivity and consequently reduce the attention that they receive (ibid.).

Furthermore, while the slow tourism brand is compatible with other marketing initiatives, it is not considered to be the best marketing tool in cases where other strong labels and brands already exist (Murayama & Parker, 2012). In the case of Japan, the terms 'slow life' and 'slow food' are recognized, but not the term 'slow tourism'. The term 'new tourism' is used instead and is regarded as a much stronger brand (ibid.).

As with the Cittáslow brand, the growing popularity of the slow brand also has its downside, especially if it is used without any justification, control or guidance, and is sometimes even misused as a marketing ploy (Dickinson et al., 2011). Hence, using slow just for marketing and commercial reasons to attract a certain clientele but with no adequate grounds can lead to degradation of the slow concept.

The lack of understanding of what the slow tourism label stands for is highlighted by Murayama and Parker (2012) who mention some cases when local government authorities in Japan use 'slow tourism' as a label or slogan, but there are no strategies or plans on how to implement it. It is suggested that more time and effort is required so that tourism providers, promoters and consumers fully understand the core values and principles of slow tourism otherwise it will be "just another label sitting alongside the rest of the niche or new tourism labels used by a few authorities seeking to freshen their marketing" (ibid., p. 181).

Finally, slow tourism is also regarded as a promotional vehicle that destinations can use in order to address some of the problems caused by mass tourism (Conway & Timms, 2010). However, this strategy should be executed with caution since it might bring adverse effects. It is argued that it might not be beneficial to encourage all mass tourists to look for slower places because it will result in such problems as overcrowding of relatively intact and wild areas and cultural clashes between tourists and locals (Dodds, 2012).

In summary, there are various degrees of the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing, and advocates can be found for such strategies as well as

opponents. However, most research focuses on the application of the slow philosophy at Cittàslow or regional level. Hence, the unique contribution of this research lies in the analysis at a national level of the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management.

2.7 Bringing it together – dimensions of slow travel and tourism

The dimensions of slow tourism are summarized in a concept map (Maxwell, 2005) or a model below (see Figure 2.7) which integrates the conceptual aspects covered in this thesis.

The current literature on slow travel and tourism shows that the concept incorporates the experiential, environmental, economic and ethical dimensions, with slowness being a common factor across these dimensions. Although currently there is no evidence that any of the dimensions are more prevalent than another, it is assumed that they are all present to some extent in a slow travel context. As Caffyn (2012, p. 78) points out, “slow could be regarded as an amalgamation, made up of a wide range of elements, perhaps even a continuum – the more elements that are present in any holiday or location the slower that trip or destination will be.”

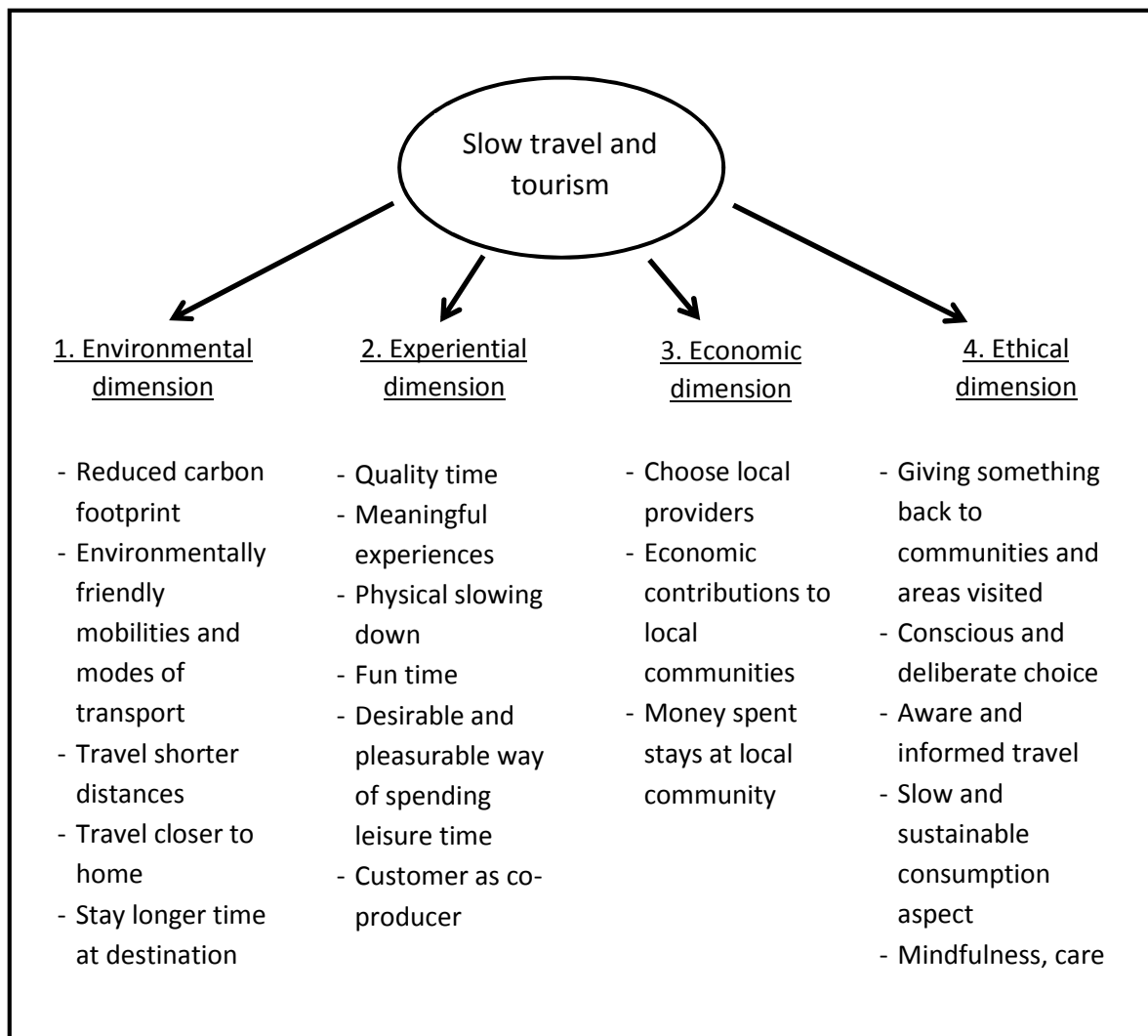


Figure 2.7

Dimensions of slow travel and tourism (Source: author)

It is also argued that slow tourism means different things to different actors – such as slow tourists, tourism providers and destination managers; therefore, different aspects of slow tourism can be emphasized by various stakeholders (Guiver & McGrath, 2016). For instance, the demand side places more emphasis on authentic experiences while the supply side tends to stress sustainability, a slow ethos and staying longer time at a destination due to economic considerations (Robinson, 2011).

2.8 Research objectives and questions

Objective 1: To identify and evaluate the interpretation and understanding of the slow tourism concept in Latvia by tourists and destination marketers.

There are various interpretations about where slow tourism could fit in the overall tourism system. Slow tourism is seen as a guiding principle for travel, as a particular tourism niche or as an umbrella term that encompasses various tourism types. Linkages are often drawn with responsible tourism (Timms & Conway, 2011), ethical tourism (Clancy, 2015), alternative tourism (Moore, 2012), green tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Murayama & Parker, 2012), eco-tourism (Wearing et al., 2012), community-based tourism (Gibson et al., 2012), volunteer tourism (Heitmann et al., 2011; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Robinson, 2011), gastro tourism (Heitmann et al., 2011), cultural tourism (Pecsek, 2016) and even pilgrimage (Howard, 2012) and hitch-hiking (O'Regan, 2012). Several authors also link slow travel with sustainable tourism (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Fergusson, 2012; Heitmann et al., 2011) since many characteristics overlap. Many authors refer to slow travel and tourism as an antidote to, or the antithesis of, mass tourism (Conway & Timms, 2010; DELTA 2000 Soc. Cons a r.l., 2012; Gardner, 2009; Heitmann et al., 2011; Timms & Conway, 2011).

Many authors have attempted to conceptualise and define slow tourism from a theoretical perspective, yet there is no universally adopted definition of the term. The existing definitions include aspects from environmental, experiential, economic and ethical dimensions with 'slowness' being the overarching theme. However, even slowness in the context of slow tourism is discussed from two perspectives – the physical mobility of a tourist (physical slowness) and the perception of time while on holiday (mental or attitudinal slowness). The lack of a universally agreed definition of slow tourism makes its interpretation context-specific.

The existing empirical studies on slow tourism focus on its interpretation from the demand side (Dickinson et al., 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010; Fullagar, 2012; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Oh et al., 2014; Robbins & Cho, 2012; Tiyyce & Wilson, 2012), supply side (de la Barre, 2012; Groenendaal, 2012), or both (Germann Molz, 2009; Gibson et al.,

2012; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). However, none of the studies explores slow tourism from the perspectives of tourism destination marketers. Additionally, research comparing and contrasting both the supply and demand side interpretation of slow tourism is lacking.

Research question 1: How do tourists and destination marketers understand and interpret the slow tourism concept?

Objective 2: To identify the characteristics of slow tourists in Latvia

Slow travellers and tourists have been the main focus of a few empirical studies (Robbins & Cho, 2012; Robinson, 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). Yet, there is still a lack of consensus on definitions of a 'slow traveller' and a 'slow tourist', and a clear differentiation between both concepts is still lacking.

Currently only one study has been carried out among self-identified slow travellers (Dickinson et al., 2011); another study has used users' posts in online slow travel forums to conceptualize slow travellers (Robbins & Cho, 2012). Others have tried to discern the characteristics of slow tourists in visitors to Cittáslow (Robinson, 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011).

Slow tourists have been characterized by their pro-environmental attitude, taking time while on holiday and engaging with people and places visited (Dickinson et al., 2011). However, it is suggested that a slow mindset while travelling is the defining characteristic of slow tourists (Fergusson, 2012; Fullagar, 2012; Gardner, 2009; Heitmann et al., 2011; Honoré, 2005; Locke, 2011; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Mintel Group, 2011; Sawday, 2010; The Independent Traveler, 2013; Tiller, 2012; WHL Group, 2012).

There are more assumptions about the characteristics of people engaging in slow tourism than there is research-based evidence. Therefore one of the objectives of this research is to identify the characteristics of slow tourists from both supply and demand sides.

Research question 2: What are the characteristics of people engaging in / practicing slow tourism?

Objective 3: To identify and evaluate similarities and differences in the perception of slow tourism practices and experiences from the supply and demand sides in Latvia

While research into the travel practices of Slow Food members exists (K.-H. Lee, Packer, et al., 2015; K.-H. Lee, Scott, & Packer, 2015; K. H. Lee et al., 2014), there is little research into the practices of slow tourists. The empirical research has mainly examined slow tourists' environmental practices, i.e. practices related to their choice of transport while on holiday (Dickinson et al., 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010; Robbins & Cho, 2012) and sustainable behaviour (Robinson, 2011).

Studies among Slow Food members show that their destination activities are influenced by habitus, i.e. the destination activities of Slow Food members are similar to their activities at home, at least in relation to food (K.-H. Lee, Scott, et al., 2015; K. H. Lee et al., 2014). Such consistency is only partly discerned among slow tourists. Their environmental practices at home do not always translate into environmental practices while on holiday, and even self-identified slow travellers exhibit varying degrees of environmental practices while on holiday (Dickinson et al., 2011). Most slow tourists however, consider their environmental practices at home as a justification for less sustainable behaviour on holiday (Dickinson et al., 2010). There is not much research on the behaviour of slow tourists that is related to practices other than environmental practices.

The experiences of slow tourism are probably the most discussed topic among travel writers, academics and practitioners, but only a few studies have examined this phenomena empirically (Dickinson et al., 2011; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). The study of Dickinson et al. (2011) of self-identified slow travellers shows that travel experiences – taking time to enjoy the journey and explore destinations, engaging with people and sharing a journey with others – is the main driver for slow travel. Slow travel experiences are also examined in a study among tourism consultants, academics and writers but in terms of the mode of transport and relation to physical slowness (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Other studies discuss experiences related to activities that can be linked with slow tourism, i.e. pleasurable experiences of slow mobility among female cycling tourists (Fullagar, 2012), sustainable travel experience of tribe tourism (Gibson et al., 2012) and

engagement with local communities by participants in a work-exchange programme (M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012).

Two studies also examine experience related to slow tourism from the supply side. The first study explores the values and lifestyles of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs in France and suggest that they contribute to the creation of emotional experience of life at a destination which is essentially about slow tourism (Groenendaal, 2012). The second study analyses the experiential values expressed by residents of the remote Yukon region in Canada and suggests that these values are used to market the destination as appropriate for slow travel (de la Barre, 2012).

Again, none of the studies explores the practices and experiences of slow tourism from the perspectives of tourism destination marketers. In addition, there is a lack of research comparing and contrasting both supply and demand side perspectives.

Research question 3a: What are actual slow tourism practices and experiences?

Research question 3b: What are the similarities and differences in the perception of slow tourism practices from the point of view of tourists and tourism destination marketers?

Objective 4: To identify and understand the key push and pull factors for slow tourism from the perspective of tourists and tourism destination marketers in Latvia

Push factors for slow tourism have been identified from the perspective of self-identified slow travellers (Dickinson et al., 2011), slow travel online community members (Robbins & Cho, 2012), tourists visiting popular destinations (Oh et al., 2014), and tourism consultants, academics and writers (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). There are also several conceptual studies on push factors for slow tourism (De Salvo et al., 2013; Moore, 2012).

The study among self-identified slow travellers has found the following push factors for slow travel: flexibility, freedom, independence, escape, relaxation, achievement, a story to tell and engagement with people and place (Dickinson et al., 2011). The empirical study among travellers to popular destinations has identified six general motivations relevant for slow travel – relaxation, self-reflection, escape, novelty-

seeking, engagement and discovery, although these motivations are not unique for slow travel and overlap with general tourism motivations (Oh et al., 2014). Analysis of the messages of slow travel online community members reveal that the major motivations for engaging in slow travel include novelty, escape/relaxation and social interaction (Robbins & Cho, 2012).

Many authors and sources indicate that slow tourists are particularly interested in local heritage and culture (Caffyn, 2007; FlightlessTravel; G. Hall, 2012; Heitmann et al., 2011; Mintel Group, 2011; Moore, 2012; Richards, 2012; Singh, 2012; Slow Movement, 2013; Timms & Conway, 2011) while others refer to a more general interest in locality (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Markwell et al., 2012). Therefore, cultural experiences can be identified as a push factor while an interest in a particular culture can be identified as a pull factor for slow tourists since one factor can work as both push and pull (Klenosky, 2002).

However, there is little empirical evidence on other pull factors for slow tourism. Slow tourists can be found in many locations, even popular tourism destinations (Oh et al., 2014). Moreover, it is suggested that there is no particular pull to a single destination for slow travellers (Dickinson et al., 2010). While research exists into the push and pull factors from the perspective of tourists, the perspective of destination marketers is lacking on push and pull factors in slow tourism. Hence, this research will identify the key push and pull factors for slow tourism from both supply and demand sides.

Research question 4a: What are the key push and pull factors for slow tourism from the perspective of tourists?

Research question 4b: What are the key push and pull factors for slow tourism from the perspective of tourism destination marketers?

Objective 5: To identify and examine the role of the slow destination brand as a pull factor in Latvia

While the general tourism literature suggests that the holiday product itself and destination brand work as pull factors (Goodall, 2004), this phenomena is not empirically

tested in relation to slow tourism. Plus, there are a limited number of destinations portraying the image of a slow destination (Guiver et al., 2016).

It is suggested that slow tourists are found in the official Cittáslow member cities (Robinson, 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). However, it is argued that the Cittáslow brand is not a pull factor for tourists, at least not for first time visitors. However, it can potentially be a pull factor in future (Robinson, 2011).

Therefore, it is unclear whether a slow destination brand on its own can be a strong and viable pull factor for destinations.

Research question 5: What is the role of a slow destination brand in attracting tourists?

Objective 6: To evaluate the implications of applying the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management in Latvia

Slow travel is often regarded as a mindset; therefore, some have questioned whether it can be a tangible product at all (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Opinions on this vary. It is also argued that 'slow' is about "the supply of an ethical product to meet the different specific ethical needs of individuals" (Robinson, 2011, p. 39). In addition, it is suggested that tourism entrepreneurs at a destination play an important role in facilitating the slow tourism experience and encouraging slow tourism demand (Groenendaal, 2012). Even Cittáslow is described as an alternative tourism product (Cosar & Kozak, 2014). Hence, apart from slow being associated with the way people travel, slow principles can be also applied to destination management and business operations (Heitmann et al., 2011).

The application of the slow philosophy in destination management has been analysed mostly in relation to Slow Cities (Cho, 2011; Cosar & Kozak, 2014; Cosar et al., 2013; Ekinci, 2014; Mayer & Knox, 2006; Nilsson et al., 2011; Pink, 2008). Examples of its application at a regional level are scarce (de la Barre, 2012; Murayama & Parker, 2012) and empirical research on the application of a slow philosophy in destination management at a national level is lacking (see Appendix 3).

Destination management practices in Cittáslow member cities are discussed in relation to environmental policies, infrastructure policies, technologies and facilities for

urban quality, safeguarding autochthonous production, hospitality and awareness (Cittáslow, 1999). It is suggested that Cittáslow status mainly has a positive effect on tourism development and consequently the development of the local economy (Cosar et al., 2013; Cosar et al., 2015).

Similarly, the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing has been analysed mainly in the context of Cittáslow (Cosar et al., 2015; Mayer & Knox, 2006; Miele, 2008; Nilsson et al., 2011). In general, it is acknowledged that the Cittáslow brand is a useful tool in destination marketing (Mayer & Knox, 2006; Nilsson et al., 2011). It is a common practice among Cittáslow member towns to use Cittáslow as a recognized brand within the heritage industry (Mayer & Knox, 2006) to attract tourists.

There are a few conceptual studies (Conway & Timms, 2010; Di Clemente et al., 2014; Matos, 2003; Murayama & Parker, 2012) and empirical studies (de la Barre, 2012) on either the direct or indirect application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing at regional level. The practice at regional level encompasses using slow tourism as an umbrella term to promote tourism offerings (Conway & Timms, 2010; Murayama & Parker, 2012). As with Cittáslow, it is acknowledged that slowness is an effective marketing concept (Matos, 2003) and slow tourism can be used as a viable promotional tool in destination marketing (Conway & Timms, 2010; de la Barre, 2012; Murayama & Parker, 2012). However, empirical studies on the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing at national level are lacking.

Altogether, while studies on the application of the slow philosophy in destination management and marketing exist at city and regional level, no empirical studies exist examining both concepts at national level.

Research question 6a: What is the potential of, and opportunities for, applying the slow philosophy in tourism destination marketing?

Research question 6b: What is the potential of, and opportunities for, applying the slow philosophy in tourism destination management?

The objectives, research questions and consequent constructs examined are displayed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Research objectives, research questions and constructs examined (Source: author)

Objective	Research question	Construct examined
1. To identify and evaluate interpretation and understanding of the slow tourism concept in Latvia among tourists and destination marketers	1. How do tourists and destination marketers understand and interpret the slow tourism concept?	Slow tourism concept (demand side) Slow tourism concept (supply side)
2. To identify the characteristics of slow tourists in Latvia	2. What are the characteristics of people engaging in / practicing slow tourism?	Slow tourist concept
3. To identify and evaluate similarities and differences in the perception of slow tourism practices and experiences from supply and demand sides in Latvia	3a. What are the actual slow tourism practices and experiences of slow tourists? 3b. What are similarities and differences in the perception of slow tourism practices from the point of view of tourists and tourism destination marketers?	Slow tourism practices (demand side) Slow tourism practices (supply side) Slow tourism experiences (demand side) Slow tourism experiences (supply side)
4. To identify and understand the key push and pull factors for slow tourism from the perspective of tourists and tourism destination marketers in Latvia	4a. What are the key push and pull factors for slow tourism from the perspective of tourists? 4b. What are the key push and pull factors for slow tourism from the perspective of tourism destination marketers?	Push factors (demand side) Pull factors (demand side) Push factors (supply side) Pull factors (supply side)
5. To identify and examine the role of the slow destination brand as a pull factor in Latvia	5. What is the role of the slow destination brand in attracting tourists?	Slow destination brand as pull factor

<p>6. To evaluate the implications of applying the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management in Latvia</p>	<p>6a. What is the potential of, and opportunities for, applying the slow philosophy in tourism destination marketing?</p> <p>6b. What is the potential of, and opportunities for, applying the slow philosophy in tourism destination management?</p>	<p>Slow philosophy in destination marketing</p> <p>Slow philosophy in destination management</p>
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Chapter 3 – Research methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the methodological framework of the research. It begins with a brief comparison of research paradigms leading to a particular paradigm choice, an overview of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research and research classification according to the type of information required followed by a justification of research method for the current study. The chapter proceeds with the overview of the methodology used in the existing studies on slow tourism and slow tourists as well as the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management. It continues with an explanation of the data collection methods and data collection process employed in this research. Further, the data analysis methods and processes are described. The final part draws upon the ethical considerations and trustworthiness criteria.

3.1 Research design

3.1.1 Theoretical paradigms

There are several theoretical or inquiry paradigms underpinning tourism research that might be applied in the research which consequently determine the overall process of doing the research. A paradigm is “a systematic set of beliefs, together with their accompanying methods” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 15). Inquiry paradigms provide guidelines for the research by answering three questions about the basis of that research: ontology, epistemology and methodology. These questions are fundamental – by answering them, the researcher can identify which inquiry paradigm to use (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). More explicitly, the three fundamental questions are as follows (ibid.):

1. The ontological question: What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?
2. The epistemological question: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?

3. The methodological question: How can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?

Various authors provide slightly different terminology and classification of research paradigms. For example, Lincoln and Guba (1985) distinguish between 'scientific' and 'naturalist' paradigms while in their later works they use the term 'constructivism' instead of 'naturalistic inquiry'. Guba and Lincoln (1998) refer to positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and related ideological positions and constructivism. Jennings (2001) classifies research paradigms as positivism, an interpretive social sciences approach, a critical theory orientation, feminist perspectives, a postmodern approach and a chaos theory approach. For the purpose of this research, a comparison of the positivist, post-positivist and constructivist paradigms will be undertaken.

Positivism is rooted in social sciences; therefore it "embraces a view of the world as being guided by scientific rules that explain the behaviour of phenomena through causal relationship" (Jennings, 2001, p. 35). The ontological basis of a paradigm implies that there are universal truths and laws that can be used to explain causal relationships, and the epistemological basis indicates that there is an objective reality (ibid.). A positivist paradigm can be used when a tourist behaviour, event or phenomenon needs to be explained using causal relationships. It is deductive in nature since it starts with a theory and then tests it in the empirical world. Observable or testable facts are used to make generalizations and further develop theories which can explain behaviours and relationships. It envisages the usage of quantitative methodology and maintaining an objective position throughout the research process (ibid.).

Post-positivism is also rooted in the social sciences but essentially differs from positivism. In terms of ontology, post-positivists hold a critical realist position – it is acknowledged that reality exists but "only imperfectly apprehendable," i.e. it cannot be fully apprehended (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). Epistemologically, post-positivists suggest a modified objectivity recognizing that objectivity cannot be achieved in an absolute sense but can be approximated (Guba, 1990). Multiple methods are used in order to capture as much of reality as possible (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). While qualitative methods can be used, the focus is still on the discovery and verification of theories (ibid.).

Furthermore, while positivists deal with verifying an hypothesis, post-positivists assume that “knowledge consists of non-falsified hypotheses” and therefore are concerned with the falsification of an hypothesis (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 113). Traditional evaluation criteria such as external and internal validity, reliability and objectivity is used to judge ‘goodness of inquiry’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

An interpretive or constructivist paradigm aims to get an empathetic understanding of the phenomena under investigation. In terms of the ontological basis, it is assumed that there can be multiple realities of the world, not just one single truth. An inductive approach is employed, and the study is commenced in “the empirical world in order to develop explanations of phenomena” (Jennings, 2001, p. 39). Moreover, the interpretive paradigm recognizes that interaction and interpretations shape social life (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Therefore, in order to understand the social world, it is essential to look at it from the point of view of people who operate within it (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). Consequently, it is acknowledged that reality is socially constructed and that both ‘reality’ and ‘knowledge’ are tied to specific social contexts (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). In fact, this paradigm takes into account that the experiences of people occur in different contexts, whether social, cultural, historic or personal (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). Moreover, it recognizes the subjectivity of study participants and the meanings that they attach to their experiences (ibid.). In addition, the subjectivity of the researcher is also acknowledged since “the background and values of a researcher do influence the creation of research data” (ibid., p. 15). The interpretive paradigm is especially useful for studying travel experiences and gaining “an in-depth knowledge of the tourism phenomenon or experience that is grounded in the empirical world” (Jennings, 2001, p. 40). While interpretive research is not synonymous with qualitative research (Myers, 2011), often interpretivism is chosen as a general philosophy in qualitative research (Decrop, 2004).

Paradigms also differ in terms of the aim or purpose of inquiry. For positivism and post-positivism, the aim of inquiry is an explanation which allows the prediction or control of the phenomena (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). For constructivism, the aim of inquiry is “*understanding and reconstruction* of the constructions that people (including the

inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve” (ibid., p. 211; original emphasis).

Another differentiation between paradigms is related to the notion that “there is no such thing as interest-free knowledge” (Tribe, 2004, p. 59). Drawing on Habermas’s theory of knowledge-constitutive interests, Tribe (2004) suggests that the pursuit of knowledge can be motivated by one of three interests: technical interests (seeks control and management); practical interests (seeks understanding); and emancipatory interests (seeks freedom and emancipation). Accordingly, different methodological paradigms accommodate different interests: positivism and post-positivism serves technical interests, interpretivism serves understanding and critical theory serves emancipation (Habermas, 1978, cited in Tribe, 2004).

3.1.2 Paradigm choice

As stated, the aim of this research is to get an in-depth understanding of the nature of slow travel practice and the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management. In order to achieve the aim and objectives of this study and address its specific research questions, an ‘interpretivist’ or ‘constructivist’ approach is considered to be the most appropriate.

In terms of the ontological position, the constructivist paradigm assumes relativist ontology where the nature of reality is subjective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). In addition, it considers that there can be multiple perspectives on reality or multiple realities in the world, not just one single truth (Hennink et al., 2011). This phenomenon is explained by Guba and Lincoln (1998, p. 212) who suggest that “multiple “knowledges” can co-exist when equally competent (or trusted) interpreters disagree, and/or depending on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender factors that differentiate the interpreters.” In this study, research participants will present their own understanding and interpretation of slow tourism, slow tourists and their practices and experiences, and the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management,

providing multiple perspectives. Hence, this study recognizes a variety of realities that research participants hold.

The emic or insider perspective used in interpretive research allows the exploration of contesting worldviews of different populations or actors involved which is challenging but also adds value to the research since it reflects different realities held by these actors (Hollinshead, 2004). "Ontologically, the emic fit of resultant qualitative interpretations is often richer or more pertinent where the researcher generates 'open-ended' and 'contingent' evocations of being and meaning, rather than yielding totalised, clean and tidy, non-complex classification of lived reality" (ibid., p. 73). Perspectives from different actors involved in this study – tourists, destination marketers – might be conflicting but it will add richness and better understanding of the constructs examined.

Epistemology is a theory of knowledge, which deals with the meaning of term 'knowledge'; its limits, scope, and validity (Tribe, 2004). The constructivist paradigm holds that in terms of the epistemological basis the relationship between researcher and research participant is subjective rather than objective; this is also referred to as 'transactional and subjectivist' epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). The knowledge production process in social sciences research is socially situated (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). The researcher becomes an insider and experiences the phenomenon which provides "the best lens to understand the phenomena or social actors being studied" (Jennings, 2001, p. 40). The relationship between the researcher and the object of investigation is interactive and co-operative and knowledge is co-created through interaction between the researcher and participants (Decrop, 2004). The approach assumes that "knowledge is constructed through communication and interpretations of the individuals," i.e. the social construction of reality (VanderStoep, 2009, p. 166). In such a way, the research informed by the constructivist paradigm is grounded in real-world settings. Knowledge is accumulated only in relative terms as more informed and sophisticated constructions are formed (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Understanding and interpretation of constructs examined in this study will be created through mutual interaction between the researcher and research participants. Additionally, the social setting will influence knowledge construction.

Since little is known about the nature of slow tourism and the actual practices and experiences of slow tourists, an in-depth understanding can be best achieved using an inductive approach. Therefore, this study aims to obtain an in-depth knowledge and an empathetic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Jennings, 2001) by “studying the subjective meanings that people attach to their experiences” and interpretations they give to behaviour, events or objects (Hennink et al., 2011, p. 14). Constructivism also allows a better understanding to be gathered of the application of the slow philosophy in destination management and marketing, while acknowledging multiple realities and allowing the study of phenomena in their natural settings.

3.1.3 Research classification

In its broadest sense, research can be qualitative or quantitative. In quantitative research, the phenomenon under study is explained with numerical figures (VanderStoep, 2009) and the emphasis is on measuring and analysing casual relationships between variables (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Quantitative researchers operate within an assumed value-free framework (ibid.).

In qualitative research, the phenomenon under study is explained with narratives or textual descriptions (VanderStoep, 2009) and the emphasis is on “the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 8). Qualitative researchers acknowledge the value-laden nature of inquiry (ibid.). The qualitative approach is usually undertaken when a deep and rounded understanding of the phenomena is required (Veal, 2006).

The differences between qualitative and quantitative research are summarized in Table 3.1. None of the approaches is inherently good or bad but rather more or less ‘appropriate’ to a particular situation (Veal, 2006).

Table 3.1

Qualitative versus Quantitative research differences (Source: Kozinets, 2012, p. 3)

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Nature of data	Visual and verbal recordings in rich detail	Responses distilled into numeric scores
Relevance of context	Results are generally assumed to be specific to time, place, people and culture studied	Results are generally assumed to be generalisable across contexts and cultures
Nature and control of potential causes	Ideally naturalistic with multiple factors shaping the behaviours observed and discussed	Ideally settings are controlled and variables are manipulated or measured to allow simple casual inferences
Key research Instrument	The researcher is the instrument and uses skills and rapport to gain insights based on trust	Researcher tries to be invisible and relies on responses to structured measures or choices

There are various interpretations of what the term qualitative research means and encompasses. Some authors suggest using it to describe the types of methods rather than using it as “an umbrella term superior to the term *paradigm*” (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 195; original emphasis). Other authors see qualitative research as a distinctive research strategy or field of inquiry on its own and not just a set of methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Hence, qualitative research can be regarded as both “a way of conceptualising and approaching social inquiry” and “a way of doing research” (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 5).

While qualitative research might mean different things to different people, in order to achieve the aim and objectives of this study, this particular research adopts the following generic definition of qualitative research:

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matters. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 3).

In qualitative research, the emphasis is placed on understanding the phenomenon from the participants' point of view which involves "humanising problems and gaining an 'emic', or insider's, perspective" (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 4). The *emic* research means that "research [is] carried out with an inside perspective (subjective)" which is opposite the *etic* research which is "carried out with an outside (objective) perspective" that is typical for positivist approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 27).

However, the challenges of qualitative research are that there is no particular theory, paradigm or set of methods that would be exclusively associated with it (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Therefore, it is advised to choose research stances that are the most appropriate for answering particular research questions (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012).

Research can be also divided into seven categories according to the type of information required: exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, causal, comparative, evaluative and predictive (Jennings, 2001). It is possible that research can adopt for example a singular or dual approach or multiple approaches. It can be exploratory and descriptive at the same time (the dual approach). Exploratory research is used when there is little or no data about the phenomenon and it usually involves qualitative methodology. Descriptive research is used to describe the phenomenon but does not explain it. It provides a picture of the phenomenon and helps to answer the 'who' and 'what' questions. Furthermore, explanatory research can be used to explain the phenomenon and answer 'how' and 'why' questions (ibid.). Causal research is similar to explanatory research since both aim to find a cause in order to explain the phenomenon. However, causal research depends on a hypothesis and adopts quantitative methodology. Next, comparative research involves the comparison of research units across time, space or against each other. It can be used to identify similarities and differences between the research units. Evaluative research is used in order to determine the outcomes of some form of change (for instance policies or strategies) and is usually applied research. Finally,

predictive research is associated with future events and forecasting (ibid.). This particular research uses a multiple approach since it is both exploratory and explanatory.

3.1.4 Research method

The research method is referred to as the 'strategy of inquiry' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Myers, 2011) which defines how a researcher finds empirical data about the world. Consequently, how a researcher goes about finding out knowledge depends on a research design which, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 28), "describes a flexible set of guidelines that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting empirical material." Yet the underlying philosophical position does not require the choice of a particular research method; several research methods can be employed under a particular philosophical perspective (Myers, 2011).

The typical research methods under an interpretive paradigm include the case study, ethnography, phenomenological and ethnomethodological techniques, the grounded theory, the biographical and historical methods, action and applied research methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) and textual analysis (VanderStoep, 2009). These research methods differ in five ways – their focus, the role of the researcher, the meanings explored, their location and the end product as illustrated in Table 3.2 (ibid.).

Table 3.2

A Comparison of Qualitative Characteristics of Research (Source: VanderStoep, 2009, p. 201)

	Where Do We Look for Meaning?	Whose Interpretation?	What Is the Unit of Analysis?	What Is Outcome Goal?
Ethnography	Culture	Balance of researcher and participant	Community	Cultural map
Phenomenology	Experience of phenomenon	Co-researchers	Individuals and groups	Essence of phenomenon
Case Study	Characteristics of bounded system	Researcher	Organization, group, individual, or critical incident	Describe and interpret case
Textual Analysis	Language and symbols	Researcher	Texts and conversations	Interpretation
Applied Research	Constructed experience with program	Collaboration of participants and researcher	Individual, group, or organization	Evaluation/ problem solving

This research shares characteristics with several research methods while at the same time not fully fitting into one of them. One of the potential methods – phenomenology – aims to explore how people have experienced a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013) which would be suitable to study how people experience slow tourism. This approach however only partially helps to meet the aim and objectives of this study since it does not uncover the application of slow philosophy in destination management and marketing. Moreover, in order to understand the essence of their lived experiences, only individuals who have

experienced a phenomenon are studied (ibid.) which limits the range of people who could potentially give insights and contribute to the study. Another possible method – the case study – examines a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context and is used when an investigator has little control over events (Yin, 2009). This would allow the examination of slow tourism within a real-life context. While decisions, individuals, organizations, processes, programs, neighbourhoods, institutions and events can be regarded as cases (ibid.), restricting slow tourism to a particular country or regarding slow tourism as a bounded system on its own does not allow researchers the possibility to capture its essence and present it exhaustively. Hence, the case study approach cannot be used since the unit of analysis for this research is hard to define. Consequently, Latvia as a country is considered a location of the study rather than a case on its own. Finally, the textual analysis research method focuses on verbal and non-verbal signs which are expressed through language and symbols and found in texts and conversations (VanderStoep, 2009). As such, textual analysis could provide a sound platform for this research since it allows the interpretation of slow tourism practices and experiences to be revealed. However, the main focus of this research is not on texts but rather on people whose understanding will be revealed through texts.

Having taken into account the fact that none of the research methods can fully help to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, this research does not adapt any particular strategy of inquiry but uses a qualitative approach.

3.2 Alternative methodological approaches

3.2.1 Studies on slow tourism and slow tourists

The early studies related to slow tourism and slow tourists have been qualitative in nature (Dickinson et al., 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010; Germann Molz, 2009; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) and the qualitative approach still remains widespread in the field (de la Barre, 2012; Fullagar, 2012; Robbins & Cho, 2012; Tiyce & Wilson, 2012). While a few purely quantitative studies exist (Robinson, 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011), considerably

more authors have given preference to studies using a mixed methods approach (Gibson et al., 2012; Groenendaal, 2012; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Oh et al., 2014).

In terms of the particular research design, many authors have chosen ethnography. Fullagar (2012) undertakes an ethnographic study among women participating in a cycling tour. It offers insights into the main topics used to describe the cycling experience from the perspective of women in a gender context. Tiyce and Wilson (2012) use an ethnographic study to explore the concept of slow travel from the perspective of long-term independent travellers in Australia. Lamb (2013) undertakes an ethnographic approach in order to explore the practices of families living a slow life. The ethnographic approach is used because it is important to get as close as possible to these families in order to “uncover their way of life” (ibid., p. 19). Finally, ‘netnography’ can be used to study particular cultures and communities not in the real world but on the Internet through computer-mediated communications (Kozinets, 2012). Such an approach is undertaken by Robbins and Cho (2012) who use netnography to study slow tourist communities online.

Although less popular, other approaches used in studies on slow tourism include a case study design and a grounded theory approach. For instance, Gibson et al. (2012) use the Tribewanted project on Vorovoro Island, Fiji, as a case study to show the links between the project and slow tourism. Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) undertake a grounded theory approach and use an inductive process to provide a working definition and an initial conceptual framework of slow travel.

In terms of the data collection methods used to study slow tourism, a variety of them have been used including interviews (Dickinson et al., 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010; Fullagar, 2012; Groenendaal, 2012; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011; Oh et al., 2014; Tiyce & Wilson, 2012), focus groups (Oh et al., 2014), personal observation (Gibson et al., 2012; Groenendaal, 2012), and surveys (Gibson et al., 2012; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Oh et al., 2014; Robinson, 2011; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). Often, a combination of several data collection methods is used. For example, Gibson et al. (2012) used in-person structured interviews among tribe members, personal observations on the island and an online survey to assess the overall tourism experience of the visitors.

Finally, data analysis often includes discourse analysis which is a study of talk and texts and accordingly studies the language used by research participants to describe, comment on and evaluate research phenomena (Wetherell, 2001). For example, Germann Molz (2009) in her qualitative study of the popular representation of pace in Western modernity analyses discourses about tourism mobilities using materials from three examples: television episodes and related website texts of the reality show *The Amazing Race*; website and blog texts on the practices of slow travel; and selected newspaper articles on 'staycations' – a term used to describe vacationing at home. Discourse analysis is also used in the study of Dickinson et al. (2010) who analyse how slow travellers and non-slow travellers justify their modal choice in relation to climate change. They explore how holiday travel is constrained both by the structures that exist within the travel and tourism industry and also by individual agency to act. Since the authors were interested in explanations of participant behaviours, a discourse analysis approach was used in the research. In this case, the authors were interested in how people talk about their holiday travel and the language they use in order to explain their particular behaviour. Similarly, discourse analysis is used in another study by Dickinson et al. (2011) who explore how self-identified slow travellers present their slow travel experiences and manage their travel identities. However, other approaches to data analysis have been used as well such as template analysis (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) or narrative analysis (de la Barre, 2012).

3.2.2 Studies on slow philosophy in destination marketing and management

There are a dozen empirical studies in relation to slow philosophy in destination marketing and management, most of which use a qualitative approach.

In terms of the particular research design, a number of studies have used a case study approach. For example, Mayer and Knox (2006) examine the Slow Food and Slow City movements as case studies of alternative urban development in two Slow Cities in Germany; Hersbruck and Waldkirch. In addition to telephone and face-to-face interviews, the authors visited a number of sites and events in both towns becoming 'participatory

observers' (ibid.). Nilsson et al. (2011) also use a case study approach in three Italian Cittáslow member towns to examine their eco-gastronomic heritage as a tool for destination development. The qualitative research is based on a combination of interviews and observations. A slightly different approach to a case study is undertaken by Pink (2008, p. 95) who uses a sensory approach to analyse two Cittáslow projects in two UK member towns – Ludlow and Diss – and in particular “the sensorial elements of discourses surrounding, and embodied engagements with, sustainable urban development.” She argues that places can be experienced in a multi-sensory way, meaning that all five senses – sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch – are involved in experiencing any place. Therefore, a sensory approach can provide valuable insights into how humans engage in a sustainable urban development process (ibid.). The range of methods used in the research includes participant observations, audio-recorded interviews and visual ethnography methods.

In terms of the data collection methods, the interview is the most popular tool used in empirical studies related to the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management (Cosar et al., 2015; Gibson et al., 2012; Mayer & Knox, 2006; Miele, 2008; Nilsson et al., 2011; Pink, 2008). Many studies also use texts (planning documents, newspaper articles and websites) as data sources (de la Barre, 2012; Mayer & Knox, 2006; Miele, 2008). Often, data is collected using several methods, e.g. an interview and observation. A few studies also use quantitative data gathered through surveys (Cho, 2011; Ekinci, 2014; Gibson et al., 2012).

3.3 Data collection methods / process

As stated earlier, there is no one particular set of methods that would be an automatic choice for qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Therefore, it is suggested that methods in qualitative research are constructed for a particular purpose rather than selected (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012).

3.3.1 Research context

Qualitative methods take into account that the meanings people create from their experiences are socially embedded (VanderStoep, 2009) and should be understood within a specific context. Hence, the research context provides a better understanding of the circumstances in which the research takes place.

As described in Chapter 1, Latvia is chosen as the location for this research. Since 2010, its official tourism brand is “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” making the setting of the research unique. Currently, it is the only destination known to the author that is explicitly using the ‘slow’ philosophy in destination marketing at a national level. Implicitly, the tourism brand indicates that the destination is appropriate for slow tourism.

Since March 2003 tourism policy at the national level has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Economics. However, there have been significant changes concerning which institution deals with the actual implementation of tourism policy since the author’s research began (see Appendix 1). Until 2016 and during the data collection process, tourism policy was implemented by the Latvian Tourism Development Agency (LTDA) which is subordinated to the Ministry of Economics. In 2016, the LTDA was abolished and its functions taken over by the newly created Tourism department within the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA) which is also subordinated to the Ministry of Economics.

At a regional level, the development of tourism is a local government responsibility. This includes providing tourism-related information about the particular territory in Latvia and abroad and participating in the establishment and financing of Tourism Information Centres (TIC) and Tourism Information Points (TIP). The number of institutions providing tourism information in Latvia is presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Number of tourism information providers in Latvia (Source: author)

	TIB	TIC	TIP	Other	TOTAL
Kurzeme	1	17	5	1	24
Latgale		10	1	2	13
Vidzeme	1	26	4	1	32
Zemgale		8	3	1	12
TOTAL	2	61	13	5	81

While altogether these institutions are often referred to as TIC (Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, 2016), their official title can be Tourism Information Bureau (TIB), Tourism Information Centre (TIC), Tourism Information Point (TIP), or occasionally Visitors' Centre or Entrepreneurship Support Centre (category 'Other' in Table 3.3).

Tourism information is also provided by regional and professional tourism organizations and associations, but only about their members.

3.3.2 Interviews

Typically, the research strategy or the strategy of inquiry indicates the specific methods that can be used for collecting data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). However, since this research does not adopt any particular strategy of inquiry but rather uses a qualitative approach, it is possible to use a variety of methods to collect empirical materials for research including interviews, direct observation, the analysis of artefacts, documents and cultural records and the use of visual materials or personal experience (ibid.). The choice of data collection methods is guided by the research topic (Silverman, 2011). In order to meet the

aims and objectives of this research, interviewing was chosen as the main data collection method.

The interview or 'guided introspection' is a process by which a researcher asks other people to reflect upon or report their experiences (past or present), their actions and their internal states. This is recorded as data (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993). In interviews, the data are self-reported, i.e. research participants provide their own reports about themselves and consequently about constructs examined, as opposed to observations where the researcher looks at and reports data (Veal, 2006).

VanderStoep (2009) distinguishes between three types of interviews – informal (where the researcher goes with the flow), structured (where the researcher has established questions) and guided (a combination of an informal and a structured interview). However, most authors refer to these interview types as unstructured (or open-ended), structured and semi-structured interviews (Myers, 2011). Structured interviews use pre-formulated questions while unstructured interviews use few or no pre-formulated questions. Semi-structured interviews use some pre-formulated questions but allow new questions to emerge during interviews (ibid.).

For this research, the semi-structured in-depth interview or 'guided' interview was chosen for data collection. This is due to the relatively small number of research participants (especially Destination Marketing Organization representatives) and their heterogeneity. Moreover, in-depth interviews allow an exploration of the phenomenon of the study in depth and detail while also allowing the personal context to be understood (Lewis, 2003). It is assumed that information obtained from research participants will vary considerably; hence, interviews allow research participants presenting different stories (Veal, 2006) to acknowledge a variety of realities.

Since in-depth interviews usually vary from interview to interview, it is advisable to prepare a checklist of topics to be discussed rather than present a formal questionnaire (Veal, 2006). It is also suggested researchers avoid "heavy initial instrumentation or closed-ended devices" in exploratory studies since instrumentation methods can and should be revised as a researcher proceeds with data collection (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 35). This research employed a mixture of both: a checklist of topics based on the

conceptual framework and pre-formulated questions that allowed some flexibility. The questions put to participants varied slightly according to the flow of the interview while ensuring that all relevant topics were covered. This approach allowed the collection of contrasting and complementary data on the same topic (Rapley, 2004).

The in-depth interview not only combines some structure with flexibility but is also interactive and generative, i.e. new knowledge and thoughts are created (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). In response to the researcher's questions, research participants often reflected on issues that they had not previously thought about (e.g. what is slow tourism, what are examples of slow tourism in Latvia). In such a way, research participants constructed a logical and consistent story, i.e. they actively constructed knowledge (Myers, 2011).

Further, the interpretivist approach assumes that an interview is a co-elaborated act between researcher and study participants and not merely the collection of information by one party (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher was actively participating in the interviews by asking questions, listening, producing follow-up questions on specific themes and topics, allowing research participants the space to talk and occasionally talking about their own personal experiences or ideas where it was relevant (e.g. when the participant asked about the researcher's own experience). These interactional practices of qualitative interviewing are described as "*an engaged, active or collaborative format of interviewing*" (Rapley, 2004, p. 22; original emphasis).

The collaboratively produced nature of interviews, however, also implies that not only are interviewers and interviewees actively engaged in the construction of meaning during the interview process (Silverman, 2011); there is also an inevitable interpretation of meanings by both parties (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hence, one of the main challenges for the researcher was to understand the meaning of what was said by research participants during interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In order to ensure that the meaning was understood correctly (Legard et al., 2003), several techniques were used. 'Mirroring' was one of the techniques used during interviews which involved using research participants' own words in formulating further questions (Myers, 2011). This allowed meanings to be verified and to focus on the words and language of research

participants (ibid.). In addition, follow-up questions were used to clarify the meanings and provide richer and deeper responses (Patton, 2002).

It is acknowledged that respondents can speak from a variety of perspectives rather than from a single viewpoint, i.e. it is possible that various perspectives can be taken by a single respondent during the interview (Warren, 2002). The standpoints or roles from which the research participants were talking did shift during the interview process. For example, during the interview a respondent could speak as a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) representative, as a tourist or as a tourism service provider. In fact, some research participants interviewed as representatives of DMOs also talked about their personal travel experiences and practices. Several DMO managers had their own private tourism businesses and talked from the standpoint of a tourism service provider. It is suggested that these varied perspectives are taken into account in understanding the meaning-making process (ibid.).

Finally, in order to discern regularities in human behaviour, it is suggested that particularistic rather than generalized data is collected, i.e. if one wants to make general conclusions about human behaviour it is necessary to inquire about an informant's accounts of specific occurrences or experiences rather than ask them to provide self-generalizations about their behaviour (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993). Therefore, participants were not only asked questions about their opinion and understanding of concepts but also about their actual behaviour, experiences and relevant examples.

3.3.3 Sampling and participant recruitment process

In qualitative research, it is important to have “not just sufficient qualitative but sufficient *quality* data with which to work” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 15; original emphasis). Hence, the choice of appropriate research participants is crucial. It has to be noted that the people from whom data is collected in this research are referred to as research ‘participants’ instead of research ‘subjects’ since the former acknowledges people as collaborators in research while the latter refers to people as controllable objects. The term ‘participants’ therefore is more appropriate for positivist studies (VanderStoep, 2009).

Qualitative, in-depth studies usually deal with small rather than large samples of people which tend to be purposive rather than random (Patton, 2002). The sample size in qualitative studies is not strictly predetermined and can evolve once the data collection has been started (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In fact, “initial choices of informants lead you to similar and different ones; observing one class of events invites comparison with another; and understanding one key relationship in the setting reveals facets to be studied in others”. This type of approach is called “conceptually-driven sequential sampling” (ibid., p. 27). Usually, the typical sample size in qualitative research varies between 20 and 35 participants. However, the sufficiency of sample size can be determined by “the criterion of redundancy” which is met when new respondents do not “significantly add new information and understanding” (VanderStoep, 2009, p. 188).

Existing studies demonstrate that the actual sample sizes vary considerably from study to study. For example, Dickinson et al. (2011) used eight in-depth interviews with eleven participants in order to underpin the concept of slow travel while to develop a conceptual framework for slow travel, Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) conducted twenty five face-to-face in-depth open-ended interviews with people who are engaged in slow travel as academics, practitioners and writers. However, since more than half of the respondents were from the UK and the rest from continental Europe as well as North America, the authors admit that “there is a western bias” (ibid., p. 270).

Further, in order to study the influence of the slow movement on tourism development, Nilsson et al. (2011) conducted nine formal semi-structured interviews with ten local officials who were involved in both the Slow Food and Cittáslow projects. In addition, systematic observations prior to and after the interviews were conducted. Lamb (2013) studied slow living among ten families from Fremantle, Australia, using focus groups and interviews. In order to examine the extent to which a slow city image motivates domestic tourists to visit such a destination and influences visitor behaviour, Cosar and Kozak (2014) used interviews with 24 local visitors to Seferihisar, Turkey, that lasted from 15 to 60 minutes. Ho et al. (2015) conducted in-depth interviews with 60 leisure/recreational cyclists in order to explore the psychological values that motivated them to engage in this slow tourism related activity. Finally, over the course of five years, Tiyce and Wilson (2012) conducted 62 in-depth interviews and more than 200 semi-

structured conversations with individual, partnered and group travellers while researching the experiences of long-term travellers in Australia.

Participant recruitment started in June 2014 after ethical approval had been obtained in May 2014. All participants who have taken part in this research are grouped into four clusters (see Figure 3.1).

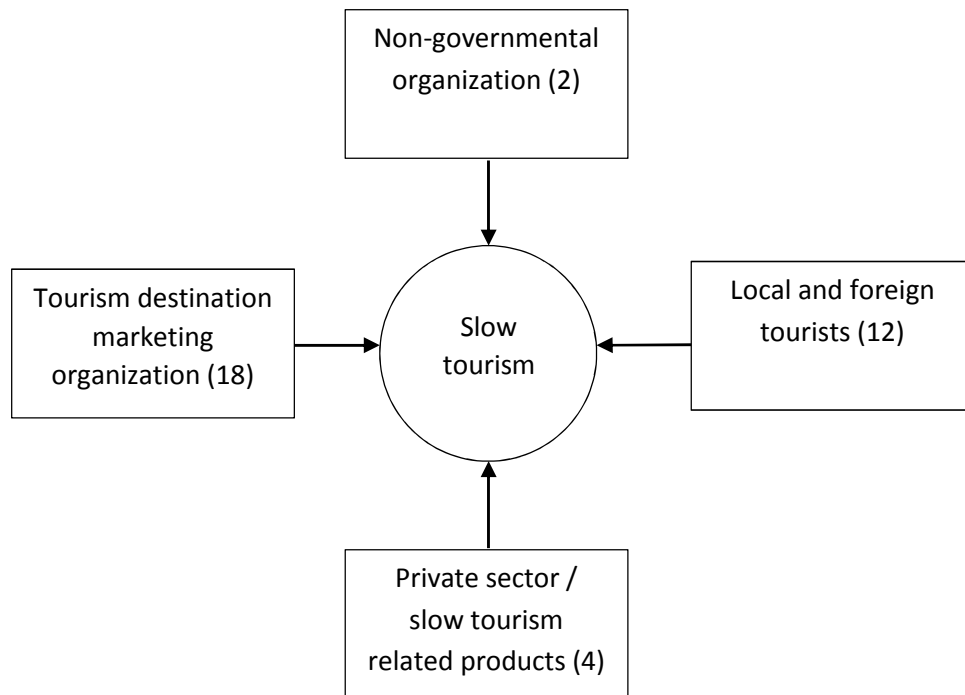


Figure 3.1

Research participants (Source: author)

There are several qualitative sampling methods – convenience, criterion, homogeneous, opportunistic, maximum variation, purposeful and stratified purposeful (Veal, 2006). In addition, sampling can be done on the basis of critical case, typical case, extreme or deviant case, politically important case, confirming and disconfirming case, snowball or chain, intensity and theory (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Sampling can also be done combining or mixing different approaches.

In the current study, multiple sampling frames have been employed (see Table 3.4). The main consideration for employing different sampling strategies was to ensure that information-rich cases are selected (Patton, 2002), i.e. that research participants can provide valuable and in-depth information for this study.

Table 3.4

Sampling methods used in the research (Source: author)

Sampling method	Description	Research participants recruited			
		DMO	Tourists	Private sector	NGO
Theoretical sampling	based on the theoretical needs of the study	X	X	X	X
Criterion sampling	individuals are selected for interview on the basis of meeting a criterion	X	X		
Snowball sampling	research participants recommend other research participants		X	X	
Opportunistic sampling	taking advantage of opportunities as they arise		X	X	X

Tourism destination marketing organization – supply side. As the initial plan envisaged, the representatives of the Latvian Tourism Development Agency were contacted and as a result, two people were interviewed (theoretical sampling). At the time of the research, both of them held senior positions in the LTDA and both had worked there when the new Latvian tourism brand “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” was introduced. Due to the small number of people that were suitable and available for interviews in the LTDA, it was decided to include the managers of Tourism Information Centres (TIC) in the study since they (1) develop and implement the tourism policy at regional level, (2) are informed about the tourism policy at national level and (3) work closely with tourism providers,

tourists, and tourism planners. Consequently, TIC managers are able to evaluate the actual situation in terms of tourism demand and supply in relation to slow tourism as well as give valuable insights into the actual implementation of Latvian tourism marketing strategy. On this occasion, the sampling approach – theoretical sampling – was guided by research and based on constructs examined (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In addition to theoretical sampling, criterion sampling has been used to select TIC managers so that a proportional number of representatives from all four planning regions (apart from Riga) would be included. This approach helps to capture regional differences in terms of slow tourism interpretations, demand and supply. Altogether fourteen TIC representatives have been interviewed: five from the Vidzeme region, two from the Zemgale region, four from the Kurzeme region, and three from the Latgale region. One respondent was a member of the regional tourism association. Finally, the member from the Riga Tourism Development Bureau representing the “Live Riga” brand was also included in the study. The “Live Riga” brand is a tourism brand for Riga, the capital of Latvia. Since both brands – “Live Riga” and “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” – emphasize different values and appeal to different market segments, it was important to identify how these both brands coexist. In all cases, participants were contacted either by a personalized email which explained the essence of the research or by telephone. Altogether, eighteen people were interviewed and this group of participants is labelled as ‘tourism destination marketing organization’.

Local & foreign tourists – demand side. In the case of local tourists, several types of sampling were used – theoretical sampling, snowball or chain sampling, opportunistic and criterion sampling. Some participants were identified prior to the data collection process (theoretical and criterion sampling). Others were suggested by other participants (snowball sampling). The existing studies on slow travellers have employed snowball sampling (Dickinson et al., 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010) which is a method used when no sampling frame exists from which a random sample can be drawn (Jordan & Gibson, 2004). Although local participants did not identify or call themselves slow tourists, they had all engaged in slow tourism at some point in their lives. As with the DMO representatives, participants were contacted by a personalized email explaining the research.

In the case of foreign tourists, recruitment of participants from this group was the most challenging. As stated earlier, there is a paucity of studies on slow travellers and suggestions as to their identification and recruiting strategies are limited. The research of Dickinson et al. (2011), for instance, deals with self-identified slow travellers who were recruited through local advertising and a snowball approach. In order to identify slow travel practitioners, writers and academics, Lumsdon and McGrath (2011, p. 270) established key search criterion so that their participants could be definitely associated with slow travel, namely: “they were expected to have written at least one paper, book or item about slow travel in the form of a website, paper, report or presentation.”

The potential respondents for this particular study were approached in several ways. Messages inviting slow tourists who have engaged in slow tourism in Latvia to participate in the research were posted in online forums and discussion boards of slow travel online groups – LinkedIn, CouchSurfing, Slow Europe Travel Forums and Facebook. However, this strategy did not yield any results. One of the possible explanations is that Latvia is not a popular destination for tourists who identify themselves as slow tourists. If looking at slow travel forums, then out of nearly 600 travel reports on the Slow Travel website there is just one entry about Latvia (entry #1962 mentions Latvia as part of a European trip) (Slow Travel, 2014). There are no reports mentioning Latvia on Slow Europe Travel Forums (Slow Travel Europe, 2014). The most popular destinations for slow tourism in Europe discussed in both websites are France and Italy. Moreover, it appeared that people who engage in slow tourism do not consider themselves as slow tourists, i.e. they do not describe themselves as slow tourists. As one of the participants has emphasized, these people usually do not call themselves slow tourists simply because they have not heard about the term and do not label themselves at all. However, once they understand what the term encompasses, they recognize that their travel style corresponds to that of slow tourists.

Therefore, after several months of no results the idea of recruiting self-identified slow tourists who have engaged in slow tourism in Latvia was rejected, and three other strategies were tested instead in order to see whether they could yield any results. Firstly, several hotels were approached for recruiting tourists who would fit the slow travel philosophy. Only one hotel agreed to help with participant recruiting. A letter was

prepared (Appendix 4) explaining the research and slow travel philosophy for hotel receptionists to give to guests who stayed at least three nights. Besides the length of stay, other criteria mentioned in the letter were a willingness to explore the destination more thoroughly, to experience local culture and to get to know local people and their traditions. This approach represents criterion-based sampling when all cases have to meet certain criteria (Patton, 2002). Secondly, the researcher decided to participate in two CouchSurfing meetings that took place in Riga. Actual participation in meetings and gatherings of particular community members is often used to get access to potential research participants as well as to get better insights into community practice (O'Regan, 2012). After talking with various event attendees, several people were approached and asked whether they would like to participate in the research and to be interviewed. Thirdly, the researcher recruited participants in Riga central bus station. This strategy was chosen because several other participants had indicated that slow tourists 1) often visit all three Baltic countries and their capitals and 2) choose public transport to get from one country to another (e.g. from Riga to Vilnius, Lithuania and Tallinn, Estonia). While there are no train connections between Riga and Vilnius and Riga and Tallinn, the bus connections between these cities are good, with more than 10 departures from Riga to the other two capitals daily. People were approached while they were waiting for their bus and briefed about the research. If their travel patterns did correspond with the principles of slow travel (a longer stay at their destination, an interest in local culture, use of public transport) and they agreed to participate, the researcher's contact details were given. In most cases, people did not have enough time for an in-depth interview but they agreed to get in touch once they returned home. The last two approaches can be categorized as opportunistic sampling – “following new leads; taking advantage of the unexpected” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28). All participants had engaged in slow tourism to some extent during their trip to Latvia. Altogether, data from twelve respondents was collected and this group of participants is labelled as ‘local & foreign tourists’.

Non-governmental organization – supply and demand side. During the data collection process, other informants that could provide important insights into the research topic were identified. There are no Cittáslow member cities in Latvia. However,

the Slow Food Riga association was established in 1996 and has been a member of the Slow Food global network since 2005. Therefore, one informant was a member of Slow Food Riga (theoretical sampling); the other was a member of the Latvian Ecotourism Society (opportunistic sampling). The participants were contacted by personalized emails explaining the purpose of the research.

Private sector – supply side. While searching for research participants, several companies were identified that offer slow tourism-related products (theoretical sampling). Many research participants had provided examples of products that were appropriate for slow tourism (opportunistic and snowball sampling). Therefore, a decision was made to include some examples from the private sector.

3.3.4 Data collection process

The data collection commenced at the end of June 2014. Where possible, data was obtained through face-to-face interviews. Where participants were not able to meet in person, Skype interviews were conducted. On several occasions, people also expressed their willingness to answer the questions in writing instead of through interview. In such cases, open-ended questions about their travel patterns and experiences were sent to the participants via email. If there were further questions, a follow-up email was sent.

The research process in qualitative research differs from quantitative research since data collection and analysis might result in the refinement of research questions and further data collection (see Figure 3.2) (Veal, 2006). Iteration or moving through data collection and analysis helps in the process of induction and the verification of constructs (Spiggle, 1994). Therefore, after the first phase of data collection and its consecutive analysis, it transpired that further data collection was necessary in order to answer research questions. Hence the second phase of data collection took place in 2015 ensuring that the aims and objectives of this research were met.

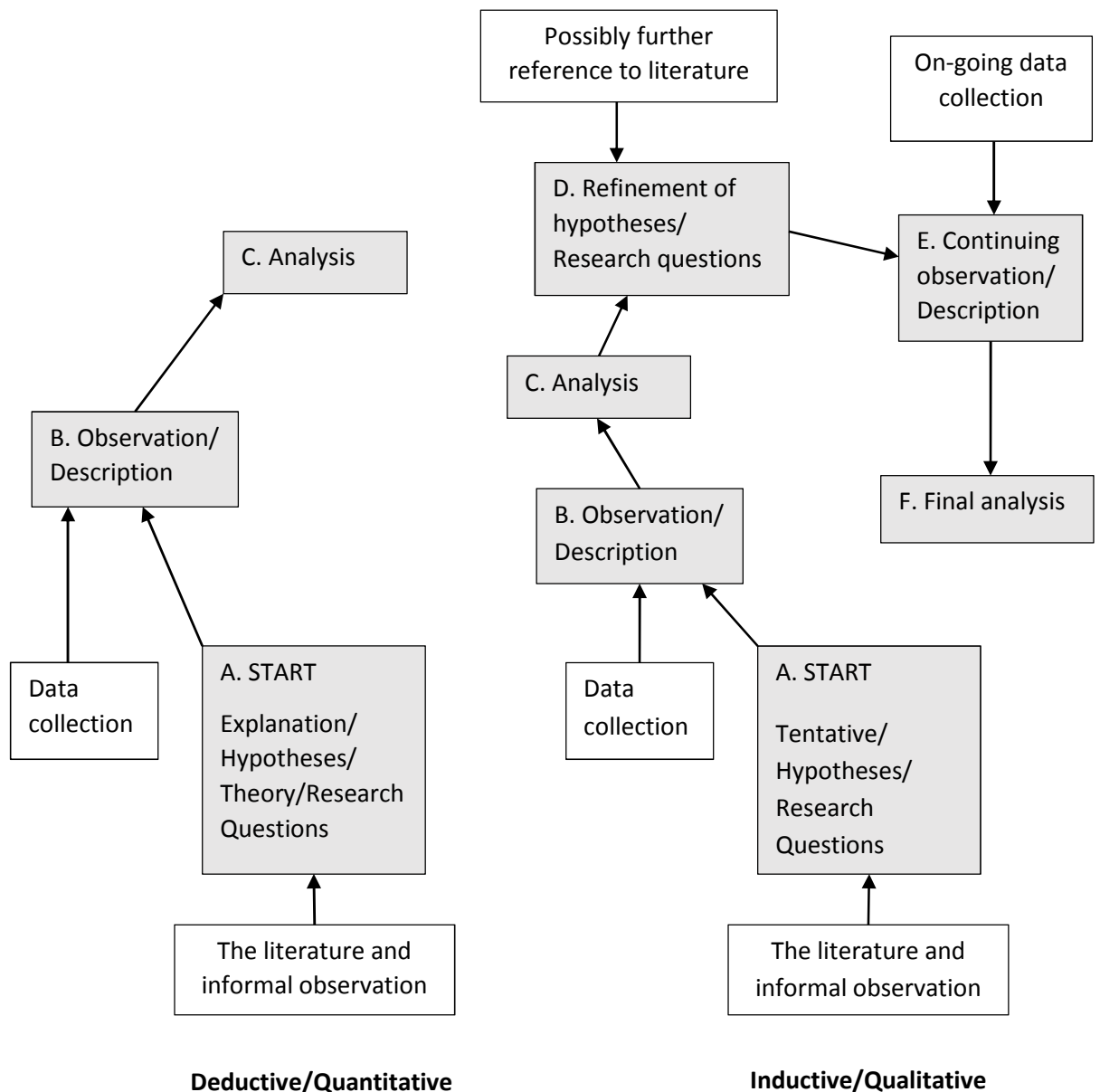


Figure 3.2

Circular model of the research process in quantitative and qualitative contexts (Source: Veal, 2006, p. 207)

Many participants had not come across the term ‘slow tourism’ or did not identify themselves as a slow tourist, so instead of asking whether they were slow tourists, they were asked about their travel experiences and practices in Latvia, their travel patterns in general, and their reasons for travelling in a particular way. In this way it would be possible to see whether their travel practices can be associated with slow tourism.

Despite providing information to research participants about the topic of the research before the data collection process, there were occasions when participants asked for explanations of what 'slow tourism' meant. In these situations, the researcher briefly explained the concept giving general characteristics found in the literature such as staying in a place for a longer time, a willingness to explore the destination more thoroughly, to experience local culture, get to know local people and their traditions and choose environmentally sound travel practices. The researcher explained that the focus of this study is to identify how slow tourism is understood and practiced in Latvia. It was emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers and that no strict definition of slow tourism exists. In this way, an effective working relationship with research participants was created (Legard et al., 2003).

All participants in the study are presented in Appendix 5 in a chronological order. Considering the confidential nature of the responses, their real names are not included in the analysis.

All interviews were audio-recorded and then stored on the researcher's encrypted laptop. Interview durations ranged from 42 minutes to 107 minutes; the average interview was about 60 minutes long. All interviews were transcribed. Both the interviewing of research participants and transcribing of audio-recorded interviews was done by the researcher. Altogether, the accounts of 37 people have been collected which included 32 interviews with 33 participants and four written answers to open-ended questions. In total, nearly 400 pages containing 227,000 words of text were collected in the data collection process.

3.4 Data analysis methods / approaches

3.4.1 Data analysis process

Qualitative research is creative and interpretive and so is the data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) which often needs to be specially designed for particular research (Maxwell, 2005). It is possible to approach data analysis in multiple ways since "there is

no single interpretive truth” (ibid., p. 30) and material can be interpreted in many ways (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data analysis can be regarded as an interactive and cyclical process consisting of three interrelated activities – data reduction, data display and the drawing of conclusions and verification (see Figure 3.3) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction deals with sharpening, sorting, focusing, discarding and organizing data in order to facilitate the drawing of conclusions (ibid.) Data reduction takes place throughout the research process. Data display refers to “an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action” (ibid., p. 11). Data display may take the form of charts, graphs, networks and matrices. Conclusion drawing and verification involves deciding on the meaning of data and the further testing of these meanings “for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their “confirmability” – that is, their *validity*” (ibid., p. 11; original emphasis). The examples of the interactive and cyclical process in data analysis can be seen very often in qualitative research such as incorporating patterns that emerge from data already collected into further interviews by using the ‘constant comparison’ method (Jordan & Gibson, 2004).

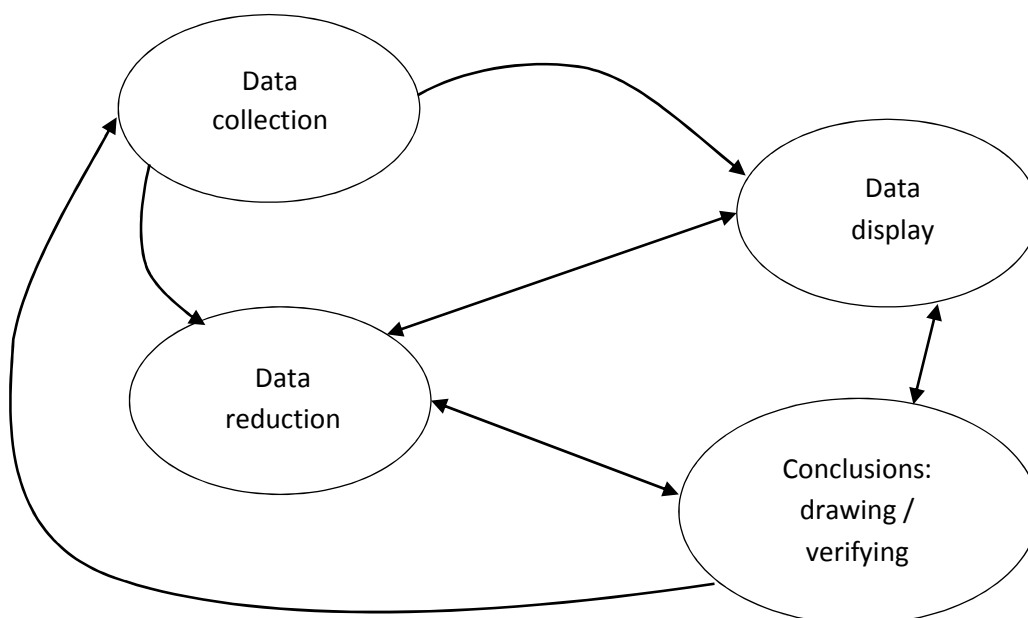


Figure 3.3

Components of Data analysis: Interactive Model (Source: Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12)

The aim of data analysis is to divide or break down information into constituent parts by dissecting, reducing, sorting and reconstituting data (Spiggle, 1994). The process of data analysis includes such operations as categorization or coding, abstraction (grouping categories into higher-order conceptual constructs), comparison (noting similarities and differences within collected data that informs further data collection), dimensionalization (identifying properties and categories of constructs), integration (building theory by integrating categories and constructs), iteration (allowing preceding data collection and analysis operations to shape subsequent ones) and refutation (subjecting emerging inferences to empirical scrutiny) (ibid.).

As stated earlier, there is no particular set of methods associated with doing qualitative research; the same is true for analysing qualitative data. Approaches such as semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis and even statistics can be used in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The particular analysis technique will also depend on the type of data being analysed, i.e. whether the qualitative data appears in the form of words or numbers, or in still or moving images (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Most analysis however is done with text which can be regarded either as an object of analysis or as a proxy for experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). If text is regarded as an object of analysis, then conversation, performance and narrative analysis as well as analysis of grammatical structures can be undertaken (ibid.). If text is treated as a proxy for experience, then either a systematic elicitation approach or analysis of free-floating text can be used (ibid.). In the case of the latter, analysis can be done based on words (e.g. word count, semantic networks and cognitive maps) or codes (e.g. grounded theory, content analysis, schema analysis) (ibid.).

[3.4.2 Data analysis approach in this study](#)

The preliminary data analysis began during the interviewing stage by reflecting on already-conducted interviews which helped to re-design questions for further interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The following steps in data analysis included writing down notes

while transcribing and later reading through interviews which assisted in developing tentative ideas and facilitated analytical thinking (Maxwell, 2005).

Once the interviews had been transcribed, data was analysed further. It should be noted that several attempts were made to approach the data analysis before an appropriate approach that suited this study was found. This included coding the interview transcripts manually, setting up constructs tables in Microsoft Word where relevant excerpts from interviews were copied, and developing initial codes that were recorded in the codebook. After initial attempts to code the data, the researcher developed the following approach to data analysis.

Firstly, data was categorized according to organizational categories that served as “bins” for sorting interview data for further analysis (Maxwell, 2005). This allowed qualitative data to be organized around key issues (Patton, 2002). This process is sometimes also called ‘theming of data’ (Saldaña, 2009). Constructs identified through research objectives and questions (see Table 2.1) formed the basis for organizational categories, for example, “Slow tourist concept” or “Slow philosophy in destination marketing.” Because of the large amount of data collected, NVivo10 software was used to assist the data analysis (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Interview transcripts were imported in NVivo10 and the data was coded or grouped in nodes according to the constructs. It is important to emphasize that NVivo10 was used as a data organization and management tool and that the actual analysis was performed by the researcher.

Secondly, the nodes or constructs were exported to separate Word documents then printed out and analysed by manually coding on paper. The resulting codes were then put into separately created Word documents which facilitated a process of overseeing and subsequent further analysis. This process helped to further refine the codes and identify emerging patterns.

It should be noted that the analysis of data was undertaken independently, in consultation with supervisors.

3.4.3 Coding, thematic analysis, and making sense of data

A thematic analysis was used to analyse the data (Boyatzis, 1998). A theme can be seen as “an *outcome* of coding, categorization, an analytic reflection” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 13; original emphasis). Thematic analysis is different from content analysis which is a “systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 1). As such, themes are derived from codes.

As mentioned earlier, coding or categorization is a data analysis operation and codes are used to analyse free-floating text (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Coding is regarded as a “transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis” that helps a researcher to organize and group data into categories that share similar characteristics forming a pattern (Saldaña, 2009, p. 4).

A code can be “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and / or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 3). The process of coding however is more of “an interpretive act” rather than “precise science” (ibid., p. 4) and both inductive and deductive coding is possible (Spiggle, 1994).

Codes can be developed in three ways. They can be driven by 1) theory, 2) prior data or 3) raw data (Boyatzis, 1998). This study employed a combination of theory-driven and data-driven approaches. Existing models and frameworks have been used to define some *a priori* codes to build an initial coding template. However, the codes were revised as analysis went on. New codes emerged as the researcher constructed the codes inductively from the raw data. Substantive categories were developed using descriptions that research participants provided when talking about constructs (Maxwell, 2005).

Several coding methods and cycles were used in this study. The combination of structural, descriptive and In Vivo coding was used in the first cycle coding (Saldaña, 2009). Following that, pattern coding was used during the second cycle of coding in order to identify emerging themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Theoretical categories were developed by placing coded data in a more general framework (Maxwell, 2005).

During the data analysis process, thick descriptions were provided. It is important to note that thick descriptions are not merely lengthy descriptions but rather an outcome of cultural analysis, i.e. interpretive analysis of cultural meanings (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993). Creating a rich, detailed and concrete description forms a basis for data interpretation (Patton, 2002).

The final step involved making sense of the data through interpretation. Data interpretation deals with making sense of the data or grasping its meaning through more abstract conceptualizations (Spiggle, 1994). In interpretation, there are no guidelines to follow like in data analysis since “interpretation occurs as a gestalt shift” and springs from serendipity and mental activities (ibid., p. 497). There are several tactics for generating meanings, such as noting patterns and themes, seeing plausibility, clustering, making metaphors, counting and making contrasts and comparisons (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). One of the most commonly used strategies for grasping the meanings and experiences of informants is seeking coherent patterns in meanings (Spiggle, 1994).

This study employed an active search for patterns and themes in the data. The researcher noted recurring patterns that brought together separate pieces of data (Miles et al., 2014). The data analysis and interpretation was then organized around these key themes. The results of the data analysis and interpretation are presented in Chapter 4.

3.5 Other considerations

3.5.1 Ethical considerations

It is acknowledged that research should be undertaken in an ethical manner. Including ethical considerations in human research is essential since research participants can be vulnerable (Sieber & Tolich, 2013) and exposed to substantial risks (Frankfort-Nachmias, 1996).

Researchers can take different views on ethics such as utilitarian, deontological, relational and ecological (Flinders, 1992). These ethical frameworks present guidance for recruiting participants, conducting fieldwork, and reporting results (ibid.). This particular

research adopts a utilitarian view of ethics which envisages recruiting participants via informed consent, conducting fieldwork in a manner that eliminates harm to others and ensuring the confidentiality of study participants (ibid.). While the utilitarian approach is criticized for being more appropriate for quantitative research with large samples than qualitative research (ibid.), it is a 'best fit' for the purpose of this study. Moreover, this approach is compatible with the ethical principles of the University of Salford. Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the College of Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Panel, University of Salford in May 2014 prior to commencing data collection (see Appendix 6).

Since this study involved interviewing individuals, initial agreements with the research participants guaranteed their confidentiality which is understood as "not discussing information provided by an individual with others" and "presenting findings in a way that ensure individuals cannot be identified" (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008, p. 418). Confidentiality is important since it aims to protect research participants from stress, embarrassment and unwanted publicity associated with the publishing of research findings as well as in situations where participants disclose sensitive information that can be later used against them (Flinders, 1992).

During the actual data collection process, care was taken to ensure that study participants were fully informed and aware of their role in the research (Frankfort-Nachmias, 1996). The details of the study were orally explained to all participants before interview. In addition, a written Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 7) explaining the purpose of the study was handed out to each participant. Participation in the research was voluntary and the participants were informed that they had a right to refuse participation whenever, for whatever reason and subsequent to consenting to participate, and that they had a right to withdraw at any stage in the process without giving reasons and without penalty. In addition, care was taken to ensure that all participants were over 18. A signed Informed Consent Form (see Appendix 8) was obtained from each participant prior to audio-recording the interviews and was retained by the researcher. Informed consent recognizes the right of freedom and self-determination of research participants and at the same time protects the researcher by reducing their legal liability and shifting part of the responsibility to research participants

(ibid.). None of the participants refused to sign the Informed Consent Form or declined the audio recording.

Although the data obtained from participants for the purpose of the research is not considered to be particularly sensitive, the real names of participants are not used in the research; anonymization of data helps to ensure the confidentiality of research participants (Wiles et al., 2008). In addition to anonymizing participant names, a decision was also made to anonymize particular cities and counties that people involved in destination marketing were representing. Changing the characteristics of research participants in order to protect their identities is a common practice among researchers (ibid.).

However, it is acknowledged that complete confidentiality is impossible to obtain in social research (Wiles et al., 2008) and this study is not an exception. The organizations which certain research participants represented were not anonymized (with their authorisation) in order to justify their inclusion in the study. This compromise was necessary to ensure the trustworthiness of the research.

Interviews were conducted either in the workplace of participants (e.g. Tourism information centres) or in public places (e.g. a café). All electronic data obtained during the study was stored on the researcher's encrypted laptop. Hard copies of interview transcripts and signed Informed Consent Forms were stored securely.

3.5.2 Trustworthiness criteria

The criteria differ for evaluating the trustworthiness of research under positivist and constructivist paradigms. While positivists use internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity to evaluate the goodness or quality of research, constructivists use credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The basic criteria of trustworthiness under a constructivist paradigm and practical techniques of how they were achieved in this research are described below.

Credibility in qualitative research refers to “how truthful the findings are” (Decrop, 2004, p. 159). In order to enhance the credibility of this research, several techniques were employed. Firstly, credibility was enhanced by prolonged engagement in the research setting and persistent observation in the field (Creswell, 2013). The researcher had lived in Latvia prior to commencement of the research and visited the country several times afterwards. This allowed in-depth experience and understanding of the situational context in which the research took place. Secondly, this contextual information was provided throughout the research in order to support data analysis and interpretation; this technique is known as referential adequacy (Decrop, 2004).

Transferability is an alternative to generalization and refers to the possibility of transferring knowledge or research findings to another setting or group (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since qualitative research often deals with small and non-representative samples, the findings cannot be generalised. However, it is possible to distinguish between statistical and analytical generalisation – “while statistical generalisation of qualitative data is most often not possible or desirable, the analytical transfer of theoretical propositions to other objects (people, settings, phenomena, etc.) is conceivable” (Decrop, 2004, p. 159). In order to enhance transferability, two techniques can be employed. Firstly, theoretical sampling was used ensuring that the sample is diverse and the researcher can access the broadest possible range of information (ibid.). Secondly, transferability was enhanced by writing rich, thick descriptions of the participants and research setting (Creswell, 2013). The capacity for transferability depends on the level of detail provided; therefore, a full description of the context in which the research has taken place was provided to allow the transfer of knowledge gained in another context (Bazeley, 2013).

Dependability refers to the extent to which the research results are consistent and reproducible (Decrop, 2004). In order to enhance dependability, several techniques were used. Firstly, since constructivism assumes multiple realities which depend on the context, all changes in the research plan and research context were documented (ibid.). Secondly, an audit trail was kept to enable another researcher to check whether he or she can come to the same conclusions (Bryman, 2016). The records from all phases of the research process were kept including interview transcripts and data analysis decisions.

Finally, a second opinion in data interpretation was sought using peer review or debriefing (Creswell, 2013). In this research, both supervisors provided valuable comments which helped to interpret the data.

Confirmability indicates whether the researcher has acted “in good faith” (Bryman, 2016, p. 386) and the findings are neutral (Decrop, 2004). While a researcher working with an interpretivist paradigm is subjective rather than objective, it is possible to make the actual data analysis objective. This was done by searching for a variety of explanations about the constructs examined and by reporting theoretically meaningful variables (*ibid.*). Another technique to enhance confirmability is to use an external auditor who can review interviews and analytical procedures (Creswell, 2013). For this research, both internal and external PhD examiners act as external auditors.

In addition to the four trustworthiness criteria described above, another way to enhance the trustworthiness of the research is by using triangulation. The main assumption here is that “information coming from different angles or perspectives is used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research problem” (Decrop, 2004, p. 162). Triangulation is often used to strengthen qualitative findings (Decrop, 1999). There are four types of triangulation identified by Denzin (1978), namely; data, investigator, theory and methodological triangulation. Two out of the four triangulation methods – data and theory triangulation – were used in this research.

Data triangulation or triangulation of data sources implies that a variety of data sources can be used in a study which can be primary or secondary, textual or visual and can include also field notes (Decrop, 2004). A particular type of triangulation of data sources is informant triangulation which “involves considering a broad range of informants and comparing what they say;” it is possible to include both typical and atypical informants (Decrop, 2004, p. 163). In this research, the perspectives of people from different point of views – public sector and private sector, supply side and demand side – were collected and compared (Patton, 2002).

Theoretical triangulation implies using multiple perspectives or theories to interpret a single set of data (Denzin, 1978). Since tourism is regarded as a multidisciplinary phenomenon (Decrop, 2004), considering theories from different

disciplines is especially relevant in order to ensure richer and more comprehensive interpretations of constructs examined. For example, Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) suggest that tourism practices should be examined from the point of view of both individual agency and the available tourism structures. While the actor / agent perspective takes into account individual values, habits / experiences and social reference groups, the tourism structures take into account institutionalised tourism arrangements, societal structures, holiday travel rules and resources, booking options and travel infrastructure. Consequently, tourism practices are influenced by both. Taking into account multiple perspectives allows theoretical triangulation. In this research, several theoretical approaches were used to interpret the data. For instance, the data was examined from different disciplinary angles (Decrop, 1999), e.g. marketing, sociology and psychology.

Chapter 4 – Data analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of the data and the discussion of findings. It contains four parts, mirroring the structure of the literature review. The first section analyses and discusses the concept of slow tourism, the second section considers the concept of the slow tourist and the last two sections present the findings and discussion on slow philosophy in destination management and destination marketing.

4.1 Slow tourism concept

4.1.1 Understanding / constructing of slow tourism

Since there is no universally agreed definition of slow tourism in Latvia, people interpret slow tourism based on their own understanding of the concept.

Only a small number of participants had heard the term ‘slow travel’ or ‘slow tourism’ prior to their participation in the research. Even those who knew the term were not sure about its exact meaning and indicated that the term is mostly not known or not defined in the local tourism industry.

[Slow tourism] is not defined in the tourism industry itself. I have not heard its definition. I think industry representatives still argue about what it is (P08, private sector).

For me, this word combination – slow travel – seemed very odd. Travelling... is an active way of moving around. Slow sounds like unhurried, sluggish – what can you do, what can you manage in such a phase? I guess this connotation is confusing me, but it is clear that it encompasses something else; it is not about sluggishness or doing nothing (P09, local tourist).

As the last quote illustrates, the term ‘slow’ can have negative associations. In fact, certain terms like ‘slow’ and ‘fast’ can be perceived differently in different cultures. For instance, it has been observed that speed is “a culturally-loaded term” which has a more positive meaning in post-socialist countries (Pecsek, 2016, p. 99).

The lack of prior knowledge of the term 'slow tourism' was initially regarded as a challenge, but later turned out to benefit the research. Since most of the respondents were not aware of the term, they were not able to orient themselves to predominantly cultural discourses (McCabe, 2005) surrounding slow tourism. In other words, their answers were less biased and reflected their genuine understanding and interpretation of the concept free from a cultural context.

Trying to define what constitutes slow travel is a challenging task and some participants noted that it might even be unnecessary.

Slow travel like eco travel is a very vague concept where strict framing probably does not exist and where everybody interprets it in a slightly different way according to tourism possibilities in a particular country or tourism traditions, or a traveller's own experience (P05, DMO representative).

[I]t does not matter what you call it. I hate it when we try to put everything in very strict academic frames and label everything, because the forms and transitions between them are so many that putting them in any sort of classification... Then it is science for the sake of science (P19, local tourist).

Many respondents linked slow tourism with the **availability of time** and not being restricted to tight schedules. Taking time as an important component of slow tourism has been acknowledged in the literature (Matos, 2003; Timms & Conway, 2011).

It is not possible to put it in some frameworks or schedules (P14, DMO representative).

Slow tourism [...] could be that a person travels without time restrictions, that he does not have a strict schedule, when he looks – 'I have to get up at 7am and I will have my lunch at 12am'. No, he can [spend] this day more relaxed. Slow tourism – yes, when he does not have this schedule (P25, DMO representative).

One of the criteria [for slow tourism] would be time; when people do not stress themselves about time allocation for a particular leisure activity or tourism product (P26, DMO representative).

The respondents also noted that slow tourism is the **opposite of running around** and involves seeing less but **spending more time** in one place which allows them to gain an **in-depth understanding**, which is also acknowledged in the literature (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). This reflects the notion that slow tourism means **quality over quantity**.

What I understand with slow tourism is that as a tourist, I do not run around ten or more attractions in one day but maybe four or five attractions where I spend two hours, three hours. I enjoy what this attraction offers. As a tourist, I do not rush myself; that I have to be in another place at 4pm even if I haven't managed to see something... that I have to leave because I have to be somewhere else (P15, DMO representative).

Slow tourism in my opinion means that [...] you do not rush through everything and go for speed but you explore an attraction or destination more in depth; that you do not go for quantity but you explore in depth (P32, DMO representative).

Spending more time in one place was linked not only to particular visitor attractions but also to destinations in general; the respondents suggested that slow tourism means **longer stays** at the destination. Staying at the destination for a longer time is often mentioned in the literature as one of the main characteristics of slow tourism (Dickinson et al., 2010; Matos, 2003).

[O]ne of the criteria is the length of stay which implies – we are not in a hurry, we can explore a city. For example; Riga not in three days but in seven days (P03, DMO representative).

I've been to Riga from 20th September till 3rd October (P24, foreign tourist).

Some respondents indicated that slow tourism meant covering **less distance** per day.

I think that slow tourism can be done with any type of transport enjoying the environment around you, [seeing] places of interest and covering short distances per day (P07, local tourist).

I link it [slow tourism] with not doing long distances in one day. That you can easily go to one small destination and explore it locally, devote the whole day to one municipality, for example. I think that this is a perfect example of slow tourism (P15, DMO representative).

The respondents also noted that **slowness** is relative and individual, i.e. slow might mean different things to different people. Slowness as an intrinsic and not extrinsic quality has also been identified in the literature (Oh et al., 2014).

What does slow mean? I think that it is actually very, very individual for each person because what might be unhurried for me might be terribly slow for somebody else, and what is fast for me might be absolutely fine for others (P06, local tourist).

It is very individual, of course (P33, DMO representative).

This shows that slow is “a polysemic term” meaning different things to different people (Bagnoli, 2016, p. 121). However, the respondents suggested that slow tourism is not passive but rather an **active** way to spend holidays.

But what is slow tourism? If you have time to cycle not just one hour but you can go around on a bicycle the whole day slowly through nice countryside or nice rural roads. Moreover, if you visit rural farmsteads and try local goodies... [then] you are active and slow at the same time. I don't think that slow is literally slow. Active can be slow as well (P25, DMO representative).

When a family comes here for a week, they don't just go to a beach and sunbathe. They participate in the everyday life of a rural farmstead. They explore, they cycle around different places in the vicinity (P33, DMO representative).

As an approach to travel, slow tourism was also linked with a possibility to **slow down**, reflect and get back to the ‘real’ values in life.

[O]ur tempo is so fast that it takes away the humanity. You have to manage this and that but we take away time from the basic values in our lives. [...] I guess we all live three times faster than needed (P09, local tourist).

After the Soviet Union we wanted to jump somewhere very quickly, to reach European standards in five years... economically... forgetting that it takes away a lot morally. Now when all these complexities – crisis, etc. – they have taken away a lot from us both economically and physically. We understand that we don't want to give away the good things. Spiritually. And we are working towards it (P14, DMO representative).

Finally, the respondents noted that slow tourism is individual and the **opposite of mass tourism** but can be practiced in small groups of like-minded people. Slow tourism as an antidote or antithesis to mass tourism has also been emphasized in the literature (Conway & Timms, 2010; Heitmann et al., 2011).

*[Slow tourism involves] travelling individually, not in these groups with flags...
(P17, DMO representative)*

*I do not associate it with mass tourism but more like families or groups of friends...
(P27, DMO representative)*

The results show that an understanding of slow tourism in Latvia partially corresponds to what is understood with the term elsewhere. Slow tourism means travelling less distance, spending more time at a destination or visitor attraction and getting an in-depth understanding of the place visited. It is the opposite of 'running around' or mass tourism. However, slow tourism in Latvia is not linked with an environmentally friendly way of travelling as suggested by a number of authors (Dickinson et al., 2011; Fullagar, 2012; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012). Yet, it should be noted that there is no unified understanding of slow tourism in the academic literature and different authors interpret the term differently. This problem is not unique for slow tourism. In fact, even the better known concept of sustainable tourism has different understandings in the literature which can be based on resource-based, activity-based or community-based traditions of sustainability (Saarinen, 2006).

The data also shows that the majority of the supply side representatives referred to slow tourism as 'an approach to travel' and not as a separate niche or umbrella term.

4.1.2 Links with other types of tourism

The supply side representatives link slow tourism mostly with two types of tourism – **nature tourism** and **culture** or **cultural history tourism**. These tourism types or their associated activities featured in almost all interviews with the supply side representatives and were the first associations made when discussing what slow tourism actually was.

It seems to me that slowly – it could be ‘nature’ as well as ‘culture’ but in a way so that I can do it myself... (P27, DMO representative)

Definitely, it is possible to relate it more with cultural-heritage attractions, also with nature objects – or any service where you can learn about the process of how you get from milk to cheese... and you can taste it afterwards too (P32, DMO representative).

Interest in the local heritage and culture of the places visited as an important part of slow tourism has been acknowledged in the literature (C. M. Hall, 2012; Singh, 2012; Timms & Conway, 2011). Slow tourism has also been linked with green tourism (Murayama & Parker, 2012). Yet, nature-based tourism has not been emphasized in relation to slow tourism in the literature.

However, some authors have linked slow tourism with **ecotourism** (Wearing et al., 2012) and a few respondents from both supply and demand side have pointed out this link as well.

In the understanding of people, in the understanding of a normal Latvian, ecotourism is nature tourism. Nobody has thought of changing this perception. If more effort would be made in relation to ecotourism, it would also relate to this slow tourism (P03, DMO representative).

[H]ere we arrive at the precise idea of eco-tourism. That you get to know local, you use local, you use local produce, you pay a local service provider who is local and not owned by somebody from outside... (P19, local tourist)

In addition, the respondents suggested that **gastronomy** and enjoying local food is also compatible with slow tourism. A few respondents also linked slow tourism with Slow Food.

My first contact with slow tourism was Slow Food gastronomy tours in Italy where you travel from one village to another and enjoy their food. That’s the idea of slow in my opinion (P04, DMO representative).

Gastronomy would be very topical. [...] People want to try something local, something special. [...] Yes, and also Slow Food goes very well hand-in-hand with slow tourism, I think... (P28, DMO representative)

A few supply side representatives linked slow tourism with **rural tourism** and enjoying rural goodies.

For me slow tourism is more associated with rural tourism. With this environment, you can visit that farmstead, you can see a collection of local people, you can have a walk in that nature park... (P33, DMO representative)

Yes, [enjoying] rural goodies can also be slow tourism (P34, DMO representative).

Whether **active tourism** can be considered as slow tourism caused the biggest disagreement among the supply side representatives. As discussed earlier, slow tourism was associated with being active rather than passive. Participants often mentioned that cycling, walking and hiking, boat trips and even skiing and snowboarding can be a part of slow tourism.

Slow can also be riding on a snowboard which can be quite fast but you enjoy nature and relax in the sauna in the evening; you don't run straight back [home] (P25, DMO representative).

For me "Best enjoyed slowly" is something that can be enjoyed in nature, either walking or cycling. That is, moving around as slowly as possible and grasping as much as possible, as much as my eyes can see and as much as I can experience. These are my associations (P28, DMO representative).

A few participants indicated that active tourism is not compatible with slow tourism. This disagreement could be explained by the fact that respondents had various understandings of the term 'active'.

The things that people are interested in doing here – slowly exploring the place, the destination; learning more about cultural-heritage values, sacral values, relaxing near to water – that is very topical at the moment. But there is not much demand for active tourism, for some kind of entertainment: there isn't. Because it is holiday time and people enjoy themselves slowly. That totally corresponds with the Latvian tourism image (P10, DMO representative).

For example, active leisure is very popular here. People like to do sports here and that might not be this relaxed type of leisure. It is active; it is something opposite (P34, DMO representative).

It should be noted that respondents also considered destination-specific types of tourism such as sacral tourism to be compatible with slow tourism.

In Latvia, slow tourism is not considered as a distinct type or form of tourism but rather associated with nature-based tourism and culture or cultural-history tourism, and to a lesser extent with gastronomy tourism, rural tourism and active tourism. As such, slow tourism can be regarded as complementary to contemporary mainstream tourism practices rather than a contrasting tourism type (Guiver et al., 2016).

The above-mentioned types of tourism are relatively well-known and recognized in Latvia whereas slow tourism is not. As discussed previously, often local alternatives to slow tourism exist that are more popular or more deeply embedded in certain destinations. Therefore, it is more appropriate to promote slow tourism philosophy and practices within the existing types of tourism rather than to introduce slow tourism as a new type of tourism in destinations like Latvia which can be challenging and perhaps even unnecessary.

4.1.3 Wholeness of slow tourism

The interpretation of what constitutes slow tourism differed between the respondents, i.e. whether slow tourism is the whole trip or whether it is just a part of the trip. Some research participants talked about the integrity and wholeness of the slow tourism trip where travel experiences are part of the overall slow tourism experiences.

[T]he whole trip is the trip. It's the destination; the whole way is the destination somehow (P20, foreign tourist).

[I]t is slow tourism when the journey is also a part of the trip: you have to enjoy it as well. You can see what is happening outside the window, what is interesting. It is not only the moving, the getting from A to B... (P02, DMO representative)

These findings are consistent with those of Dickinson et al. (2011) and Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) who suggest looking at slow travel as the whole tourist experience. Others however indicated that slow tourism is episodic – it is only one part of the trip.

I can call only one fragment from the overall trip slow tourism. [...] But to say that all parts of the trip were slow tourism – no way... Moreover, every small destination experience was an experience which I could hardly call slow tourism (P06, local tourist).

This confirms the idea expressed by Caffyn (2012) who suggests that people can have slow day trips or slow afternoons. This however is opposed to the idea that slow travel refers to the whole tourist experience (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

As the data shows, there are different degrees of engagement with slow tourism, i.e. for some people slow tourism can be the whole trip while for others it can be only one part of the trip. In the case of the latter, one can argue that elements of slow tourism can be found in conventional tourism (Larsen, 2016).

4.1.4 Role of environment

While it is acknowledged that the environment at the destination – both the physical environment and the social situation – influences tourist behaviour (Fridgen, 1984), it is disputable how much the environment where tourism takes place can be used to characterize slow tourism or identify slow tourists.

A number of respondents said they felt the environment in Latvia – for example a particular region or town – is appropriate for slow tourism.

I think that Latvia and especially the Latvian countryside is especially appropriate for it [slow tourism] (P 25, DMO representative).

I think that it is possible to talk a lot about slow tourism in county F (P28, DMO representative).

Conversely, a few respondents mentioned that slow tourism is an appropriate type of tourism for their regions or towns.

[W]hy is it (slow tourism) suitable for us? Town B is one of Latvia's provincial towns and we don't have big shopping centres, big attractions, entertainment centres or discos. There is no heavy traffic, not many people, there are plenty of green zones,

many objects, there are no bistros, no fast-food chains – no McDonalds, no Hesburger. These are things that would indicate a fast tempo of life. The town itself is very quiet, very tranquil, very harmonic. [...] And here you have a feeling that time doesn't rush you. That is what characterizes the town. Therefore slow tourism? We have it. Also culture, of course, art festivals, different cultural events. We don't have big rock concerts or that type of [event]... We have opera, classical music, theatre plays, which is in accordance with enjoying slowly, with enjoying culture. That is why I think that yes, slow tourism is very, very appropriate for town B (P02, DMO representative).

I think that this (slow tourism) is the most, most, most appropriate [type of tourism] for region S (P14, DMO representative).

When talking about the particular characteristics of an environment that would be suitable for slow tourism, many of the supply side representatives associated slow tourism with rural, non-urban or less urban environments, and nature.

Riga could hardly be considered a place for slow tourism. Most likely not [...]. I think that you can get it outside Riga because, when you go to any of the Latvian towns outside Riga, they have a different rhythm, not to mention [in the] rural areas. There are considerably fewer people and the daily rhythm is more tranquil and slow (P04, DMO representative).

We don't offer slow travel in Latvia in a crowd. As I understand it, since I am from a rural area myself, I think that it is more in a nature environment where there are as few people as possible (P25, DMO representative).

For me, "Best enjoyed slowly" is something that you can enjoy in nature (P28, DMO representative).

[...] slow tourism... I don't think you can do it in Riga. For me, slow tourism is more associated with nature objects and nature things [...] (P33, DMO representative).

While urban environments are less associated with slow tourism, on consideration some supply side representatives acknowledged that slow tourism can actually take place in any environment, i.e. people can also engage in slow tourism in urban environments such as Riga, the capital of Latvia.

[I associate slow tourism] not with rural areas but with a less urban environment. Of course, Riga can be “Best enjoyed slowly.” [...] Riga is a small tourism destination and there you can also support the local, and you can move around easily on a bicycle, or find cultural clusters, local artists and local food. In principle, all of that is achievable in Riga (P05, DMO representative).

[Slow tourism] is certainly associated with sustainability or nature... However, you can also sit and read a book slowly in an urban environment – in Old Riga, for example (P26, DMO representative).

Some supply side representatives have indicated that the environment where slow tourism takes place should be considered in relation to tourists' home environments, i.e. the home environment of the tourist influences how they perceive the environment at the destination, and also whether they consider the environment to be appropriate for slow tourism.

Fast and slow are relative terms. I am saying, for instance, that for a Western European level, for a Scandinavian level it [the rhythm of life in city W] is as fast as, I don't know, in Stockholm, Helsinki or Oslo. Compared to the speed in Moscow, it is indeed the countryside here. Or if we compare with London or Paris. It depends very much on which city we're comparing it with (P17, DMO representative).

As people from Holland say, they can be described in three ways – 1) overpopulation and density 2) an industrial country and 3) lack of nature and tranquillity. Then they come here, sit down in front of a meadow and say: ‘That's it!’ Now they will sit here in their folding chairs for a week and say “Best enjoyed slowly,” as they joke (P26, DMO representative).

The tourists themselves, however, did not emphasize the need to be in a particular environment to engage in slow tourism. Instead they talked about enjoying the environment around them in general.

[Slow tourism] can be characterized by unhurried enjoyment and being in an environment you want to explore (P06, local tourist).

[...] well, it's also a kind of sightseeing because you see the landscape, right? When you go by train or by bus, you see what is around you, [you see] if it changes; if it is a lot of forests or just agriculture. It's a bit like television but you just see landscape all the time (P20, foreign tourist).

A few demand side respondents associated slow tourism with being in a non-tourist environment and going outside tourist hotspots to experience everyday life.

For me personally “Best enjoyed slowly” means that I am outside that entire commercial environment and that I am enjoying [something] special (P18, local tourist).

There [a suburb in Riga] we could see the houses where people live and how everyday life is happening that was different to the Old Town (P21, foreign tourist).

Maitland (2010) noted that the everyday life of people in cities became of interest to tourists who wanted to experience the city ‘off the beaten track’. As the results show, this can also be the case in slow tourism.

It has to be noted that a non-tourist environment was not limited to the non-urban environment alone, as the previous quote above about the suburb in Riga shows. A few of the supply side representatives – especially the foreign ones – acknowledged that they have spent their time in an urban environment. As one of the tourists explained:

A city is more entertaining when travelling alone (P24, foreign tourist).

A study by Pearce (1982) found that different types of environment satisfy different needs for tourists, i.e. urban environments were chosen by people who wanted to satisfy relationship and psychological needs while non-urban environments were chosen by those wanting to satisfy self-actualization needs.

Traditionally, slow tourism has been associated with rural areas (Murayama & Parker, 2012) and the results support it. Indeed, natural environments can provide a sense of timelessness (Holden, 2008) which encourages slow tourism. However, the fact that less crowded destinations attract tourism flows is not specific to slow tourism. For instance, the study of Marrocu and Paci (2013) shows that population density at the destination has a negative impact on domestic tourists’ decisions, i.e. tourists prefer to visit destinations that are less crowded yet have natural, cultural and recreational amenities. However, the results show that slow tourism can take place in both urban and non-urban environments.

One explanation of this could be that slow tourists have different needs to satisfy; therefore, different environments for slow tourism are chosen.

Another explanation could lie in the fact that for some tourists the environment at the destination is the main reason for travel while for others it provides only a background to which tourism behaviour takes place (Fridgen, 1984). In the case of the latter, rather than seeking a holiday at a specific destination, many tourists seek a particular holiday 'experience' that can possibly be found at a variety of destinations, some near to, or far from, the home (D. Scott, Peeters, & Gössling, 2010).

Similarly, a study among French domestic tourists has reported that the characteristics of the place where tourists choose to stay has little connection with their recreational activities, at least during the summer season (Bel et al., 2015). That is, tourists can pursue outdoor activities or visit natural and cultural heritage sights both in urban and rural areas. Hence in slow tourism the tourists are seeking a particular holiday experience that they can find in various environments.

Consequently, the extent to which the environment where tourism takes place can be used to characterize slow tourism or identify slow tourists is questionable. While less urban areas and rural areas are considered to be more appropriate for slow tourism, the research shows that it can be practiced anywhere in Latvia.

4.1.5 Role of planning

The degree of planning slow tourism trip was varied, ranging from very little to a moderate level.

When talking about their travel experiences, many demand side representatives – foreign tourists – described the lack of strict plans during their trips.

I didn't have any ticket back. I just had a ticket to Helsinki. I got there and actually I wanted to spend two nights there but then thought, OK, just do another night. So I booked the ferry to Tallinn for a day later. Always just going... Sometimes just going to the bus stop and taking a bus or sometimes booking it one day in advance on the internet. I never had this ticket – 'OK, then I have to be in, whatever, Vilnius to take the train back' ...but actually [it was] always open. Well, the date was not

that open, because I have to be at university at some stage. And then some birthdays in the family were coming up so I wanted to be back for that too. So I had some dates in my mind. So, OK, maybe I should be back in Germany at that point but [I had] no fixed ticket (P20, foreign tourist).

I started walking and followed my curiosity (P24, foreign tourist).

In fact, being open-minded and taking advantage of the situation can lead to memorable experiences. As Feifer (1985, p. 261) has described it, “not-seeking was a good way to find things of interest.” Similarly, the local tourists also talked about lack of strict plans during their trips.

[...] we found a hostel, and the host asked us – how long are you going to stay? Well, we will stay for at least one day, maybe for another, we’ll see. He said – it’s great that you don’t have plans! At that moment I also felt that. I realized that it is actually a huge freedom that you are not attached to anything and that you can let things happen, [to] enjoy that (P01, local tourist).

You go to relax without the stress that at 3pm you have to be here and at 4pm you have to be there, and that you have booked a visit here and you have booked a visit there... We go as we can. The trajectory is roughly marked but it is without overdoing the kilometres or amount of things that you see in that day (P18, local tourist).

This tallies with the viewpoint discussed in the literature review that slow travel involves traveling without strict itineraries and planning ahead, caring only about being ‘in the here and now’ (Tiyce & Wilson, 2012).

However, while the activities of respondents during their trips were not strictly planned, the journey to and from the destination or the time-frame within which the trip took place was usually planned in advance.

First of all, slow travel [means that] – you are not put in a framework. It means that I have time. [...] Yes, you can have the time period “to and from” when you travel but what you do in between that time you don’t plan that strictly. [I think] ‘Yes, I will go, I know the direction’. I know roughly what I want to visit but it is not like that from 2-3pm I am visiting Nature Park Pape and from 3pm I am visiting something else (P06, local tourist).

I think that in Latvia [...] you have to plan the trip in detail by planning its logistics. The logistics are such that you have to have transport at the start point and you have to have transport at the finish point (P19, local tourist).

This is in line with Lannoy (2016) who argues that some time management is needed in slow travel, e.g. when deciding on the distance that needs to be covered per day in a walking, cycling or boating trip. Therefore, “slowness cannot be improvised” (ibid., p. 60).

Some demand side representatives, however, described much more detailed planning during their trips.

As regards the hiking trips along the sea coast, we decided approximately where the starting point could be. Depending on the number of days that we can devote to the trip, how far we could walk, depending on that, I open the website of Baltic Country Holidays [Latvian rural tourism association] and look for accommodation possibilities, and then adapt the route accordingly (P01, local tourist).

[I]t depends how many people are going. If [there are] two of us, then it can be a last minute idea. If [you] organize a trip for friends, which I am doing from time to time – either with bicycles, boats or a hiking trip – then there is some preparation. [...] When you organize for friends, then there are few “musts” – you definitely have to include some tourism objects, places, farmsteads or anything that relates to tourism at that place. Then you book a visit there, do the planning... (P18, local tourist)

In both cases, more than two people were involved in the trip. Hence, it can be argued that as the number of people taking a slow tourism trip increases, so does the level of planning.

Although the supply side representatives indicated that slow tourism cannot be put into strict time plans, they also emphasized that time management is important if tourists plan to visit service providers, i.e. slow tourism offerings need to be pre-booked.

I think that one of the aspects of slow tourism is that it has to be booked in advance at least a couple of hours before you go there so that people can get ready and organize everything (P14, DMO representative).

[...] in slow tourism – when a person [tourist] comes and asks about what they could visit or we could offer them immediately, at that point it actually gets very

difficult. You have to tell people [service providers] in advance so that they get ready, so that they know that clients will come and they can devote their time to them. Otherwise, clients could arrive to visit a farmstead but they [service providers] could have gone to the nearby city to do some shopping... (P33, DMO representative)

A few demand side representatives also talked about how their plans changed during the trip indicating a high level of flexibility during slow travel.

And there the plans changed, thanks to the people who were there. [...] We had planned to stay there for one night but everything there was so great that we stayed longer (P06, local tourist).

I remember I went to a place and thought, 'OK, really nice old woman to stay with. And tomorrow I can go to this place and then to this place and stuff,' [I] had all these plans in my head. And then she said – 'oh, you know, tomorrow I have this knitting group'. She met with some other older women and they all just knitted. They even had some, how do you say, some spinning wheels. You know these old ones? They were just spinning and they showed me how to do that. That was really funny and crazy! (P20, foreign tourist)

The change of plans was also emphasized by the supply side representatives.

He [the tourist] can also change direction from our suggestions. He had planned to go to one Latvian city but he pops in or there is a nice host at the hotel where he stays overnight, in a guest house where he lives, or he pops in the Tourism Information Centre... A conversation develops and suddenly he changes direction; he goes in the other direction because something appealed to him. That is the slow [tourism] (P25, DMO representative).

While flexibility in decision making during slow travel has been suggested by some authors (Conway & Timms, 2010), the role of planning in slow tourism has been overlooked by researchers, apart from rare exceptions like Lannoy (2016) who acknowledges that his personal slow tourism requires strict time management.

In terms of trip planning, varying degrees of planning have been described in the general literature. On one hand, the literature suggests that there are travellers who prefer very detailed planning. As a result, they often overplan their trips, especially in relation to their on-site activities, and end up engaging in fewer activities than planned

(Stewart & Vogt, 1999). On the other, there are tourists who at times may deliberately avoid acquiring information about their travel destination in order to preserve an element of surprise and safeguard some novelty about their holiday: what Parrinello (1993, p. 244) refers to as “anti-cognitivehood.” Slow tourists tend to exhibit varying degrees of planning behaviour and fall somewhere between these two extremes.

The literature also suggests that the degree of planning and the flexibility of plans varies depending on whether it is done before or during the trip. Hyde (2004), for instance, describes pre-trip decision making as ‘deliberate, purposeful and reasoned’ while on-trip decision making is ‘light-hearted, free-spirited and hedonistic’. In the case of tourists using rental vehicles, Becken and Wilson (2007) divide trip planning and decision making into three stages – core decisions, secondary decisions or loose plans and en route decisions or unplanned behaviour. The core decisions on the destination, length of stay, transport mode, rough travel route, key attractions and special interests are made months in advance of the trip and are unlikely to change. Secondary decisions on sub-destinations, activities, attractions, exact travel route and the location for accommodation are looser and are taken days or months prior to the trip. En route decisions on local activities and attractions, restaurants, shopping, side trips and accommodation are usually unplanned, i.e. they are not considered before the trip. Similarly, the study of Stewart and Vogt (1999) suggests that plans made before the trip about the length of stay, travel party and travel mode are usually more stable while the plans regarding accommodation and activities are often changed and adapted during the trip.

The results from this study show similar behaviour among slow tourists. The plans about the destination, rough travel route, the length of stay, transport mode, travel party and special interests are usually made before the trip and tend to be relatively stable. However, slow tourists are flexible regarding decisions about their exact travel route, accommodation, and especially activities en route. So even if a few decisions are taken prior to the holiday, slow tourists like a certain degree of flexibility while travelling and leave room for unplanned encounters. According to Lannoy (2016, p. 62), one of the things he likes in slow tourism is interaction with local people when their behaviour deviates from the expected and leaves him “happily surprised” such as an unexpected

gesture or special treatment. Although such behaviour cannot be planned in advance, it is possible to plan for unstructured time where such encounters could take place. This requires balancing between detailed planning and leaving room for unexpected behaviour and interaction.

Overall, planning and decision making in slow tourism involves a certain degree of flexibility. As the results show, certain aspects of slow tourism are planned in advance. Yet slow tourists also exhibit rather high degrees of flexibility during their trips, especially in relation to the activities. While not all activities in slow tourism involve visiting service providers, those that do might be a possible source of conflict between slow tourists and service providers due to their differing interests. The lack of planning of activities en route from the slow tourists' side may cause inconveniences for service providers offering activities of interest to these tourists, i.e. serviced providers prefer these activities to be booked in advance.

4.1.6 Slow tourism experiences

As mentioned in the literature review, slow tourism experiences are one of the areas most discussed among travel writers, academics and practitioners. As with slow tourism, there is no single definition of the term – which is not surprising given that even a widely used term such as 'quality tourism experience' lacks an exact definition (Jennings et al., 2009). Since quality is a self-defined term, it can be understood from the perspective of the person using it gaining emic perspective (Jennings & Weiler, 2006). As the earlier discussion has shown, 'slowness' is a self-defined term and can mean different things to different people. This study has attempted to understand slow tourism experiences from the perspectives of research participants.

These research participants talked a lot about the various experiences associated with slow tourism. A few respondents highlighted the importance of their slow tourism experiences, sometimes even suggesting that this was far more important than the actual places visited.

Probably also the experiences that you have during it [the trip], they were very important (P01, local tourist).

[F]or me travelling is more going step-by-step and experiencing more than you see, if you can say that. To meet more people and to do stuff together rather than just look at different places and say – ‘OK, now I’ve seen this city or I’ve seen this church, or I’ve seen whatever, this landscape, this waterfall, whatever’... (P20, foreign tourist)

When talking about their slow experiences, research participants concentrated mostly on experiences that were meaningful for them in some kind of way.

I remember the breakfast – even though it was September, it was warm. It was a sunny morning. We were sitting on the terrace in our jackets drinking tea. The sun had risen - or was still rising, I cannot remember. You look at the sea and feel such tranquillity inside you. You are away from the stress of the city, maybe [you have] broken away from [your] daily worries. It is very precious (P01, local tourist).

Now thinking back about our trip I can recall every detail that happened and how it was. But if you will ask me something about one of my Hungarian trips, I can only say ‘it was the same as the rest of the trips’ (P06, local tourist).

While the recollections of meaningful experiences are unique and individual, some qualities of such experiences can be shared (Morse, 2014). The data shows that the components of meaningful experience in the context of slow tourism were related to either immersion in culture and environment or interaction with hosts and locals.

4.1.6.1 Immersion in culture and environment

The respondents noted that the important part of the slow tourism travel experience is immersion in the local culture or environment. This was linked with the ability to become part of the local community, to take part in local life and sometimes even blend into the local culture.

He [host] met us by the sea. It was half a kilometre to his house. He drove for 10 min. talking all the time about what is what, that there was a house and two sisters live here but they have difficulties with men... He sort of introduces [us to]

the village, what there is [there]. [...] And you already get accustomed to that environment and start to feel a bit like a local (P01, local tourist).

I was going around using the bike of my CouchSurfing host. She has a small child, a girl that is maybe 2 years old. So on my bike I had this seat for a child... Usually tourists do not have a child's seat on their bikes – [when they go to the supermarket. And [maybe] the people... think – 'OK, there is somebody with a child's seat so maybe she's local too'... (P20, foreign tourist)

Being part of the service environment and immersing oneself in it was also mentioned by the supply side representatives.

Here they [tourists] can take part, they can... I'm not sure how to formulate it better... they can take part in many activities. They can be a part of it. They can be a part of everything that is offered here and they can do something in almost every place (P02, DMO representative).

In order to learn more about the history, one has to go slowly through a museum, look at the old photos and just immerse oneself in all this; it is impossible to get to know these things quickly (P34, DMO representative).

Immersion in the environment was also linked with appreciating nature and beautiful scenery.

For us, slow tourism is also watching the sunset. [...] People really come and follow how the sun is setting. They like that romance, that beauty... There is something in a sunset that attracts people (P28, DMO representative).

Finally, as one respondent noted, immersion means enjoying the experience in general.

If you really want to enjoy [something]... Everybody who wants to immerse themselves [in the details], I think that it can be coupled with the word 'enjoy' (P29, DMO representative).

4.1.6.2 Interaction with hosts and locals

Many research participants highlighted the role of hosts and locals in enhancing slow tourism experiences. Some participants emphasized the importance of interaction between the customer and service provider.

Of course, they have more interaction outside Riga because very often you are forced to communicate with locals. I think that people in Latvia open up slowly but once they do, they are hospitable and try to help. It is also an added value that you can get travelling outside the most popular routes (P04, DMO representative).

I think that one integral part of slow travel which people sometimes do not fully understand is 'the person'. At both ends: the person who goes – the traveller – and the person who welcomes; the service provider (P06, local tourist).

A few respondents mentioned how service providers or locals can help tourists experience a place by either recommending things or sometimes even acting as a local guide. Hence, slow tourism also means discovering a destination from inside – through the eyes of local people.

They [tourists] can learn about the city through a waiter who can say: 'We have this and that, maybe you can visit this and that place? Where have you been already? Maybe tomorrow you can visit such and such place?' (P02, DMO representative)

You arrive at a destination with the aim of discovering it from the inside and not by walking alongside a guide and 20 other people where you follow the umbrella and – at the end of the excursion – do not know all the answers about the destination. You arrive and communicate with locals. You go to a local restaurant, you stay at a small local hotel and you meet people there. In such a way, you learn about the culture through local people and not through big travel agencies which operate like a convoy (P08, private sector).

In the plane from Frankfurt to Riga, we met a young Latvian girl (around 25) who speaks French fluently. And we spent half a day with her. She took us the Janis Lipke Memorial, a Latvian worker who saved the life of more than 40 Jews (P22, foreign tourist).

The importance of staff and customer interaction is emphasized in the general literature. For instance, N. Scott, Laws, and Boksberger (2009) regard the consumer as an active participant in the co-creation of their experience.

Similarly, the importance of interaction between hosts and guests in the context of slow tourism has been highlighted by several authors (De Salvo et al., 2013; Markwell et al., 2012). Interaction with the local community can also provide tourists with a sense of place (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2010) which is important in slow tourism.

However, while such interactions are important, they are accidental and cannot be planned in advance. Gibbs and Ritchie (2010, p. 183) have argued that “memorable hospitable experiences are only truly experienced if the moment is spontaneous.” Although the focus of the authors was on restaurant dining experiences, the same applies to slow tourism experiences.

4.1.6.3 Heterogeneity of slow tourism experience

It can be seen from the previous discussion that slow tourism experiences are not homogeneous; people are looking for a variety of experiences in slow tourism. As one of the respondents noted, having the same type of experience can lead to the point where tourists would feel oversaturated.

We have Rundāle Palace, for example. A fantastic visitor attraction, no doubt about that: ideal. Let's say we have planned to spend two days there. I think that if we start at 10am, then by 3pm we will have had enough of it, right? Only because – how much information can we take in that one attraction offers? We could go there the next day and take in another part of the information... So maybe in slow tourism [experiences should come] from different areas (P06, local tourist).

The assumption that tourists who travel in a similar way share the same experiences has already been questioned in the literature (Uriely, Yonay, & Simchai, 2002). There is also a growing notion of “the tourist experience as a diverse and plural phenomenon” (Uriely, 2005, p. 205), i.e. tourists are looking for a variety of experiences while on holiday.

In fact several authors have recognized the diversity of tourism experiences within existing tourist categories. For instance, Feifer (1985, p. 261) notes that postmodern tourists are willing to combine different types of experiences during a single trip which she describes as “a kind of random sample.” Furthermore, the study of Uriely et al. (2002) among Israeli backpackers shows that participants can have more than one type of experience in the same trip, in successive trips or across their ‘backpacking biography’.

Even tourists within the established category of individual mass tourism are looking for a variety of experiences at the destination and to experience the same host community in different ways (Wickens, 2002). Likewise, tourists engaging in slow tourism may have a variety of experiences, e.g. their level of immersion in the place visited can vary as can the level of interaction with locals.

Since slow tourism can encompass having different experiences in different environments, slow tourism can be considered as a part of ‘postmodern tourism’ which is characterized by “the multiplicity of tourist motivations, experiences and environments” (Uriely, 1997, p. 983). It can also be argued that slow tourists share similar characteristics with the ‘post-tourist’ who is able to combine different tourist roles at any time or a variety of tourist roles over time, who adopts different tourist characteristics and seeks a variety of experiences, and who is able to make informed decisions based on the available choices (Sharpley, 1994). More than 30 years ago Feifer (1985, p. 269) described the ‘post-tourist’ as follows: “Now he wants to behold something sacred; now something informative, to broaden him; now something beautiful, to lift him up and make him finer; and now something just different, because he’s bored.” Consequently, it is important that destinations and service providers offer visitors a variety of experiences.

4.1.7 Other aspects of slow tourism

Environmental and ethical considerations as well as economic aspects were found when reviewing the literature. In this study the participants did mention these issues but to a lesser extent than the slow tourism experiences.

While many research participants mentioned that slow tourism is related to being in a pleasant environment, not many mentioned **environmental** responsibility or environmental concerns while travelling. Only one respondent mentioned that their travelling patterns are influenced by environmental concerns.

Also now all these environmental issues are coming up so people are maybe more... They decide to take a train somewhere and to have a few stopovers in between rather than to take a plane because I think that's... I mean, that's a reason for me too, actually, to say – 'OK, that's just not doing so much bad stuff to the environment'. I would say it's getting more popular at the moment (P20, foreign tourist).

Similarly, only one supply side representative linked slow tourism and longer stays with a reduced environmental footprint.

Currently, green thinking is popular in the world in general - that you do not harm the environment with your activities. Therefore, if you choose to stay in one place for a longer time rather than using transport to travel here and there, then at the ideological level it is possible to link slow tourism with the interests of people to protect the environment and to reduce their environmental footprint (P36, DMO representative).

Another respondent talked about environmental friendliness in a broader sense.

Every tourist has to be friendly to the environment that he is visiting. If he is a culture tourist, he is friendly to the cultural environment and people who are at the place he visits, either local people, local service providers, or just local passers-by. If he is a nature tourist, he is friendly and careful to the nature environment. In fact, if we are talking in broad categories, then everybody who puts on a backpack and goes into nature is environmentally friendly, by his nature (P19, local tourist).

While environmental considerations are considered to be an important component in slow travel and tourism, it might take some time for this idea to gain wider acceptance in Latvia.

Another aspect of slow tourism – the **ethical** dimension – was mentioned in relation to mutual respect between a host and a guest. Often slow tourism was linked with small-scale businesses where offerings are more personalized and depend on the interaction between a host and a guest as discussed earlier.

This collaboration should be mutual. Here the slogan of wild capitalism – that the client is always right and he is everything – does not work, right? Maybe it works in commercial tourism but here [in slow tourism] it does not work. Only then it is possible to have the best experience for both parties. Mutual communication, only in that way! Mutual respect (P14, DMO representative).

Here [at a small-scale service provider] tourists cannot come with their ambitions that everything has to be like this or that, item after item like quality, service, and everything. Here there is some interpretation. Here everything works as it works. Of course, the basic requirements – cleanliness and everything – that is there. But the rest is more like interpretation of the subject, how the visit goes in a particular place... (P18, local tourist)

However, other ethical practices such as ethical purchasing behaviour and slow and sustainable consumption practices were not mentioned by the respondents.

Finally, from the **economic** point of view many supply side representatives linked slow tourism with longer stays and hence more spending.

Of course, from the economic aspect, we would like it [if their stay] would be longer, that they [tourists] would stay here longer, spend more money and so on (P02, DMO representative).

Their [LTDA] economic aim as far as I understand it is to increase the length of stay in Latvia (P03, DMO representative).

Of course, this slow travel is in accordance with the economic objectives (P05, DMO representative).

In addition, the economic aspect of slow tourism was highlighted by acknowledging that slow tourism involves paying fair prices which are often higher due to the use of local resources.

Maybe the tours are more expensive than mass tourism excursions but the clients are such [people] who are ready to pay more in order to see more than in a mass event (P08, private business).

Now we have the movement to use everything 'local'. For instance, cafes buy their ingredients not from RIMI [a supermarket chain] but from locals. Of course, it is more difficult, it is more labour-intensive and also the costs are higher (P32, DMO representative).

4.1.8 Appreciating local

One of the themes that emerged during the data analysis was linking slow tourism with the appreciation of 'local', i.e. recognizing that spending holidays in one's own country and visiting local attractions can be as interesting and rewarding as going abroad. As the respondents noted, tourists can build their overall experience by enjoying small things.

Here we have many small things that are interesting in a way, that allow you to taste our nature, culture or traditions and discover Latvia in such a way (P04, DMO representative).

Our local tourism promotional activities [...] they are also based on the same values, the same principles that it is not always necessary to run, to go and search for the big and the beautiful; that the beautiful and interesting is often right next to you... Therefore, the aim of our local tourism campaign was to talk about a change of attitude towards travelling [locally] without saying directly 'slow travel' but actually talking about that through values, attitude and well-presented information (P05, DMO representative).

Several respondents also noted that locals do not appreciate local values and resources and consider that Latvia is not attractive as a tourist destination. Changing the attitudes of locals about travelling locally is an important component of slow tourism.

There is a stereotype that there is nothing to see in Latvia or nothing to do (P18, local tourist).

In my opinion, we Latvians, with this rushing lifestyle, trying to catch Europe, have often lost. We do not feel this "Best enjoyed slowly", this value that we have. And maybe that is why this slogan, which is a brilliant slogan, is so valuable for Latvia. We do not appreciate it ourselves (P26, DMO representative).

I meet so many [local] people who don't know anything in Latvia. They have travelled around the whole world but in Latvia – 'there is nothing to see!' They have an opinion – there is nothing to see. There is no Eiffel Tower, no Buddhist temples... there is nothing to see! (P33, DMO representative)

Similarly, service providers do not always recognize that they can offer something valuable to the tourists.

Again, the problem is that we do not appreciate what is next to us, what our everyday life is. I go into a rural pub and ask – 'do you have Latvian dishes?' 'No, we don't have Latvian dishes'.

Then we take the menu, go through it, and realize that around 90% of the dishes that they have can be attributed to Latvian dishes (P19, local tourist).

Indeed, local communities and businesses are very often not aware of the fact that a part of what their everyday life is can add value and enrich the experience of tourists (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2010).

A few respondents suggested that slow tourism would not appeal to locals and especially for the people from the countryside who already live in this environment, who are used to it and who take it for granted. Therefore foreigners, especially from Western European countries, are more likely to appreciate it.

Without looking at any statistical data but based only on my own experience I can tell that it [slow tourism] would appeal more to foreigners. There is a difference, you see. We are already in this environment and especially those living in countryside... [...] They have it already and they don't appreciate it (P06, local tourist).

Campsites are very popular in Germany, Netherlands, France. [...] They relax in nature. They relax and enjoy the contact with ground, with nature in general in such a way, by merging. In Latvia of course, these traditions are just developing, these campsite movements, because every Latvian has a piece of land and every Latvian has countryside. We have lots of land and few people. That is why we do not enjoy it yet, this environment (P29, DMO representative).

Choosing domestic holidays over international ones is usually associated with the consequences of global economic recession (Papatheodorou, Rosselló, & Xiao, 2010): that is, people have less disposable income to spend on leisure activities and the cost of going abroad has increased in relative terms. Besides, slow tourism is sometimes linked with the concept of the 'staycation' which refers to vacationing at home (Dodds, 2012; Germann Molz, 2009). However, engagement in slow tourism as a way to appreciate local tourism resources has not been emphasized in the context of slow tourism. Yet, it is an important aspect of slow tourism – slow tourism is about appreciating the local.

4.1.9 Slow tourism as a repeat visit

Another theme that emerged from the interviews with the supply side participants was linking slow tourism with a second visit or a repeat visit to a destination.

This type of tourism could be as a next trip. At least, I see it like that. For example, a foreigner has come here for a short break in Riga. He might have also visited Sigulda or Jūrmala. [...] Very good! But he has done this short run around. He has done the Old Town, Open-air museum, Art Nouveau, Turaida, Rundāle Palace, Jūrmala. Then the next step could be that when arrives next time, he chooses to stay not in Riga but in Jūrmala, Sigulda or Tukums. Then he can deepen his experience. If we look at the target audience, then those who run everywhere – it is possible to change their way of thinking and the second trip could be like this. In the case of local tourists, this is also the second trip. Everybody rushes to the wine celebration in Sabile. They have seen nice things, they have seen a rodel track [a rodel track is like a downhill bobsleigh track with riders using a sledge on rubber wheels] but didn't have time to visit it... Then they return for the second time (P03, DMO representative).

Of course, maybe for the first time you need some... If you arrive here from somewhere, then you will run around quickly and when you come... Because we see that there are tourists from abroad who return. Then they take longer to explore (P32, DMO representative).

Slow tourism as a repeat visit has received limited consideration in the academic literature.

4.2 Slow tourist concept

4.2.1 Characteristics of slow tourists

One of the objectives of this study was to identify the characteristics of slow tourists in Latvia. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the focus was on more general characteristics and not on the socio-demographic characteristics of people engaging in slow tourism.

As already discussed slow tourism is the opposite of mass tourism and consequently can be attributed to individual tourism. Slow tourism might not suit everyone and a few respondents pointed out that slow tourism is more likely to attract experienced tourists.

It is necessary for a person to go through different phases of travelling because you try out different ways of travelling before you get to this slow [way]. It is unlikely that you can start with slow travel. It is more for people who are mature in their thinking and perception. I assume that there are tourists who will never go outside resorts, from this kind of travelling, from top destinations. And then there are tourists who eventually understand that it is possible to get a different type of satisfaction while travelling (P04, DMO representative).

A big part of tourists are what we call experienced tourists who see value in the process of travelling, not the result. [...] Someone who has seen a lot in his life, he, as I say, wants to taste that herring in the 47th way somehow. Then he looks for such opportunities and gets satisfaction from that. These are such collectors (P05, DMO representative).

For people, it gets more important with age, this slow [way]. It is not because they are getting weaker; it has nothing to do with that but more with the way of thinking and perception that you have worked hard all your life and at some point you realize – ‘but I also want to enjoy life!’ I think that a person suddenly realizes that life is not about rushing, that life is about enjoying (P25, DMO representative).

The notion that slow tourism would be appealing to people who are educated and well-travelled is also acknowledged in the literature (Heitmann et al., 2011). Such experienced tourists are sometimes also called ‘mature’ tourists. Tourist maturity – at society level – is

influenced by peoples' cultural attitudes in addition to the individual income level and education (Parrinello, 1993, p. 241). While such qualities are usually associated with older tourists, relatively young tourists can also be 'mature'. One of the respondents – a foreign tourist – was an undergraduate student at a university at the time of the interview.

The respondents also noted that slow tourists do not require luxury but a decent level of comfort.

[I]f they had chosen me as a small agency to show them the city, then they chose everything else accordingly. [...] They are not ones who demand luxurious service and look for the best room in the hotel but they want convenience, comfort and to see the place with full help, if you can say so (P08, private sector).

Who are these people who travel here in Latvia? These are people who have [financial] means, and if they have [financial] means, they have a corresponding standard of living. If he goes somewhere, he can walk through mud or something but after that he needs comfort – a shower, accommodation... and the rest... (P15, DMO representative)

Most of the respondents suggested that slow tourism is practiced by groups of friends and families with children.

If it is a family with small children, then this recreation more or less is slower and longer; [they] don't just run through, look quickly and run away. They are also more likely to participate and learn something new (P02, DMO representative).

The target audiences could be different. In my opinion, these could be families with children and the age of children is not that important... if the [visitor] offering is adequate. Another option [could be] groups of friends, from two people to two to three cars, who enjoy spending time together (P03, DMO representative).

These are mostly individual tourists. Mostly these are [local] families, families with children or friends. Likewise with foreigners, there are married couples: with children, without children (P10, DMO representative).

Families with small children by their nature travel in a much slower way. In addition, they are more likely to take part and get involved in different activities and more willing to learn something new. Besides, the literature shows that families with children tend to

substitute international holidays for domestic ones (Davison & Ryley, 2016). Hence, families with children – especially local ones – could be considered as a viable market for slow tourism. Practising slow tourism as a family can also have a positive impact on facilitating such tourism in the future:

Slow tourism should be taught in the family (P33, DMO representative).

However, not everybody agreed that families with children are compatible with slow tourism.

A screaming child is one of the threats for people who are these slow tourists; they are in fact this silver age category. Yes, not all of them [children] would be nasty but they [tourists] have raised their children, they have gone away for a holiday, they haven't gone to Thailand or any other exotic destination with their children. They have come to the Baltics, to a tranquil, slow meditative destination and they don't want to face any alerts, any kind of stress (P12, DMO representative).

It should be noted that this particular DMO representative links slow tourism with silver age tourists from abroad, mainly Western-European countries. A few other respondents also considered older people or seniors as a target segment for slow tourism; again, mostly from wealthier European countries.

I imagine slow tourists as seniors. It is very stereotypical. [...] Or close to retirement who are relatively wealthy... Who have seen a lot in their lives and maybe they want to explore a particular region or a city (P07, local tourist).

These are definitely foreigners, so-called seniors (P32, DMO representative).

I think that this type of tourism, from what I have observed here working in tourism, is more for older, senior tourists (P36, DMO representative).

It is debatable whether the term 'slow tourist' can be a constant identity and whether people who have engaged in slow tourism at some point in their lives or during some trips are going to travel in such a way in the future.

And I can say – yes, in this case, spending two weeks in the mountains, we were slow tourists. Similarly also in Latvia, in the moment when a person puts a bag

either on a bicycle or his shoulders he in fact becomes a slow tourist. When you asked me whether I am such a tourist – I am more than I am not (P19, local tourist).

This study shows that slow tourists are not a homogeneous segment. In fact, diversity exists within the slow tourist category which is in line with studies in other tourist segments as in the case of ecotourists (Acott, Trobe, & Howard, 1998), cultural tourists (McKercher, 2002), individual mass tourists (Wickens, 2002) and backpackers (Uriely et al., 2002). For example, using the attitude domains of ecotourists together with an environmental assessment of their tourist activity, Acott et al. (1998) provide a conceptual framework to differentiate between 'deep' and 'shallow' ecotourists plotting them on a deep and shallow axis. While the authors discuss some philosophical issues behind 'deep' ecotourism, they do not, however, provide criteria to identify it. Similarly, Deng and Li (2015, p. 256) acknowledge that "ecotourism or ecotourists are not homogeneous" and that "the ideal type of ecotourism/ecotourists for a destination rarely exists." The authors note that "in reality, ecotourism or ecotourists exist as a spectrum or continuum within which many forms of ecotourism or ecotourists are acceptable" (ibid., p. 256).

Even in the case of cultural tourists it is not possible to talk about a homogeneous market segment since different types of cultural tourists exist. For instance McKercher (2002) groups cultural tourists into categories of purposeful, sightseeing, casual, incidental and serendipitous depending on two dimensions of centrality: 1) the importance of a cultural motive to visit a destination and 2) the depth of cultural experience. According to the author, only around 12% of all cultural tourists are purposeful or 'deep' cultural tourists and cultural tourism is an ancillary activity for the majority of cultural tourists; hence, cultural tourism is a small niche market (ibid.). Furthermore, a number of authors have acknowledged that subgroups or subtypes exist within broader tourist categories. For instance, the study of Wickens (2002, p. 849) among individual mass tourists in Chalkidiki, Greece – also known as Halkidiki – shows that they have "a highly diversified pattern of interests and activities" and therefore can be further classified into five micro-types. Similarly, even within relatively distinctive antinomian tourists "there are subtypes worth exploring" (Andriotis, 2012, p. 55).

Ideal types of tourists rarely exist. In fact, tourism typologies do not take into account the realities of the wider social setting (Sharpley, 1994). As discussed earlier, for one tourist the whole trip is slow while for the other only one part of it could be slow. Yet, at the same time it can be argued that both tourists have engaged in slow tourism. This can be linked with the idea of ‘fuzziness’ – there is no sharply focused definition of the concept; full members and partial members of the group can be included (E. Cohen, 1974).

4.2.2 Slow tourist label

As the data shows, slow tourism is and can be performed by people from different ages and genders and at different family life-cycle stages. However, they do not call themselves ‘slow tourists’. In fact, people consciously engage in slow tourism practices but without labelling themselves or their practices in any way.

[Y]ou don’t call yourself a slow tourist although in reality you are, but you just don’t know that you are in that category. Or you make a [tourism] product that you sell to a person without putting it in any category. We sometimes do things unconsciously of them [categories] (P04, DMO representative).

In addition, it was mentioned that a travel identity can change and one person can engage in different types of tourism during one trip.

Of course, they don’t label themselves as eco, slow, nature or active [tourists]. They probably don’t label themselves at all. Besides, one day they climb mountains, the second day they go out in boats, the third day they participate in rogaining [a form of orienteering] and the fourth day they go and have a tasty meal somewhere. Every time we can put them in some definitional frame or other but they don’t care about that (P19, local tourist).

While there are doubts as to whether people who practice slow tourism without recognizing or adopting the label can be called ‘slow tourists’ (Guiver & McGrath, 2016), the research provides evidence that in reality the vast majority of tourists engaging in slow tourism do not recognize the label or adopt it. However, they recognize the principles of slow tourism.

Very often, when we explained to somebody what slow travel is, the reaction from people was – ‘oh, but that’s exactly how I travel! Then I am a slow traveller!’ They do not really think about that; they do not identify themselves as slow travellers. But when you explain what it is, then – ‘yes, that’s the way I like to travel!’ (P08, private sector)

One of the reasons is the lack of knowledge of what the ‘slow tourist’ label stands for. Another reason is that the term ‘slow tourism’ or its Latvian equivalent is unknown to most of the tourists.

4.2.3 Motivation for slow tourism

4.2.3.1 Extrinsic push motivations

Escaping daily life

One of the main reasons to engage in slow tourism that both the supply and demand side representatives mentioned was escape – from stressful work and daily life, from the urban environment, from information overload and from the fast tempo of life. Escape was the most popular answer among the supply side representatives.

Maybe it is this fast, hurried time, Internet, information overload... And when one travels, they just want to do it slowly and sometimes even leave the phone at home, maybe put in a different sim card just to have communications, and that is why they will travel slowly (P15, DMO representative).

I think that the age [that we are living in] is such that technologies are developing rapidly, there are so many offerings, temptations - temptations from bigger cities - that people get tired. People get tired of crowds, of noise, and this offering [slow tourism] is what we might call recreation or relaxation or regeneration. This is what makes people relax more slowly and think it over (P29, DMO representative).

Similarly, although to a lesser extent, the demand side representatives also mentioned escape from their daily environment and willingness to change the tempo of life as a reason to engage in slow tourism.

In summer, during school time you are chilling for three months without knowing what date or which month it is. You are not interested in anything, just grooving. Yes, I wanted to get this feeling back once again, when you get a different regime in your life. And this regime is walking. You walk for 8 hours a day; it is your working day. The only thing that you have to think about is what you will eat and where you will sleep (P09, local tourist).

The rest [of my holidays] I take during Oktoberfest (P24, foreign tourist).

Slow travel allows not only the tempo of life to change but also the daily habits.

I noticed that during these two weeks I had abandoned, I had no interest in social media. I didn't check it and didn't communicate with anybody. [...]...it just moved away from me as inessential. Usually, I use social media quite a lot. I am socializing and I know what happens in my friends' lives. But at that point I knew nothing and I didn't miss it either (P01, local tourist).

Escape is one of the core reasons people engage in tourism (S. Cohen, 2010) and is not specific to slow tourism. In fact, tourism as an escape from urban life was already identified by Boorstin (1962). In the context of slow tourism, a few authors have identified escape as one of the motivations (Dickinson et al., 2011; Oh et al., 2014; Robbins & Cho, 2012).

Yet, it is possible to argue that escape from the side-effects of modern society – the speed, fast tempo of life, stress and urbanization – are specific motivators for slow tourism. Since escape from daily life implies that tourism is different from everyday life (E. Cohen, 1979), ordinary or everyday life should be a starting point for studying motivation (Parrinello, 1993), i.e. the ordinary world provides the push for the motivation to travel. This is also supported by Sharpley (1994, p. 111) who argues, looking from the structural point of view, that “society itself determines, arguably, the ultimate motivation for tourism.” Hence, the role of modern society itself as a contributor to slow tourism should not be overlooked.

Extending daily life

However, the demand side representatives also mentioned how their daily activities have informed their activities while travelling.

[Travelling is an opportunity] to see what is going on in our small country, what people do. It is a kind of reality check actually because you cannot manage new projects or generate new ideas [...] You cannot be competitive in your work duties if you don't know what is going on in the territory, how people live, where the problems lie, what one nature park looks like, or another, or a lake, or what infrastructure there is... You cannot read that in documents, you can only learn it by being there, in the territory. For me, it [travelling] is related with being able to do my work duties (P18, local tourist).

Oh, I haven't told you about the puppet theatre! Last Saturday and Sunday we went to see the puppet theatre. There were two Saturdays, this Saturday as well, but also last Saturday and Sunday we went to two puppet theatre shows. We didn't understand a word but we wanted to see them. [...] We are interested in puppet theatre, we say "figuren theatre," because we are interested in puppet theatre plays. We have worked in culture events ourselves, we have been puppet players (actors) ourselves. We have just seen some plays in the East where the puppet theatre culture is very developed, in Budapest or Riga, Prague and so on. There are very many interesting puppet theatres. We have been to many puppet theatres in Germany. This is something special for me. So we have done it three times [in Riga] (P21, foreign tourist).

The literature acknowledges that the distinction between tourism experiences and everyday life can be blurred. Lash and Urry (1994) observed there is a 'de-differentiation' of tourism from leisure, culture, sports and hobbies, i.e. the distinction between experiences in everyday life and tourism is decreasing. The authors use the social practice of eating out as an example: decades ago it was associated with being on holiday whereas nowadays it is a part of everyday life.

As both the above quotations show, slow tourism can also be regarded as similar to daily life or as an extension to daily life. In other words, the patterns of work and leisure of these tourists are rather similar (Sharpley, 1994). Interestingly, this aspect was not emphasized by the supply side representatives.

4.2.3.2 Intrinsic push motivations

There were four intrinsic motivations mentioned both by the supply and demand side representatives: novelty, education or learning new things, reconnecting with oneself, other people or with nature, and being active. In addition, patriotism has been identified as a push for local tourists.

Both the supply and demand side representatives said that an important aspect of a slow holiday is to see and visit new places and get new experience. **Novelty** as a push in the context of slow tourism has also been identified in the literature (Oh et al., 2014; Robbins & Cho, 2012).

You go on holiday to explore, to get new experience (P02, DMO representative).

Everybody says that we want to see and get what we do not have in our daily lives [while travelling]. Isn't it so? (P06, local tourist)

I take a backpack and walk 20 km a day. I go sightseeing and see some places that I haven't seen in Latvia before (P09, local tourist).

I wanted to have a real change to my 'normal' life and decided to visit some unknown place in Europe (P24, foreign tourist).

Another reason for engaging in slow tourism that was mentioned by both the supply and demand side representatives was related to education or **learning new things**.

I think that people want to acquire new skills, new knowledge (P02, DMO representative).

So far we can see from experience that they [tourists] are keen to do everything that provides an opportunity to learn. This could be craftsmen, nature schools, routes; these could be various activities – rural goodies – involving horses, pigeons, bread-baking, pizza-making, etc. In my opinion, that's what slow tourism means (P14, DMO representative).

I love travelling because it broadens my horizons (P24, foreign tourist).

I associate it [slow tourism] with perfecting one's knowledge in some field (P33, DMO representative).

One respondent even described that he has come to Latvia with his wife to do a week-long 'Bildungsurlaub' – a German concept that in English would translate as a 'learning holiday'. These are courses that can be on various things such as learning a language, relaxation techniques, or as in this case, a course about the history and culture of a country.

There is no better way for us to make a vacation. We are not people who are lying on the beach enjoying the sun. [...] That's boring to us, lying, OK, 2 or 3 days. But for me it's not important to get brown skin or something. So it's much more interesting to... We do lots of culture while on vacations. We go often to cities like Amsterdam. We enjoy getting in contact with local people; you can learn much more from them (P21, foreign tourist).

Travelling for educational experience was once an essential aspect of the 'Grand Tour' (Pearce, 1982) and it can be seen as an important part of travelling nowadays, especially in the context of slow tourism. The learning aspect of slow tourism has been identified by several authors (Gibson et al., 2012; Heitmann et al., 2011).

Next, both the supply and demand side representatives identified a willingness to reconnect with oneself, other people and nature as an important motivator for slow tourism. **Reconnecting** as a motivator is directly linked with the extrinsic motivation of escaping daily life and other intrinsic motivators such as being active.

It is an unhurried way to be in contact with nature, in serious contact (P01, local tourist).

[Walking/hiking] means physical hardship. It is physically difficult because you carry all the stuff with you. But it's also extremely beautiful [scenery]. And these internal reflections... (P09, local tourist)

[Slow tourism is needed] for all the people who are exhausted by urban life. They lack – you can feel it very obviously – they lack that contact with nature. Even the scientists have proved, nobody needs convincing anymore, that people need contact with the earth, with nature in order to be healthy (P28, DMO representative).

This aspect could be linked partially with self-reflection (Oh et al., 2014) or making real and meaningful connections with people, places and environment (Caffyn, 2007).

Furthermore, both the demand and supply side representatives talked about the possibility of **being active** as an important part of their slow holidays.

In addition, if you walk or cycle – it is like stretching your legs, when you can burn some calories and do something good for your body, for your health (P01, local tourist).

[I travel] mostly to stretch my legs so that it is physical, so that there is some physical activity. [...] Being active – it is linked with a healthy lifestyle. Then yes, it is the reason (P18, local tourist).

Burning out is very, very typical nowadays. People burn out. That is why they need nature. That is why we have slow tourism. If he has been sitting in the office for long hours during the week, he has not had a chance to stretch his legs, to walk barefoot along the coast or, I don't know, walk on a cone trail or whatever, to take a cycle ride or to throw away the office clothes, to relax... but it is indispensable (P28, DMO representative).

Being active included not only physical activity in terms of physical exercise but also being present and taking part in various activities. A few authors have referred to this as engagement with people and places visited (Heitmann et al., 2011; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Markwell et al., 2012; Moore, 2012).

You can be present, see everything... [...] I think that it is great because of the above mentioned reasons – being present and [there is the] possibility to take part and see (P01, local tourist).

So far I would say that I was really lucky with many of my CouchSurfing experiences that people showed me how they live, what the typical food is in their culture or they showed me around the area. With some I even met friends of theirs and did stuff, went out for a night or something. I mean, in Riga too we did a lot of stuff in the evening, I think. We went to this CouchSurfing meeting and this dancing stuff. So that's really cool because you have another view on the place than if you are just staying in a hotel or a hostel, meet other tourists or travellers, not sure (P20, foreign tourist).

As such, slow tourism can be regarded as an active rather than a passive way of spending holiday time.

Finally, as discussed earlier, slow tourism is linked with appreciating the local culture, heritage, values or environment. **Patriotism** could be considered as a push factor for local tourists who want to have a sense of belonging to their own country.

However, a number of authors (De Salvo et al., 2013; Dickinson et al., 2011; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) suggest that environmental responsibility or environmental consciousness has not been identified as a push for engaging in slow tourism.

It is acknowledged that travel motivations are complex and multivariate (Holden, 2008). For instance, the study of Jamrozy and Uysal (1994) of German tourists overseas revealed that two major motivations were escape and a search for novelty and experience. Similarly, the motivations to engage in slow tourism can be multivariate and more than one motive can be present during the same trip.

4.2.3.3 Pull factors

The respondents mentioned a broad range of pull factors such as discovering new culture and places, visiting interesting places, attending cultural events, visiting friends and relatives and recommendations. These are general pull factors and are not specific for slow tourism. It was also uncertain whether any pull factors for slow tourism would exist due to the assumption that people can engage in slow tourism anywhere, not only in a particular place or by doing particular things.

However, a few commonalities among the pull factors were identified. Many respondents associated slow tourism with nature-based tourism. In addition, a stressful daily life and being tired of the urban environment were identified as reasons for engaging in slow tourism and consequently many participants named **nature** as one of the most important pull factors.

Talking about nature tourism, which can be a very important element in slow travel... (P05, DMO representative)

I always need to have an interest in either the nature or novelty of the place (P24, foreign tourist).

While physical factors such as an absence of stress and noise have been suggested as pull factors for slow tourism (Heitmann et al., 2011), the importance of nature as a pull factor for slow tourism has been overlooked in the literature.

As discussed earlier, appreciating the 'local' has been identified as an important aspect in slow tourism. While **patriotism** has been mentioned as a push factor for slow tourism, it is also included as a pull factor, as some factors can work as both push and pull. Hence, one of the pull factors in slow tourism that respondents mentioned was visiting their own region and exploring the nearby vicinity.

He goes to Crete but he hasn't been around his own region! Now increasingly more people recognize that and start with [exploring] their own [region]. They take their small, stress-free break, even if they go there for half a day. They just go to town G... [...] It is half a day but they have seen it and they know it. [That gives them] It is a sense of belonging, some kind of patriotism. [That's] It is very good (P14, DMO representative).

So far, patriotism as a pull factor has been discussed in relation to the Caribbean diaspora and returning nationals who could potentially be slow tourists there due to sentimental and patriotic reasons (Conway & Timms, 2010) but it has not been considered in relation to local tourists.

It should be noted that while these are important pull factors, they might not be equally important for everyone. Since motives are multi-dimensional, more than one motive can influence the destination choice (Crompton, 1979). Other studies have shown that tourists are willing to experience several attributes of the destination (e.g. cultural and natural attributes, shopping or nightlife) during their trip and to have more than one experience at the destination or during their holiday (Pyo, Mihalik, & Uysal, 1989).

In addition, tourists could be motivated to choose a particular destination not because of its specific qualities but "by the broad suitability of the destination to fulfil their particular psychological needs" (Pearce, 1982, p. 65). Hence, destination marketers are advised to emphasize these needs and address the push factors in destination

promotion. Similarly, other authors propose basing marketing strategies on tourist motivations in combination with the attributes of a destination (Pyo et al., 1989).

4.2.4 Slow tourist mobilities

Mobilities or the choice of transport to and from the destination as well as while at the destination is one of the biggest areas of discussion in slow tourism. Slow tourism is often associated with low carbon modes of transport (Dickinson et al., 2011; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012) that includes trains, coaches, and bicycles as well as walking, but excludes aeroplanes and cars. At the same time, there is also an opinion that any mode of transport can be used in slow tourism (Conway & Timms, 2012).

Local tourists are flexible in using different means of transports for travelling around Latvia, depending on convenience, availability of public transport and other aspects. There is no one particular pattern of getting from one place to another.

We went to Liepaja by car. It was far away. [We] usually go on hiking trips by public transport. We find a train or a bus that goes there. [...] There isn't one particular model, there are different patterns. I like to travel by train. If a city is accessible by train, it is easy to transport a bicycle as well. I like that (P01, local tourist).

We go by car, we have bicycles with us or... [...] It is more convenient, so car plus feet or bicycle or boat would be the most traditional [way of travelling] (P18, local tourist).

Similarly, different means of transport are used by local tourists when travelling abroad. Flying is the most popular means of transport to get to a destination.

Recently we fly and then rent a bicycle at the destination (P18, local tourist).

Everything depends on what my goal is and what I want to achieve. If the country is relatively small, then it might be enough to go hiking in Tajikistan's mountains. If I went to Kazakhstan, I don't know whether I would be hitch-hiking; more likely I would rent a car. For going through the United States I would use a car and

nothing else. It depends where you are going and what the purpose of your journey is in general (P19, local tourist).

The majority of foreign tourists acknowledge that they have come to Latvia by aeroplane.

It depends. It depends on where I go. When I have nine days to go to Riga, there's no question for me that I have to take a plane. [...] [Otherwise] I have two days driving, and then I'm tired and that makes no sense. There are no good trains, there are no really good buses. [...] So it depends. But usually I take public transport. I take the car when we go to places where there is no train or it's hard to get to (P21, foreign tourist).

I arrived and left by plane which is the easiest way within a 14-day holiday (P24, foreign tourist).

There was only one respondent who had deliberately chosen not to take a plane to come to Latvia and could be considered as a 'hard slow traveller' according to Dickinson et al. (2011). It has to be noted though that this respondent has spent around six weeks travelling around various places, including Latvia.

I went to New Zealand before and to some other places and [I was] always flying and always going so far. And I really liked the idea [...] to travel overland, see what is in between and to have a kind of connection to the places, not just going to the plane and off and around the world or somewhere. [...] To see Latvia, Lithuania and some other places. To see how it all – [how] the landscape develops and how people change and stuff. [...] I just realized yesterday actually that it is really, really different to travel overland and to see, to have this connection to the place where you are, you know? ... You just see what is in between these places. So now I really have the feeling, OK, somewhere there is Estonia and Latvia, and Lithuania and I have been there but it is connected to where I am now because I went all the way [across it] by bus or car or train. So somehow, I don't know... It is a different feeling than if you go by plane and come out in a place and you could have been to Mars or something... because it's really far away and you don't have this connection in your head and [that] feeling... (P20, foreign tourist)

Despite the fact that only a minority of foreign tourists had chosen public transport to get to Latvia, public transport was used for going around the destination, e.g. going around Latvia or going around all three Baltic countries.

On Wednesday we went to Jūrmala on different types of public transport. On the way there we took a train from the Central station. We came back [...] on small minibuses. These are the small buses that go every 20 minutes (P21, foreign tourist).

Travelling to Riga and then to Vilnius, we would normally have taken a train. I like trains and take them whenever I can for short (less than a day) trips. They can be slow or fast and usually have stations located in or near the centre of the cities. But there were no direct trains in either case, so we decided to take a bus (P23, foreign tourist).

Travelling by public transport was even suggested as an attraction in its own right. A few participants acknowledged that taking public transport contributed to their overall experience.

If you really want to see the local culture, then get on the electric train and go to Jūrmala. Or take a bus (P08, private sector).

It sounds stupid but it made me feel a bit like a local, not to be a tourist going by plane and taking a taxi, but to be with other people. Or taking the train to some places and then there were all these people around just coming from the forest picking mushrooms or something (P20, foreign tourist).

We took the bus because there was no train from Riga to Vilnius. We didn't want to fly. When we travel to places we have never been to we like to see the countryside as much as possible (P23, foreign tourist).

While the benefits of using public transport were acknowledged both the local and foreign tourists noted that a particular mode of transport was chosen as a result of compromise.

[We went to Stockholm] by plane. We have also been there by ferry but I think that the cost and the time it takes [is too much] for the time I have to spend there. I get on [the ferry] at 5 pm and I am there at 10 am the next morning. Or I take a plane and I'm there within an hour and the price is exactly the same. And then I start to wonder. I regret the waste [of time]... (P09, local tourist)

If I am with my wife, we would have to take the car because she is a woman with a lot of clothing and she buys things. When she goes to Riga, she buys books and books and shirts, and everything. [...] When we go to the airport tomorrow, if I was by myself, I would take normal public transport. But my wife wants to take a taxi. So it's a compromise, you know (P21, foreign tourist).

The crucial factor is the cost of travel to and from the destination. Therefore, a comparison between car, bus, train, airplane and ferry and the duration of travel plays an important role (P37, foreign tourist).

When talking about the ways tourists reach their destinations, the answers of supply side representatives varied depending on the location of the destination and the availability of public transport. Many of the respondents said that the majority of tourists – both local and foreign – come in their private cars.

Usually people come with a car and drive from one place to another (P10, DMO representative).

Usually it's a car. Some use bicycles and public transport but it is a very tiny fraction. [...] Usually it is a car. [...] It gives you freedom in terms of time because you can go when you want and not when the bus goes. And sometimes it might not go at all, like tends to happen here... (P15, DMO representative)

It was acknowledged that it is challenging to go around Latvia using public transport and that public transport can be used only to reach certain destinations.

It is difficult to travel around Latvia using public transport. The only thing that remains is to use a car or rent a bicycle. [...] Using public transport we can really only advise tourists from Riga to visit Riga to Sigulda or Riga-Jūrmala. All the public transport in Latvia more or less goes through Riga, unfortunately. If we look at the regions, then in order to move between towns within regions it's often very difficult. Or it takes lots of time and planning in order to plan the route adequately. It is a problem, this public transport system, which does not allow the easy planning of routes without wasting unnecessary time (P04, DMO representative).

Some supply side representatives said that tourists arrive at their destinations not only by car but also by using public transport. These destinations were relatively close to Riga and could be reached easily by public transport.

It is convenient [to reach us] by train, by bus and also by using your own transport. [If one wants to travel] further, then it would be more convenient to use your own transport. Or a bicycle (P27, DMO representative).

Many people come, we feel that, in private cars. Then there is a fraction who come by public transport, on a bus from Riga. You cannot get here any other way. We do not have the train here (P32, DMO representative).

A few supply side representatives noted that some tourists – especially foreign ones – reach their destinations by bicycle. Proportionately more cyclists were found in destinations near the Baltic Sea as many cyclists were visiting there as a part of a wider trip around the Baltic Sea coast.

I think that slow tourism is also when, for example, a person from New Zealand comes on a bicycle and goes around the Baltic Sea spending six months [doing it]. Then that is slow tourism. [...] People very often choose to go around the Baltic Sea on bicycle (P33, DMO representative).

These are cycling tourists – in small groups, even individually, 2-3 people – who, yes, choose cycling routes and go through the whole of Latvia along the sea coast, and that is how they get here (P36, DMO representative).

Cycling tourists, individually or in small groups, could be considered as a specific segment of slow tourists. Again, the link between cycling tourism and slow tourism has been made by Fullagar (2012).

A few respondents, however, indicated that a choice of particular mode of transport to get to the destination would depend on how many people are going.

I think that it only makes sense to choose public transport if it is more convenient and cheaper. [...] For one person it's cheaper to take a bus. For five people I guess it is more beneficial to go with a car (P17, DMO representative).

As the data shows, both fast and slow modes of travel are used in the context of slow tourism in Latvia. These results are in line with those of previous studies (Oh et al., 2014). Planes are often used for the journey to Latvia and cars are popular for going around Latvia. This study also shows that the choice of transport is based on convenience or

personal preference and not on environmental considerations. However, a combination of different modes of travel and means of transport is also a characteristic of slow tourism in Latvia.

4.2.5 Slow mindset

Attitudinal slowness or a slow mindset has been identified in the literature as a particular way of thinking that distinguishes slow tourists from other types of tourists (Fullagar, 2012; Heitmann et al., 2011; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). A few respondents also referred to this aspect both directly and indirectly. For example, when describing slow tourists, rather than describing unique places visited by slow tourists, the participants described how slow tourists approached the travel.

I am sure in the time I had I could have seen more. But I decided not to jump like a tourist from one highlight to the next. I had time to think about what I went to see or to visit special spots several times (P24, foreign tourist).

[In order for it to be called slow travel], there should be a mood, of course – a state of mind not to run everywhere (P29, DMO representative).

Well, one tourism object or place can be explored in different ways. It depends on the person (P32, DMO representative).

As discussed earlier, slow tourism is associated with not rushing around in order to see all the highlights. The willingness to resist the conventional norms of the tourism industry that tourists should see as much as possible while on holiday illustrates the “resistive and subversive roles” that tourists increasingly undertake (McCabe, 2015, p. 26).

As Sharpley (1994, p. 81) has discussed, certain types of categories of tourists exist that have “more to do with the values of society as a whole than with the behaviour or lifestyle of [an] individual tourist.” Following this idea, slow tourism can be considered as a phenomenon which is deeply embedded in modern society, and slow tourists could be

considered as a tourist type which reflects broader societal attitudes towards tourism (ibid.).

This study argues that the mindset of tourists is the key criteria for identifying slow tourists. The mindset is person-specific, whereas the actual behaviour and practices on holiday can be country-specific and a response to the tourism systems available in that particular place, and so mainly determined and constrained by external factors.

4.3 Slow philosophy in destination management

4.3.1 Constraints for slow tourism

One of the main themes identified from the data was related to the constraints on slow tourism. The respondents talked about different factors that currently hinder slow tourism and its development in Latvia.

4.3.1.1 Destination constraints

The first type of constraint for slow tourism was related to the general accessibility of the destination and movement around it. The respondents highlighted the availability and organization of **public transport** – both bus and train – as one of the most important barriers for slow tourism. This aspect was also discussed under the “slow tourist mobilities” section earlier.

This combination of public transport – it is possible to combine something but it is not [tourist] friendly. It is not easy (P03, DMO representative).

It is a very difficult process [to travel by public transport] nowadays. If there is a bus once a day going to some place and not coming back, then for foreigners... Forget the foreigners, even the locals don't understand how to get there! (P15, DMO representative)

Since all public transport traffic goes through Riga, people can be advised to travel from Riga to Sigulda, Jūrmala, or any other bigger city. However, it is complicated to travel between towns and cities within the regions since it takes lots of time and energy for planning. Besides, it is difficult to reach many visitor attractions using public transport – even top ones such as Rundāle Palace.

It is difficult to get to Rundāle [Palace]. If I understand correctly, then the only way for a tourist to get to Rundāle [Palace] is on an organized tour. There are options – a one-day excursion to Rundāle [Palace]. I think that the options [to get there] with public transport are not great (P17, DMO representative).

There, where you want to get, where there is something special, usually [public transport] does not go or [is] limited. I don't have that much time to adjust and be dependent on it. The public transport is bad, from my experience. That's how it is, and unfortunately it does not encourage mobility (P18, local tourist).

Deficiencies in the public transport system can be regarded as one of the core constraints when encouraging people to travel around Latvia by bus or train, promoting a more environmentally friendly way of travelling as a consequence.

While cycling was mentioned as an alternative to public transport, the poor **cycling infrastructure** was mentioned as another barrier to slow tourism. There are few cycling paths and where they do exist, they are not comfortable for cyclists to use.

Most of the cycling paths that have been built [...] they have been built according to some technical project without thinking about the comfort of cyclists. [...] I would not recommend cycling tourists to use most of them. If an everyday cyclist can use it for going to work, then this infrastructure is not designed for a cycling tourist. [...] ramps and bottle-necks are not suitable for those who cycle with big bicycle bags (P07, local tourist).

Of course, there are young people who cycle; there are cycling tourists, there are foreign cycling tourists who come here. However, they have other problems here, especially the foreigners if they come here on bicycles. Our roads are not safe because there are no cycling paths along the roads and the traffic here is heavy, the intensity is high and it is not safe. This entire infrastructure in general, in my opinion, is not developed in Latvia. All these cycling services – [like] where to repair a bicycle if something happens, parking places for bicycles, we don't have enough of them... (P10, DMO representative)

Poor cycling infrastructure as a constraint for cycling has been acknowledged in the literature (Downward & Lumsdon, 2001). Finally, the poor quality of the general **road infrastructure** was suggested as a barrier for slow tourism.

[...] the quality of roads that we have. We had partners from Denmark visiting us. They said: 'It's madness! How come you have tourism here? You don't even have roads here!' These are things that are very hard, very difficult to influence (P12, DMO representative).

In order for a person to get [somewhere], they need a road, yes. In tourism, accessibility comes first and then tourism is subordinated to that (P25, DMO representative).

The availability of basic infrastructure such as roads and public transport is important not only for slow tourism but tourism in general. Building a prosperous tourism industry cannot rely solely on the destination being 'available' for tourism. It is acknowledged that supply-side factors such as natural endowments, technology and infrastructure play an important role in influencing international tourism flows (Zhang & Jensen, 2007) and accessibility of the destination has a positive impact on tourism flows (Marrocu & Paci, 2013).

4.3.1.2 Tourism service provider constraints

The second type of constraint for slow tourism was related to services and information provided by the tourism industry. Several participants have mentioned the lack of **cheap accommodation** as one of the main drawbacks for longer or more frequent trips in Latvia. A few respondents used walking the Santiago route as an example to compare accommodation prices in Latvia and abroad.

What is good about this Santiago route – the whole infrastructure there is adjusted for that. You know that after every 20 km or if there is a town, there will be one main albergue [low cost hostel], something like dormitory type of accommodation. If it is full or you don't like it, then most likely there will be another one in 5 km. You can count on that. And it costs very little, 5-6 Euros per person. There is a bed, you can take a shower, you can watch TV in a common room, there is a kitchen,

you can cook. You cannot get that in Latvia - it is lacking - because you get guest houses which are more expensive (P01, local tourist).

The Santiago way is a deliberately made route. [...] There, the whole system is designed. There are places that can accommodate 40 people. You pay 5 or 10 Euros for which you get a bed and a blanket and a pillow, sheets. That's all. You have a shower and a kitchen. You go to a shop, buy something, cook, get a shower and the next morning set off for the next 20, 30 or 40 kms. We do not have such infrastructure in Latvia. Can I go from guesthouse to guesthouse? Guesthouses in Latvia are not very cheap. It would cost a lot. And the route is not made for that, I have to use a dusty gravel path... I would say [these are more like] one-day paths in Latvia (P09, local tourist).

Furthermore, the respondents noted that the availability of **information** about individual service providers or tourism information in general causes barriers for slow tourism.

If you start planning yourself, I think you might be lucky and you will manage to combine [everything]. Often this information is fragmented. Possibly, [you might find] that some information is not in foreign languages. Possibly sometimes there is no information about prices or opening hours. In short, you will need lots of time and energy to plan such a trip "Best enjoyed slowly"... such slow tourism (P04, DMO representative).

I also think that this [tourism] information about Latvia is very fragmented taking into account that we are a relatively small country. If we try to divide all tourism information according to a hundred municipalities, then it is very difficult for somebody who is not local (P19, local tourist).

There is no doubt that information about tourism service providers is essential both for tourists and the service providers themselves. The importance of good information about the activities at a destination is also supported by the fact that tourists' plans regarding the on-site activities are subject to change (Stewart & Vogt, 1999). Yet the availability of very detailed information about the destination and its various visitor attractions might not actually encourage slow tourism but in fact hinder it. As a study among self-drive tourists shows, attempts to encourage them to visit less popular regions by regional promotion could actually increase their travel distance and also the time spent at that destination, because tourists would extend their itinerary by adding these destinations to

their list of main highlights instead of dropping some highlights and visiting the less popular region instead (Becken & Wilson, 2007).

Next, the respondents acknowledged that the lack of **co-operation** between service providers creates another barrier for slow tourism development.

Co-operation – it is very challenging here (P03, DMO representative).

[We Latvians are] all by ourselves. We don't know how to work together, we don't know how to live together and that is our biggest problem. If we could do [things] together, we could do a lot (P14, DMO representative).

The inability of service providers to co-operate among themselves creates difficulties to 'fill' the tourism brand with appropriate tourism products.

Finally, the respondents said that there is a lack of **offerings** to encourage longer stays – and hence contribute to slow tourism.

If, five and ten years ago, the important things were turnover, speed and volume, then now it has changed. Because the whole world has changed five years ago with [the 2008] crisis. People don't organize [corporate] sports games anymore. They don't organize corporate parties anymore. Weddings, bigger and smaller, are not organized that often. Speed and volume does not work anymore. Now there is a need [for service providers] to think slowly (P03, DMO representative).

[I would ask] the following question – do we have, and do we have enough, places [attractive to tourists] so that I would have enough offerings to choose from? Where I could spend [a little] longer, enjoy them slowly and get positive emotions. This would be a dilemma here [in Latvia] (P15, DMO representative).

The respondents also indicated that it might be relatively easy to find a good quality hotel and restaurant but it would be a problem to find things to do. Although there are some good quality tourism products, problems arise with the development of complex tourism products that require finding components of an equally high standard throughout the whole trip. It should be noted that complex slow tourism offerings are discussed separately in the one of the following sections.

4.3.1.3 Tourist constraints

The third type of constraint for slow tourism was related to tourists themselves. As one respondent noted, the biggest barrier to slow tourism is the personal **attitude** of tourists or their mindset.

I don't think that we [the destinations] lack something. It is in one's own head. Everything is available everywhere: you just have to choose according to your own needs (P25, DMO representative).

Some respondents related such attitude with **inertia** or a lack of initiative to do things.

I cannot say that they [locals] don't want [to engage in slow tourism]. I would say that they don't know that it is possible to do this and that here and there. That is one thing. The second thing is the inherent laziness or inertia of the Latvian. It is so nice to keep one's bottom on a sofa and not get up! But once you have got off the sofa, then it's cool! And if you have experienced this feeling once or twice, then the third time it is much easier to get your bottom up. Isn't that so?

When there are free days or a weekend, then there are several alternatives – either to spend them watching TV or go somewhere. I choose to go somewhere (P18, local tourist).

As one of the above quotes also shows, the tourists' **limited knowledge** regarding destinations, visitor attractions, activities and various possibilities about how to spend their leisure time is another constraint for slow tourism.

It is possible to observe that [people] don't know what there is in Latvia, where things are. Of course, [people know that] yes, there are cities and then there are popular [destinations] like Sigulda, Tērvete, such attractions. But there is also a lack of knowledge about Latvia among locals... among Latvia's citizens (P36, DMO representative).

Finally, the respondents acknowledged that the **purchasing power** of tourists creates barriers for slow tourism.

The purchasing power of our local tourists is not that high. Sometimes it's more ...psychologically... Foreign tourists can be divided in two categories. In one category there are those who want to know and are able to pay, psychologically.

Those [tourists] who have come to our country, they all are physically able to pay. But the question is – are they able to pay psychologically? It is not a problem for one part of them. We just feel that. Then there is another part for which it is an issue, that they will not pay. There's a different contingent. For instance, those in camper vans who travel around. They do not park in campsites; they park in other sites – by the train station, or somewhere else [where you don't have to pay to park overnight]... (P15, DMO representative)

While many authors have identified constraints for tourism in general, the constraints for slow tourism have not gained much attention in the literature so far apart from time and modal constraints (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). This study shows that there are various barriers to slow tourism that are related to destination, tourism service providers and tourists themselves which can be classified as structural and intrapersonal constraints (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991).

As discussed earlier, tourists want to experience different things during their holiday. There is a belief that “the essence of tourism is the visitor experience” (Ritchie, Tung, & Ritchie, 2011, p. 430). Destinations as ‘experience suppliers’ (Ryan, 1997) are expected to create an opportunity for tourists to engage in a variety of experiences. However, before unique experiences can be staged, the other three underlying levels should be reached: extracting the right commodities, making commercial goods and delivering excellent services (Mei, 2014). The prerequisites for staging unique experiences for tourism destination are having culture and nature as commodities or tourism resources, providing adequate tourism infrastructure such as destination facilities, transportation and hotels, and ensuring that service providers are delivering high service through host-guest encounters. These things have to be attained if slow tourism is to be developed in Latvia.

4.3.2 Role of storytelling

The ability of the service provider to tell stories that entertain, educate and give a better understanding of the place visited is an important component of slow tourism. The role of storytelling in facilitating slow tourism was emphasized by both the supply and demand side representatives.

[I]f you have a story, you will have slow travel. [...] He [the host] talks and he shows all this. The standard tourist who follows a guidebook would not see or hear anything like this. [...] These are the things that cannot be taught. How he does that, I don't know. But this is slow travel (P06, local tourist).

A number of research participants highlighted the importance of guides in storytelling. Although the importance of guides is well known in tourism and not specific to slow tourism, many respondents emphasized the role of guides in facilitating it. In fact, guides can contribute to slow tourism by encouraging longer stays in a particular place and enhancing the understanding of that place.

There [at the visitor attraction] is a very nice guide, a historian, who also writes guidebooks. [...] He explains everything so well that people sit with their mouths open. This is the added value, a story by a person like this (P10, DMO representative).

Take architecture, for example. We can look at it but very often there is a need for the story [behind it]. So there is a need for a guide. [...] If he [the tourist] just looks [at the building] – yes, he can see it. But if there is a story behind it and there is a discussion, then it becomes slow tourism. Because when I look at the building – how long will I do that for? 10 minutes? That's it. But if there is a story about how it was built, what were the ideas, what thoughts the architect had, what were the intended functions [of the building], then he can engage in a conversation with a guide for an hour or two (P15, DMO representative).

In the nature-watching process a very important element – it could be even the most important element - is a person who comes with you; who shows, tells, interprets, explains. I would say that this story is more important than what's happening around you. If you have a good story-teller, a good person, a good guide, a good nature-interpreter, then accordingly the product will be very, very good (P19, local tourist).

Some research participants emphasized the importance of a story which accompanies a dish, a building or a town.

If we had this dish with a story behind it, we could use it as something that the locals could recommend... (P03, DMO representative)

I like the fact that this pub is in an historic building and there is a whole story behind it. [...] At the same time, there are other pubs located in historic buildings... [...] They don't make anything of it; these service providers don't use it to their advantage! It is possible to make such a good story out of it... (P28, DMO representative)

A few participants described how TICs are working with local service providers to help tourists learn more about the city through the eyes of locals.

We are currently working so that waiters in cafes and receptionists in hotels are competent and can advise people not only about their own place, but also about other attractions and to show these places on a map. So we delegate part of our functions to service providers. They are a big support for us (P02, DMO representative).

The respondents also gave some examples of how the process of storytelling can contribute not only to slow tourism but also to encourage word-of-mouth in peer-to-peer communities.

It is another type or way of travelling where tourists are encouraged to visit more attractions and spend more time in the territory. If instead of the usual fridge magnet or postcard he is given this object [...] and there is a story behind it [to remind him] of what he has experienced there, then when he returns from his trip, he can use this object to recall and tell [stories] about where he has been and what he has done (P12, DMO representative).

This is a practical example of how marketers have created tools to encourage tourists to share their experience and tell stories. Tourists use objects to recall their experiences in stories to their friends and family members. This example shows how storytelling can be used to encourage customer co-creative behaviour (Pera, 2014).

The importance of storytelling in tourism has been emphasized in the literature (Bryon, 2012; Moscardo, 2010; Mossberg, 2008; N. Scott et al., 2009). Stories can be told not only by tour guides (Bryon, 2012) but also by service personnel who can facilitate consumer immersion into experiential context (Carù & Cova, 2007) and be a mediator between the ordinary and the non-ordinary (Mossberg, 2008).

It is suggested that a theme “automatically turns a service into an experience” (Gilmore & Pine, 2002, p. 92). Moreover, storytelling is considered to be one of the key methods to stage unique experiences (Mei, 2014). In addition, storytelling can contribute to the entertainment dimension (Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011) which is one of the four experience dimensions according to Pine and Gilmore (1998). It is even argued that entertainment is becoming a key differentiator in the economy and that products without an entertainment component will not survive in the future (Wolf, 1999). Hence, a story can be used to diversify experiences.

In the context of tourism, a theme or a story about the destination can give tourists a more meaningful experience and at the same time can be used to promote tourism products (Mossberg, 2007). Moscardo (2010) suggests that stories about destinations that exist in various parts of the tourism system come from the representations of places and people and can be used to attract tourists as well as shaping tourist experiences by providing contextual meaning for them.

While slow tourism experiences are created by tourists themselves, tourism service providers and DMOs can provide prerequisites that facilitate such experiences. One of the options is to use stories and storytellers for that. Although slow tourism is not about entertainment *per se*, stories can make it more entertaining and at the same time slow down tourists. In addition, there is a need for a shared story that will enhance the Latvian tourism brand. Currently everybody has their own story to tell, i.e. different stories are told at national and regional level. But the most successful places have a simple story that can be told and shared by all stakeholders.

4.3.3 Slow tourism offerings

An interesting theme that emerged from the interviews was related to slow tourism offerings, i.e. the actual and potential products that are compatible with slow tourism. The role of micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs in encouraging slow tourism has been acknowledged by Groenendaal (2012) who suggests that a non-commercial and personal approach is the best way for both the supply and demand side. Her study was conducted

among Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs who have emigrated from one wealthy EU country to another; namely, France. The role of more commercial tourism enterprises in facilitating slow tourism has not been widely discussed in the literature. This study provides some insights into the development of slow tourism offerings and discusses their economic viability.

4.3.3.1 Developing slow tourism offerings

Some research participants described how they have planned and organized their slow tourism trips themselves without choosing any particular tourism offering that could be considered as a 'slow tourism' offering. A few respondents emphasized the role of local service providers in creating slow tourism offerings.

[I]t is the entrepreneur who has to provide this opportunity for slow travel (P06, local tourist).

[I]t is not that important what people call it; it is important that service providers offer slow tourism products (P08, private sector).

[S]low tourism cannot be static, especially from the point of view of the service provider. [...] As the hosts [the service providers] say, you have to think about what new [things] you can offer every year. If I have been there ten times, there has to be a reason for me to come the eleventh time (P19, local tourist).

A few respondents noted that some tourism places are inherently 'slow' and have an opportunity to develop slow tourism offerings. For instance, rural farmsteads offering countryside retreats have the potential to slow down tourists since they can not only look at things but also take part in various activities.

[I]f you can pop in the museum for a short time or into a church for 15 minutes, then these farmsteads are the ones which slow the tourist down (P19, local tourist).

Even a tourist who is not considered to be a slow tourist can be encouraged to engage in slow tourism at a particular place and time.

Others emphasized the role of the demand side in driving the development of slow tourism offerings.

Personally I have the impression that it [slow tourism] is not that much a producer-directed process as much as it is a consumer-directed process, since it is based on some kind of conviction or ideological platform (P05, DMO representative).

There was also an opinion that there is no need to develop specific slow tourism offerings because everybody in the countryside can offer slow tourism.

It's not that we would be thinking about it specifically, because in our rural region I think that we have only slow tourism. We can all offer it (P25, DMO representative).

4.3.3.2 Economic viability of slow tourism offerings

The respondents had mixed opinions about the type of offerings that could be compatible with slow tourism and consequently about their economic viability as well. A few respondents regarded slow tourism products as more sophisticated, exclusive, expensive and high-quality tourism offerings.

I think that it is difficult to talk about slow travel in its classical sense as it is known in other countries. [...] I think that our service providers are not ready for that. That's what I think. There is a lack of attitude, of service quality... (P04, DMO representative)

Regarding tourism products outside Riga, the product development is at a basic level; therefore it is necessary to develop the basics before we can start talking about slow travel products... (P05, DMO representative)

This idea was also expressed indirectly by mentioning offerings provided by castles and manor houses, or acknowledging that slow tourism offerings are expensive.

The offerings by castles and manors would be the most appropriate for slow tourism. [...] This includes visiting castles as tourism attractions as well as the

exclusive opportunity of staying there overnight and visiting their restaurants. This is exactly targeted to the slow tourist (P12, DMO representative).

This craftsman takes time. Maybe it is an hour, maybe two hours and certainly he will not do it for 1 EUR. [...] [It is related to] the economic situation in the country ... whether the person who travels has enough resources to pay for this slow tourism (P15, DMO representative).

Of course, it is not cheap [...]. It does not cost 5 EUR, it costs more... Unfortunately... But at the same time it is something unique (P29, DMO representative).

At the same time, some respondents associated slow tourism with non-commercial or less-commercial tourism offerings that are provided by small, family-owned businesses.

For instance, the owner of one small rural farmstead... even if he is not very active with their offerings, or with selling [things]. If it is their hobby and they like to welcome guests from time to time, then they have this slow tourism (P03, DMO representative).

As I understand it, when it [the slow tourism offering] becomes very commercial, it starts to lose its appeal in slow tourism (P14, DMO representative).

[T]here are these small jewels that definitely do not earn money from tourism; they live their own life and have income from something else. I think that they are the most important element in this "Best enjoyed slowly," story. But they are not the ones who will always offer the classical service that tourists would expect (P18, local tourist).

Other respondents pointed out that slow tourism offerings are based on the hobbies of service providers and not the money. Slow tourism provides an opportunity for locals to do something that is interesting for other people as well and service providers can pursue their hobbies.

It is the peculiarity of slow tourism providers that they usually work somewhere else. Here in the regions, it is impossible to earn money and sustain yourself by working only in tourism. It is not enough. The flow of tourists is not enough. That's why it [the tourism offering] is special. It means that you have to book in advance.

It means that not everybody can offer it. Not everybody would be able to work like that because it is double work, it is overwork. Very often people do it because they like to do it. [They are] enthusiasts – for whom it is a hobby. [They're not doing it] because of the money (P14, DMO representative).

A few respondents noted that slow tourism offerings are often just a side business or only one part of the tourism offerings that the service providers offer.

These excellent places very often work very hard, including offering this slow [tourism]. [...] It means that those [service providers] who do work, they do almost everything. Those who don't work, they don't. Very often that is a specific characteristic (P19, local tourist).

These entrepreneurs don't just stand there and wait, they are busy doing other things. If you say [that you want to come], they have time to prepare (P33, DMO representative).

Finally, some respondents questioned the economic viability of slow tourism offerings since providing slow tourism requires extra time from service providers.

But slow tourism requires time [from the service provider]. Which entrepreneur or businessman – I don't know – will drive me around seaside villages in his BMW? Who will show me, tell me (P06, local tourist)?

For the service providers it means more work for the same money. It is one of the characteristics of slow tourism. Therefore, to be honest, I think that one part of the service providers will disappear; [the ones] who are not ready for that (P14, DMO representative).

As the results show, there is some controversy as to whether slow tourism offerings are economically viable. On one hand, tourists like small, less-commercial offerings. When slow tourism offerings become large-scale commercial tourism products, they lose their appeal. On the other hand, service providers rarely make enough money from offering slow tourism products on a small-scale. Consequently, it is difficult to keep a balance between being able to offer something individual and unique and at the same time make ends meet. As a result slow tourism offerings are not the only offerings provided by

businesses, and service providers earn money from other activities. In fact, slow tourism is very often only a side-business.

When asked about particular examples of slow tourism offerings, the respondents mentioned service providers of various types and size. The most popular examples were related to gastronomy offerings, visiting rural farmsteads or craftsmen, guided tours in towns, cities or nature parks and sauna rituals, as well as miscellaneous offerings by visitor attractions, museums and holiday centres. In addition, respondents also gave location-specific examples such as offerings by synagogues, fishing villages and visits to different local events. Very often, the examples given by the respondents, especially supply side representatives, were the best practices at the local or regional level – by active entrepreneurs who constantly think about diversifying their tourism offerings and about ways to encourage tourists to stay longer.

The above mentioned examples are commercial offerings that have an economic potential not only in the context of slow tourism but in tourism in general. This is supported by a similar study of Bel et al. (2015), who identified four segments among French domestic tourists that represent real economic potential in rural tourism: water-based activities, outdoor activities and nature experiences, nature and heritage discovery and gastronomy. These four segments are classified as ‘active stays’ which generate more spending than passive stays, mainly due to the greater use of rented accommodation and purchasing of more products and services (e.g. regional products) (ibid.).

4.3.3.3 Slow tourism offerings and label

While many tourism offerings were said to be compatible with slow tourism, there are no specific tourism products currently marketed as slow tourism offerings. Few people are aware of the slow tourism concept, nor do they label themselves as slow tourists. Similarly, the slow tourism label is not used when offering tourism products. As many respondents noted, it is possible to find offerings that are compatible with slow tourism but they are not specially designed as slow tourism offerings, nor promoted in such a way.

[Y]ou develop a product that you sell to people without putting it in any category. Sometimes we do things without being aware. [...] I think that, of course, we can try to bring some existing products under the slow tourism label and say – yes, it corresponds to this idea. But we cannot talk about deliberately designed products developed from beginning to end with such an idea in mind (P04, DMO representative).

We have not talked with service providers about promoting, developing or emphasizing any product under this [slow tourism] label. There are some service providers who have managed to do it unintentionally. [...] It is possible that many things are actually related to it [slow tourism] but they are not [promoted] in this way... (P27, DMO representative)

Our product [individual tours] goes very much hand-in-hand with the brand that the LTDA has introduced and pretty much corresponds to it. It was not done entirely unknowingly... We haven't called it 'slow travel' but the idea behind it was the same, that it IS slow travel (P35, private sector).

As the last two quotes show, the offerings that would correspond to the idea of slow tourism are not marketed under that label, and some have questioned the need to promote tourism products under the slow tourism label.

Of course, from one side it is an opportunity to capitalize or develop such a tourism product saying – 'look, we have a slow travel product'. From the other side, it is difficult to say how productive or efficient it would be because after all we are talking about a niche, and this niche can identify itself through these principles... (P05, DMO representative)

It was mentioned that the new tourism destination brand might encourage service providers to consider developing and promoting slow tourism offerings.

Maybe it [the brand] has an effect on some of the service providers who start to think that it is possible to sell products in such a way and encourage people to stay longer (P04, DMO representative).

4.3.3.4 Complex tourism offerings

Since slow tourism implies staying at a destination for longer, many respondents indicated the need for complex tourism offerings. Consequently, the development of slow

tourism is directly linked with the capability of the tourism industry to generate complex tourism products.

[Everything depends on] the ability of the tourism industry to generate complex tourism offerings, since this slow tourism is to a certain extent a complex tourism offering. Maybe it's even an innovative tourism offering, which is not classified traditionally on interests or resources but more on the type of travelling and the lifestyle (P05, DMO representative).

The necessity for complex tourism offerings was linked with the willingness of tourists to look for and enjoy different experiences during the same trip. The heterogeneity of tourism experiences was already mentioned under slow tourism experiences.

We came up with the idea of this product [...] so that it is not only selling, it is not just a workshop. A person can take part [in something], can look, buy, feel, smell, eat – [they can] do all of these things together. And it works well together (P14, DMO representative).

If you add some tasting and some kind of action to [...] watching the product, then, of course, it takes on a different meaning (P19, local tourist).

A few respondents mentioned that offering additional services or a variety of services through individual service providers would be one example of how complex tourism offerings can be developed.

They [the service providers] understand that it is not enough to offer just a bed; it is not enough to offer just a sauna and hope that people will stay longer. So they offer additional things like bicycles, boats, catamarans... (P10, DMO representative)

They [the service providers] see that the tourists who come want to do something else as well. Then these guest houses – the rural guest houses – look for various possibilities how to offer additional services depending on their [financial] resources (P27, DMO representative).

Another strategy for developing complex tourism products that the respondents mentioned was having a variety of tourism offerings in one area or vicinity. Here, co-operation between service providers was said to be very important. The lack of co-

operation between service providers was highlighted as one of the barriers to slow tourism.

In this slow tourism – yes, I could name one rural farmstead but usually [tourists] would not go to visit just one place. We usually want a complex [offering]. So these places cooperate so that people can see various things together (P33, DMO representative).

Similarly, it was acknowledged that co-operation between DMOs and service providers facilitates the development of complex tourism offerings in one region.

We understand that as a destination, town B cannot hold a tourist for a very long time. Therefore, we co-operate with neighbouring attractions and neighbouring municipalities. Then we try to make the offering such that he spends a night here, he has one activity here in the town and the other activities could be outside the town. He returns to the town in the evening, spends the night and can go to a concert or something like that. By co-operating in a bigger territory it is possible to develop offerings for a longer period (P02, DMO representative).

We co-operate very closely [with the regional DMO] because those [tourists] who live outside the city and enjoy [nature], for example, they have chosen their accommodation in nature, they still want to come to the city and see something. I think that we need a mix of offerings. We cannot exist without each other and in isolation (P29, DMO representative).

It is acknowledged that tourists who stay longer at a destination prefer travelling less per day. For example, Becken and Wilson (2007) introduced the concept of the “travel budget” which is the distance tourists are willing to travel each day. In the case of self-drive tourists in New Zealand, the “travel budget” was around 200km or 3-5 hours per day. It is interesting to note that factors like repeat vs. first time visit, family vs. non-family, nationality, type of vehicle and so on had no impact on the “travel budget” while tourists who stayed longer travelled less distance per day. Hence, having more attractions in close vicinity could positively contribute to slow tourism.

4.3.3.5 Target audience – locals vs. foreigners

In terms of the target audience for slow tourism offerings, the respondents had mixed opinions. It was suggested that while slow tourism could be practiced by everyone, slow tourism offerings might be more appealing for foreign tourists. As a few respondents noted, local tourists are often not willing or able to pay the price that service providers ask.

Our locals will not be ready to pay for the time that an entrepreneur or service provider will be ready to spend. A foreigner maybe, yes, but not the local (P06, local tourist).

It was also suggested that some forms of slow tourism, for instance, wildlife observation or mushroom identifying, would be more popular with foreigners than locals. This was not because of price but due to the fact that locals take these things for granted or as self-evident. This links to the fact that slow tourism is less appealing to locals and especially for people from the countryside who live in this environment.

[I]f you offered mushroom identifying to the locals, they would say 'you are crazy!' Locals do not understand it; they go mushroom picking themselves. Also they wouldn't understand the idea that actually you are not just going to pick mushrooms, but there will be a person who tells you about mushrooms. [...] Local people do not always appreciate resources in such a way that somebody from outside does (P19, local tourist).

4.3.3.6 Offering a variety of experiences in slow tourism

Tourists are looking for a variety experiences in slow tourism. Therefore, destinations and service providers should look for different ways to offer such experiences.

One of the most popular categorization of experiences is provided by Pine and Gilmore (1998) who have discussed how companies can stage memorable experiences. They have grouped experiences into four categories or realms depending on customer participation and their connection to the environment where that experience takes place; namely, entertainment, educational, aesthetic and escapist experiences. Entertainment occurs when customers' participation is passive and they absorb the event, such as when

attending a concert. Education also involves the absorption of an environment but the customers' participation is more active, like in attending a class. Aesthetic experiences occur when customers are immersed in the environment but their participation is passive, as when observing beautiful scenery. Finally, escapist experiences involve both active participation and immersion in the experience for example, taking part in a play. The authors argue that the richest experiences are those that encompass all four realms of experience – entertainment, educational, aesthetic and escapist (ibid.).

However, the relative importance of all four dimensions can differ in various contexts. For instance, the study of Hosany and Witham (2010) among cruise passengers reveals that all four dimensions can be found in cruisers' experiences; however, the extent to which they can be used to explain customer satisfaction, memory, arousal, overall perceived quality and intention to recommend differ. According to the study, aesthetics is the most important dimension explaining satisfaction and intention to recommend (ibid.). Similarly, Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2012) suggest that while all four dimensions can be found in the case of wine tourism, the authors acknowledge that not all of them might be equally important in evaluating the wine tourism experience.

The study of Mehmetoglu and Engen (2011) even suggests that not all dimensions need to be present at the same time and that different dimensions influence visitor satisfaction. It was found in the case of the Ice Music Festival in Norway that escapism and aesthetics contributed to visitor satisfaction while education and entertainment did not. In the case of the Maihaugen Museum in Norway the education and aesthetic dimensions had a positive impact on visitor satisfaction while escapism and entertainment did not play a significant role in it. Hence, the authors argue that the contexts associated with where experiences take place should be considered when creating and staging experiences (ibid.). The study of Aikaterini, Seonjeong, Liang, and Lanlung (2014) among the attendees of "VEISHEA festival" found that while all four dimensions influence the vividness of memory, only the entertainment and aesthetic dimensions affect loyalty.

The data shows that immersion in a local culture and environment as well as interaction with hosts and guests are characteristic for slow tourism. Both supply and demand side representatives mentioned engaging and being part of the place visited,

having a connection to the place visited, and feeling like a local as an important part of slow tourism experiences. A combination of immersion and active participation can be classified as escapist experiences in slow tourism. The respondents also mentioned learning new things (educational experiences) and enjoying nice scenery (aesthetic experiences) as a part of slow tourism. Therefore, escapist, educational and aesthetic experiences can be considered as dominant or core slow tourism experiences. Entertainment experiences were not mentioned directly but the respondents have emphasised the importance of storytelling in slow tourism. Consequently, entertainment experience can be regarded as supporting experience in slow tourism. Overall, this study shows that all four realms of experience exist in slow tourism.

Offering all types of experiences can be challenging for individual service providers. However, it is possible to offer a variety of experiences in a wider region and within complex tourism offerings.

In addition, slow tourism experiences can be offered by the service providers but whether it is actually realized will depend on the tourists themselves.

4.4 Slow philosophy in destination marketing

4.4.1 Brand development background

There are three factors that have influenced the creation of the Latvian tourism brand. Two of the factors – growing urbanization and the increasing tempo of lives – meant that there would also be a corresponding and growing need for slow time, time for oneself or time spent in nature. The other factor – a willingness to differentiate through brand – was based on the fact that there were no strong physical attributes to enable differentiation to be made.

One of the objectives when building a brand was that we wanted to differentiate through the brand. Since we do not have any strong physical attributes, we did this differentiation through emotional attributes, which are 'time' and 'the way you relax' – the emotions and feelings that you get from relaxing. [This was] not done

through physical attributes that refer to particular places or through specific, rational arguments (P05, DMO representative).

The Latvian tourism brand is based on three core elements: 1) available resources; 2) economic benefits, targets and aims and 3) the value system that exists in Latvian society.

When the tourism brand “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” was developed, slow tourism was identified as a movement and a type of travel which serves as a perfect example to justify the brand’s viability. On one hand, it had growth potential. On the other, it was a concept that had been already developed.

The perfect fit was in fact that the platform was called “slow down”. There is a brand “Best enjoyed slowly,” and there is also a slow travel movement – it just linked together informatively. If an example has to be given, then slow travel is the most striking one. It does not mean that it is the biggest or the foundation, but it is one of many (P05, DMO representative).

Although the Latvian tourism brand is based on the platform ‘slow down’, that exact wording might not appear anywhere directly. That is also one of the reasons why slow travel has not appeared as an explicit and strong term in a tourism context.

It is more like a communication, a concept, a communication platform. It might not appear directly; it might appear directly as “Best enjoyed slowly,” or it might appear as “Rediscover Latvia” ... or it might appear as slow travel. Actually, all this is based on one platform but this platform is not repeated. Talking about our tourism brand, it is based in this platform and the title of the platform was “slow down.” At the same time, “slow down” might not appear anywhere. However, the communication that we are organizing in different ways and formats encourages doing what we have defined in this platform – [for people] to slow down (P05, DMO representative).

This tourism slogan does not exist in Latvian. It was initially developed in English and then the meaning was translated into German and Russian. While the English version is considered as the main one, the slogan exists in three languages. The tourism industry sometimes uses the Latvian translation of “Best enjoyed slowly” which is ‘unhurried recreation’ or ‘relaxation in Latvia’ (in Latvian – *nesteidzīga atpūta Latvijā*). However, there is no official tourism slogan in Latvian. However, alongside the introduction of a new tourism brand the LTDA launched a local campaign to promote travelling in Latvia.

The slogan of the campaign – “Rediscover Latvia” – has filled the gap and is often associated with Latvian tourism slogan.

Although the new tourism brand was received positively by the tourism industry, not everybody was happy with it. The problems arose during the translation of the slogan into Latvian – many literally translated the English ‘slow’ as ‘physically slow’ and ‘dull’. It was noted that there were attempts to overcome these challenges by re-designing the initial tourism slogan.

To be honest, the first version was “Slow down in Latvia” which then got softened to “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly.” So this was not the first version. We tried to soften this ‘slow’. Many had difficulties with understanding this ‘slow’ (P04, DMO representative).

Confusion over what the national tourism brand constitutes is regarded as one of the greatest problems in destination marketing, yet this is an internal rather than an external problem (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2003). In Latvia, there is some resistance from internal stakeholders who consider that the slow tourism brand will hinder economic development. This attitude is associated with a lack of information or an unwillingness to understand the essence of slow tourism. Some respondents link such attitudes with an inability to distinguish between a national brand and a national tourism brand.

Riga, the capital of Latvia, has its own tourism brand: “Live Riga.” The respondents were confident that the Latvian tourism brand does not conflict with the “Live Riga” brand and that they were more complementary rather than competitive. This allows the national tourism marketing to be developed along a dual brand strategy.

The respondents also mentioned that the Latvian tourism brand aims to promote tourism resources outside the capital Riga. This approach resembles the one proposed by Conway and Timms (2010) who have suggested using slow tourism as a promotional tool for tourism offerings in remote and marginal locations in the Caribbean beyond mass tourism complexes.

4.4.2 Slow destination brand

4.4.2.1 Attitudes towards slow destination brand

In general, the DMO representatives had high logo identity recognition which is defined as “the degree to which people see the correspondence between the elements present in the logo design and the logo as a whole and the country’s identity” (S. Lee, Rodriguez, & Sar, 2012, p. 586). In other words, the respondents saw the match between the logo and the country’s image and suggested that the logo has managed to capture the main characteristics of Latvia as a tourist destination.

In my opinion, it really is applicable to Latvia. I think that they have nailed it (P06, local tourist).

This brand is definitely better than the previous one (P27, DMO representative).

There were, however, doubts about whether the slow destination brand is used adequately in the destination promotion.

We say “Best enjoyed slowly” but if you look at the marketing messages or what kind of destinations they are advertising – it is still Jūrmala, Sigulda, Riga, which I’m sorry to say are not “Best enjoyed slowly”... They are standard mass tourism destinations. [...] They probably have these elements there – you don’t have to rush through there - but they are mass tourism destinations. Yes, this is a contradiction but if you’re spending money on advertising and in a campaign we want a return. It is possible to get a return from these mass tourism destinations but not from a lady in the countryside who bakes tasty pancakes, where you can really relax and get that superb experience that you cannot get anywhere else: you can drink milk and eat pancakes and walk around barefoot. With this you cannot get [a return], a country cannot earn money with that and fill up the beds of hotels in Riga and Jūrmala and all the rest... (P18, local tourist)

Respondents from both the supply and demand sides demonstrated a positive attitude towards the brand “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” suggesting that is a successful tourism brand for Latvia. At the same time, questions were raised about whether it is possible to generate revenue using such a brand since ‘slow’ is more associated with small-scale, local businesses and attractions.

4.4.2.2 Attitudes towards the slow destination image

Some research participants also expressed their opinion about the slow destination image that their regions, cities or towns might be associated with due to the national tourism brand.

Most of the DMO representatives considered that the slow destination image is appropriate for their towns, cities or administrative region. This support was expressed indirectly, firstly through acknowledging that slow tourism is appropriate for their region, city or town (see the section 4.1.4 “Role of environment”), and, secondly, by describing how they have customized the national brand slogan and used it in their own promotional materials (see the section 4.4.2.3 “Brand application”).

A few DMO representatives from bigger cities, however, emphasized that the slow destination image is not appropriate for them. These participants stressed that although the slow destination image is suitable for Latvia, it is not adequate to promote their city.

[...] city X differs [from other cities in the region] as it is not slow. City X is a very, very dynamic city. City X is a very active city, and that is what makes it stand out and differ in the context of regional development. But if we are looking more globally, if we are looking in the European context and even in the Baltic States' context, European and Baltic States, then of course, it is possible to rest and relax slowly in city X. Life here passes much more peacefully and we cannot compare ourselves with megalopolises (P29, DMO representative).

Maybe only one aspect here – nature and water-based activities – can be associated with slow tourism. But essentially there are other things that are topical for us in city Y and in the vicinity of city Y. So not everything is in line with this [tourism] brand. [...] But I don't think it has to [be]... You cannot expect total tranquillity in a big city because of its dynamics (P34, DMO representative).

Interestingly, while stressing the dynamic nature of their two cities, these DMO representatives acknowledged that it is possible to engage in slow tourism activities there as well.

Whilst the slow destination image was said to be appropriate for the country, the opinions of the respondents varied as to whether their regions, cities, or towns should be associated with ‘slow’. This questions whether slowness is an effective marketing concept

and a viable promotion tool for the destination as suggested in the literature (Matos, 2003).

4.4.2.3 Brand application

While the LTDA has suggested that regional DMOs use the national brand, there are no clear guidelines about how to do this. In addition, regional and local DMOs are neither subordinated nor reporting to the LTDA. Therefore, the application of the Latvian tourism brand at regional and local level is voluntary and it is up to DMOs to decide on how much they use the national brand, and in which ways.

The results show that the current application of the brand by DMOs at regional level can be grouped in three categories – applying the logo/visual application, customizing the slogan and implementing the brand/conceptual application.

Applying the logo / visual application

Several respondents reported that they are using the national brand logo in their promotional materials, such as brochures, posters, and websites. This was the most common way of using the national brand.

Concurrently [with our own brands] we also use Latvia's brand on all the [printed] materials. We put it on bigger regional materials and we also put it – maybe not on all, but on our own local materials (P27, DMO representative).

Currently, this LTDA brand “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” is on the printed materials and there is also a banner on our website. We do not use it in any other way (P36, DMO representative).

However, a few respondents acknowledged that they are selective about using the national brand on their materials, i.e. the brand is more likely to be used on regional materials that cover several municipalities than on local ones.

Of course, we put it [the logo] on maps. It will not be on this one because this is a local one... (P28, DMO representative)

Naturally, we use our own [local] brands more in the marketing programs. But in co-operation with the region and in regional programs we use “Best enjoyed slowly” and we also use the logo on the maps. [...] But internally, to promote city X in Latvia we use our own internal brands in order to differentiate (P29, DMO representative).

Customizing the slogan

A few respondents said they have taken the Latvian translation of “Best enjoyed slowly” or the slogan of the local campaign “Rediscover Latvia” and adapted them in their own communication messages.

When we publish our brochures, we use headings like “unhurried recreation / relaxation in city H” (P10, DMO representative).

We try to use the logo in some way. We put it, of course, on our own materials. The council also does this sometimes for different events – “Enjoy city F slowly” – we try to make this emphasis [...]. We also have an annual tourism season opening event and then we write “Enjoy city F and its surroundings slowly” like a motto (P32, DMO representative).

However, some respondents noted that if everybody customized the national slogans, it would not be original and could get boring.

I know that some tourism information centres use this, yes, ‘rediscover, I don’t know, city T or something else’ but in our opinion it would be cribbing if all cities now would do that – ‘rediscover city Z, rediscover city Y, rediscover this and rediscover that.’ I think it would sound very homogeneous (P34, DMO representative).

Implementing the brand / conceptual application

Only two respondents said that they have thought about how to apply the brand practically. One respondent said that they have come up with their own interpretation of slow tourists, identified them as one of their target markets and are working towards attracting them. This was a part of a wider regional co-operation project where several municipalities have come together to attract more tourists to the region and encourage them to stay longer. Another respondent mentioned that they have identified four main

types of tourism for their city and its surroundings and “Best enjoyed slowly” can be best related to nature tourism. Hence, the brand is emphasized when talking about nature tourism.

The results show that due to the lack of clear guidelines on how the brand could be used and the limited capacity of the LTDA to encourage the application of the national brand at regional level, the application of the national tourism brand is varied among regional DMOs. In other words, there is a mixed commitment to the brand among various stakeholders (Bregoli, 2013) which can be considered as a weakness for the national destination brand. In order to overcome such drawbacks, destination marketers are advised to provide clear guidelines or practical toolkits on actual brand implementation strategies.

4.4.2.4 Brand – a pull or push?

Respondents acknowledged that the slow destination brand has a limited capacity to be a pull factor for the destination and questioned the ability of the tourism brand to influence tourist flow.

After all – how much can such a brand realistically influence the tourism flow? If we know that Latvia is by and large associated with Riga, if we know that Riga by and large is associated with pleasure, entertainment and nightlife, then the question is how much can we promote anything with one brand or the other? (P05, DMO representative)

[J]ust because a country has a slogan like this does not mean that people will travel in such a way. Maybe in some intangible way, because the slogan exists, people will have a desire not to rush and travel. It is more imperceptible... But of course, it is a very good slogan and ‘enjoying slowly’? Only if we don’t rush can we then relax and enjoy. For me as a tourism professional, it is a good slogan. But people don’t travel like that because of the slogan (P15, DMO representative).

Some respondents however considered the brand to be a tool to influence the attitude of tourists towards travelling, especially in the case of local tourists.

Our local tourism campaign “Rediscover Latvia” [...] is essentially based on the same values and on the same principles that there is no need to always rush, to go and search for the big, the beautiful: that very often this beautiful and interesting thing could be nearby. Therefore, when talking about this campaign, our main aims and objectives have been to talk more about the change of attitude towards travelling without saying ‘slow travel’ directly but actually meaning it by working with values, with attitudes and information that is presented in an interesting way (P05, DMO representative).

The brand encourages you and maybe even makes you wonder... (P06, local tourist)

The campaign “Rediscover Latvia” was very good. I think that it somehow encouraged Latvians to explore what is in Latvia slowly (P28, DMO representative).

As the responses illustrate, the national tourism brand is used to pull tourists to new or already known places in Latvia. At the same time, the aim to influence attitudes towards travelling locally could be considered as an attempt to address the push factors by addressing intrapersonal barriers (Crawford & Godbey, 1987) that local tourists might have towards travelling locally. While the local population cannot be considered a homogeneous market that will respond to the promotional messages in the same way, it might encourage some members of the local population to travel locally.

4.4.3 Marketing challenges

The respondents mentioned various constraints to slow tourism that have been reported earlier. Inevitably, they also touched upon problems in relation to destination marketing. Therefore, one of the themes that emerged during the interviews was the various challenges relating to the application of a slow philosophy in destination marketing.

4.4.3.1 Low recognition and lack of clear destination image

The image of a destination has a significant role in tourism. Firstly, image plays a key role in destination marketing (Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001) and is used as a tool to differentiate one destination from another and to pull visitors towards a destination. Secondly, the images that tourists have of a destination can affect their behaviour (Knopf, 1983). For instance, the study of H.-J. Chen, Chen, and Okumus (2013) on destination image and travel constraints during the early decision making process has found a significant relationship between the two, leading the authors suggest that a favourable destination image could work as a pull factor to overcome travel constraints (e.g. unfamiliar cultural constraints).

However, this study shows that one of the basic problems which Latvia faces as a tourism destination is the low recognition of the country as a tourism destination as well as the lack of a clear destination image.

There is relatively little information about Latvia. We still have to spend lots of time telling people where Latvia is: very basic things. We still have to tell [people] what it looks like here, what the political situation is, what the economic situation is, what the situation regarding safety is, such basic things. Very often we do not get to such details as slow travel (P04, DMO representative).

This same idea was supported by foreign tourists who indicated that they did not have a clear image of Latvia or Riga before their visit.

To me, I didn't really have any image or any imagination of what Riga is. The only thing that I expected is that it's interesting and it is: it is interesting (P21, foreign tourist).

We did not have any specific view or attitude about Riga or Latvia before our trip. Our trip was a very positive experience (P23, foreign tourist).

As the research has shown, there is no clear image of Latvia among many international tourists. Consequently, low recognition and the lack of a clear image of the destination pose additional challenges in developing the image of Latvia as a slow tourism destination.

It has to be noted that the destination image from the tourists' perspective is a complex construct which has various dimensions. On one hand, Gartner (1993) suggests that destination images are formed of three interrelated components – cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive image component is the sum of an individual's beliefs and attitudes about the destination and relates to an individual's knowledge of the destination; the affective image component relates to the motives that individual has for selecting the destination and refers to individual's feelings about the destination, and the conative image component is an action component and refers to intended behaviour (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Gartner, 1993). On the other hand, Gunn (1988) has noted that a destination image evolves at two levels. The organic image is created through assimilation of information from media, books and non-touristic communications, while the induced image is derived from tourism promotion. When these two approaches are combined, one can argue that the cognitive image and the affective image can be formed organically or they can be induced. Destination marketers have more control over induced image than organic image.

However, the extent to which destination marketers can influence the image held by tourists is questionable. In fact, the studies show that the induced sources of information provided by destination marketing organizations have little influence on the cognitive image for first time visitors (Beerli & Martín, 2004). Moreover, there are differences in how the destination image is formed among local and international tourists. Local level images are based on 'organic' factors, i.e. individuals are more likely to evaluate familiar local areas based on their experience and local knowledge rather than on the promotional materials of these tourist destinations (Walmsley & Young, 1998). However, the destination images at the regional and international levels are more likely to be developed through induced information agents (ibid.).

At the same time, the image that tourists have about the destination affects their behaviour not only before, but also during and after the trip. Even if tourists have little knowledge about the destination visited, the image of the destination formed while they are there can influence tourists' behaviour. In fact, it is suggested that a destination's image influences tourist behaviour and activities during a trip (Tasci & Gartner, 2007) in terms of spending patterns, planned length of stay and planned activity patterns.

The destination's image also has an impact on the after-purchase behaviour of tourists, such as their positive re-visit intentions (Prayag & Ryan, 2010). In fact, several studies have confirmed that a more favourable destination image has a positive effect on tourists' behavioural intentions such as an intention to re-visit and a willingness to recommend (Bigné et al., 2001; C.-F. Chen & Tsai, 2007; Milman & Pizam, 1995). In addition, the image of the destination tends to improve with return visits – as shown in the study of first-time and return visitors to Rome (Giraldi & Cesareo, 2014).

As discussed above, it is acknowledged that the image of a tourist destination created by marketers is only one of the factors determining the perceived destination image. While destination marketers do not have full control over all the elements that contribute to the image of a destination, they can enhance a positive image through tourism promotion. Since those who are familiar with the destination have a more positive image and are more interested and more likely to re-visit, a 'slow destination' image may work [or is likely to be considered] as a pull factor for a repeat visit. In other words, a slow destination image can be used to encourage foreign tourists to return to Latvia. This idea mirrors the opinion of supply side representatives who see slow tourism as an attractive theme for a return visit.

4.4.3.2 Communicating the national tourism brand and its meaning

Another challenge was related to insufficient communication about the national tourism brand and its meaning.

Although DMO representatives have high brand recognition, brand recognition among service providers is low, i.e. it was suggested that the majority of service providers are not aware of the national tourism brand.

Go inside [the café] and ask whether they know what 'enjoying slowly' in Latvia is – what it is and where it comes from (P06, local tourist).

It [the brand] is not conveyed to every entrepreneur, every person, every service provider in tourism and therefore it is not established. [It is] as simple as that (P26, DMO representative).

Even those service providers who are aware of the national brand prefer to use other tourism-related brands.

As far as I have asked accommodation and other tourism service providers, then they say that... In short, the bigger hotels are in a tourism association, for example, "Kurzeme Tourism Association" or "Baltic Country Holidays" and then they would use the "Baltic Country Holidays" brand because it is more recognizable (P36, DMO representative).

The research participants suggested that work on communicating the brand and its values should be ongoing to keep it topical.

When the brand was launched, then they had all these presentations about it and it was a novelty then. [...] But if it is not supported, if nobody sustains it, if nobody reminds you all the time or if there are no obligations, then everybody is human, you know. Everybody can forget something (P26, DMO representative).

The respondents noted that it was the task of the LTDA to ensure the ongoing communication of the brand and its values. It was also suggested that the LTDA should carry out more informative and educative advertising campaigns for the local market.

I think there needs to be more information, more education [about the brand] (P06, local tourist).

It is beyond our powers to implement, to deliver the brand. We can only visually portray it somewhere (P34, DMO representative).

At the same time, it was generally acknowledged that the LTDA does their best within the limits of their budget.

Brand communications is an important ascendant to successful destination branding (Hankinson, 2009). Therefore, internal communication with stakeholders is essential for improving commitment to the brand (Bregoli, 2013). In addition, communication about the brand and its meaning should be ongoing in order to keep the brand topical and 'alive'.

4.4.3.3 Loving national, using local tourism destination brands

The DMO representatives generally had a positive attitude towards the national tourism brand. Yet one of the main reasons for the inert application of the national tourism brand and the implementation of the slow philosophy in destination marketing was the fact that essentially all regional and local DMOs had their own brands which they preferred to use on their promotional materials. The preference for using own brands can be explained by the willingness to compete with each other in order to attract more local tourists.

In Latvia, everybody tries to highlight their own logos, their own identity signs in order to attain, to create associations (P32, DMO representative).

In Latvia, you see, every region fights for its own brand. We are not different (P33, DMO representative).

We don't have a unified vision and it would be good if the [national tourism] brand in Latvia would be more unified. Otherwise, there is a fight. Cities should not compete with each other but it happens anyway. Now we have not only cities but also regions - and everybody tries to pull the blanket to their side (P34, DMO representative).

Another possible explanation of the preference of regional and local brands over the national tourism brand is the assumption that the national tourism brand was designed for foreign tourists and not for local tourists.

[T]he slogan was unique because of the fact that it was introduced in English first and then they thought about how it could sound in Latvian. But it is OK ... because it is created for foreigners (P26, DMO representative).

"Best enjoyed slowly" – I think that it is more outwards-oriented [for foreigners] (P29, DMO representative).

As a result, the regional and local DMOs prefer to use their own brands, logos and slogans and little attention is given to the national tourism brand.

4.4.3.4 Tourism policy implementation and strategic direction

A few respondents provided some critical comments about the implementation of tourism policy at the national level. The criticism was directed both towards the LTDA and the Ministry of Economics.

[T]here was only one sentence about tourism in the government declaration – to promote the recognisability of Latvia's public image. That's all (P10, DMO representative).

LTDA is under the Ministry of Economics. What is it – is tourism an outcast or something? [...] I have a feeling that tourism is under-valued somehow (P28, DMO representative).

A few respondents mentioned that there is an inequality in allocating resources for tourism promotion at the national level and the promotion of different parts of Latvia is unbalanced.

To be fair, we develop and promote our slow tourism using our own regional financing. Our own financing! At the same time, Riga is promoted using joint [national] financing and its own separate financing. [...] The task is to promote Latvia. The task is not to promote Riga or its surroundings or so on. It means that the principle of balance has to be taken into account (P14, DMO representative).

The regions always feel that they are left behind. Everybody knows that there is Jūrmala, Riga, Sigulda and something else but others are outside somehow... (P28, DMO representative)

The lack of continuity in strategic direction was identified as another marketing challenge.

You see, everything in Latvia happens as an experiment. [...] Everybody comes up with their own theory. [...] There was a need to introduce something new [brand], the money had to be spent. They introduced this. And that's it. A few years after the introduction everybody forgot about it... (P26, DMO representative)

The campaign ["Rediscover Latvia"] was terminated, it is not running anymore. At least, I haven't noticed any continuation for that campaign (P28, DMO representative).

The respondents generally had a positive attitude towards the new tourism brand but a few respondents mentioned that there is a lack of information and guidelines on how to apply this idea in practice.

The idea, of course, is very good – ‘slowly’ in order to encourage more, longer stays, yes, but how to apply it practically... We haven’t had such discussions (P36, DMO representative).

As a consequence the practical application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing in Latvia is difficult, constrained and complicated.

4.5 Bringing it together – revised dimensions of slow travel and tourism

A summary of the literature review resulted in the model 2.7 that was presented in sub-chapter 2.7. It showed four dimensions of slow travel and tourism – environmental, experiential, economic and ethical.

The results of this study show that all four dimensions of slow travel and tourism – environmental, experiential, economic and ethical – are present, if in varying degrees.

Both supply and demand side representatives emphasized the importance of slow tourism experiences as being an integral part of slow travel and tourism. In other words, the experiential aspect is the most important component of slow travel and tourism concept. Other dimensions of slow travel and tourism can be found but their relative importance is much lower. In other words, people engage in slow tourism mainly because it provides an opportunity for meaningful experiences.

Hence a revised model of the four dimensions of slow travel and tourism is proposed (see Figure 4.1) where the experiential dimension is portrayed relatively bigger than the other three dimensions – environmental, economic and ethical. The model presents an aggregated understanding of slow travel and tourism. It is possible that not all four dimensions are present when looking from the point of view of an individual tourist.

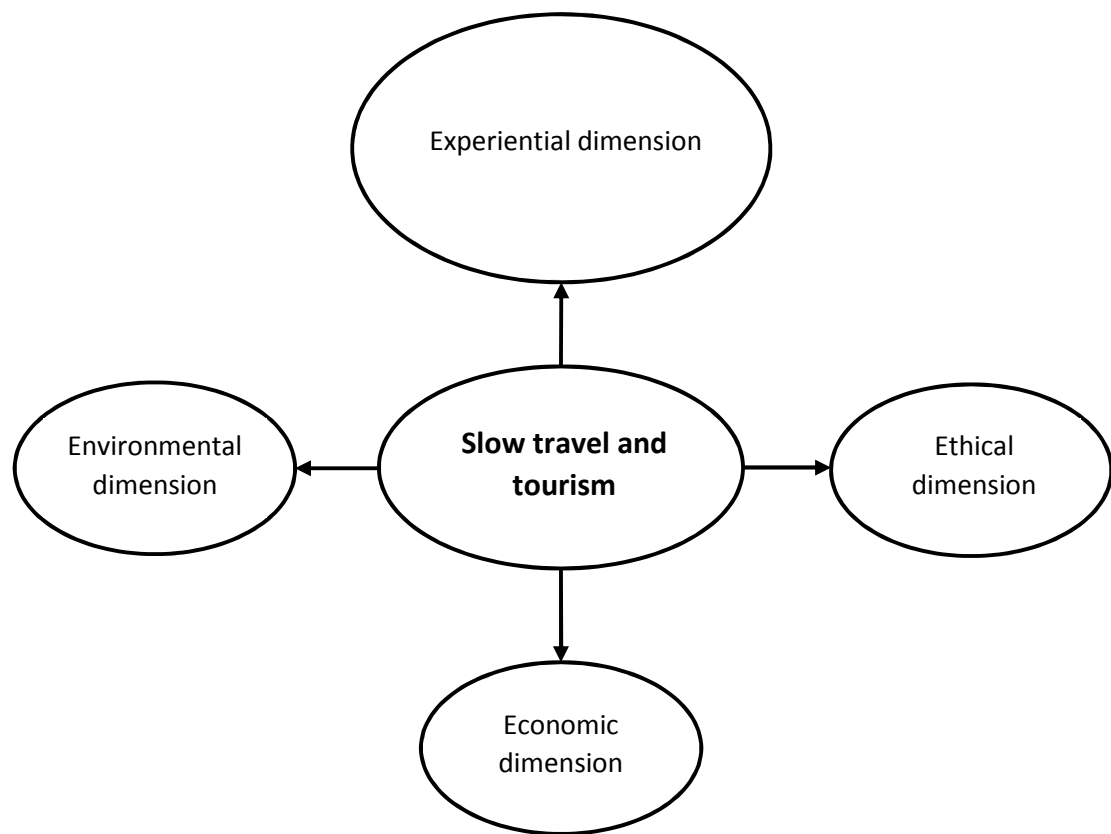


Figure 4.1

Revised dimensions of slow travel and tourism (Source: author)

The results of this study show that the essence of slow tourism is meaningful experiences; other aspects are side benefits. Therefore, slow tourism can be regarded as experience-based tourism. Yet, these experiences are multidimensional and different experiences form the overall slow tourism experience. Escapist, educational and aesthetic experiences can be regarded as the core slow tourism experiences while entertainment experiences are also present and can be considered as supporting experiences in slow tourism.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions

This study aimed to get an in-depth understanding of slow tourism, slow tourists and the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management. The chapter comprises of five main sections. The first section summarizes the main results of the study showing how each of the research objectives was achieved. The second section highlights the theoretical and methodological contributions of this study while the third section provides recommendations for tourism policy makers and tourism service providers. The fourth section discusses the limitations of this study while the last section provides suggestions for future research.

5.1 Research objectives

5.1.1 Objective 1

To identify and evaluate the interpretation and understanding of the slow tourism concept in Latvia by tourists and destination marketers.

The results from this study suggest that despite the lack of a universally agreed definition of slow tourism in Latvia, it is considered to be an approach to travel rather than a niche or an umbrella term. It is associated with nature-based tourism and culture or cultural history tourism, to a lesser extent with gastronomy tourism and rural tourism, and also to some extent with active tourism.

Both supply and demand side representatives link slow tourism with the availability of time, travelling shorter distances per day, staying longer, spending more time in one place and gaining an in-depth understanding of the place and culture visited. Although slow tourism is considered to be an active way of spending holidays, it is the opposite of running around. It is also considered to be the opposite of mass tourism and encompass quality over quantity. Slow tourism offers the possibility to slow down, while acknowledging that slowness is individual. This understanding of slow tourism in Latvia

corresponds to what is understood by the term elsewhere. No significant differences were found between the supply and demand side interpretations of slow tourism.

However, slow tourism in Latvia is not linked with environmental consciousness or an environmentally friendly way of travelling, as suggested by a number of academics. While a couple of respondents in fact did link reduced carbon footprint with slow tourism, they can be considered as an exception rather than holding a generally accepted view.

The results also showed that there are varying degrees of engagement with slow tourism. Some respondents regarded it as the whole trip while others as just a part of the trip.

The role of the environment where slow tourism takes place was emphasized by the supply side representatives; the demand side representatives did not emphasize the necessity of being in a particular environment to engage in slow tourism. While less-urban areas and rural areas are considered to be more appropriate for slow tourism, the research shows that it can be practiced anywhere in Latvia.

The study also produced interesting findings in two areas in relation to the understanding of slow tourism which have received little attention in the literature so far. Firstly, the supply side representatives considered slow tourism as a tool to encourage travelling locally among Latvian tourists. Slow tourism was linked with appreciating local, i.e. recognizing that spending holidays in one's own country and visiting local attractions can be as interesting and rewarding as going abroad. Some local tourists also supported this idea. Secondly, the supply side representatives suggested that slow tourism could be a repeat visit for foreign tourists. This idea was not mentioned by the demand side representatives.

5.1.2 Objective 2

To identify the characteristics of slow tourists in Latvia

While self-identified slow tourists have been reported in the literature (Dickinson et al., 2011), this study suggests that people who engage in slow tourism do not use nor are aware of such a label.

The findings suggest that slow tourists are individual tourists. They can be considered as experienced or 'mature' tourists who have travelled in their lives. The respondents pointed out that slow tourists do not require luxury but a decent level of comfort. In addition, slow tourists exhibit not only physical slowness but also mental or attitudinal slowness. In other words, the respondents associate slow tourism with a slow mindset which is a particular way of thinking that distinguishes slow tourists from other types of tourists. These notions are acknowledged in the literature.

The results also show that slow tourists are not a homogeneous segment since it can be practiced by people from different ages and genders and at different stages in the family life-cycle. In addition, the slow tourist identity can change from one trip to another and even during the same trip. Therefore, the ideal type of slow tourist – one that would embrace slowness, travel experience and environmental consciousness during their trip (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) and for whom an overall tourism experience would be slow (Dickinson et al., 2011) – rarely exists.

Both the supply and demand side representatives suggest that slow tourism is usually practiced by three types of tourists: 1) older people or seniors, mostly from wealthier European countries, 2) groups of friends, and 3) families with or without children. While the first two segments of slow tourists have been identified in the academic literature, families with children have been overlooked as a potential segment for slow tourism. The respondents have suggested that families with children – especially local ones – could be considered as a viable market for slow tourism. However, this suggestion has not been unanimous and service providers need to reconsider the compatibility of various slow tourist segments.

5.1.3 Objective 3

To identify and evaluate similarities and differences in the perception of slow tourism practices and experiences from the supply and demand sides in Latvia

This study has identified slow tourism practices in two areas – trip planning and mobilities. Firstly, the results from this study suggest that the degree of planning for a slow tourism trip was varied, ranging from very little planning to a moderate level of planning. The plans about the destination, approximate travel route, the length of stay, transport mode, travel party and special interests were usually made before the trip and tended to be relatively stable. At the same time, slow tourists were flexible regarding decisions about their exact travel route and accommodation and especially activities en route, leaving room for unplanned encounters. However, the supply side representatives emphasized that time management is important if tourists plan to visit service providers, i.e. slow tourism offerings need to be pre-booked.

Secondly, the results show that both fast and slow modes of travel are used in the context of slow tourism in Latvia. Local and foreign tourists are flexible in using different means of transports for travelling around Latvia, depending on convenience, availability of public transport and other aspects. Local tourists often use cars in combination with walking, cycling or boating to travel in Latvia. Foreign tourists often arrive by plane and then use buses or trains to travel around Latvia; yet arriving and/or travelling around by private car is popular as well. Both the supply and demand side representatives suggested that there is no single pattern of getting from one place to another. This is in line with authors suggesting that any type of transport can be used in slow tourism (Conway & Timms, 2012; Oh et al., 2014) but contradicts other studies suggesting that slow tourism should include low carbon modes of transport (Dickinson et al., 2011; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012).

Public transport – bus or train – is used to reach certain destinations in Latvia. However, both supply and demand side representatives acknowledged that it is challenging to travel around Latvia using public transport due to the deficiencies in public transport infrastructure and its organization, which was mentioned as one of the structural constraints not only for slow tourism but tourism in Latvia in general. A similar

situation was reported in relation to cycling. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that actual slow tourism mobilities are based on the combination of convenience, public transport infrastructure and other aspects, rather than environmental considerations. This was acknowledged by both the supply and demand side representatives.

This study has identified that both the supply and demand side representatives regard meaningful experiences as an integral part of slow tourism. Such experiences were related to either immersion in culture and environment or interaction with hosts and locals. These core experiences in slow tourism can be classified as escapist experiences according to Pine and Gilmore (1998). At the same time, slow tourism experiences are not homogeneous; people are looking for variety of experiences in slow tourism. While escapist, educational and aesthetic experiences can be considered as the dominant or core slow tourism experiences, this study shows that all four realms of experience – escapist, educational, aesthetic and entertainment – exist in slow tourism. The last experience realm – entertainment – has received little attention in the literature so far.

The findings of this study suggest that essentially slow tourism is experience-based tourism; the emphasis in slow tourism is on meaningful experiences and not on environmentally friendly travelling.

5.1.4 Objective 4

To identify and understand the key push and pull factors for slow tourism from the perspective of tourists and tourism destination marketers in Latvia

The results from this study suggest that motivations for slow tourism can be extrinsic and intrinsic. Both tourists and tourism destination marketers acknowledged that ‘escape’ from daily life is one of the main extrinsic motivators for slow tourism. While escape is one of the most common push factors in tourism (Crompton, 1979) and has also been identified in the context of slow tourism (Oh et al., 2014; Robbins & Cho, 2012), the escape from the side-effects of modern society – speed, the fast tempo of life, stress, and urbanization – are slow tourism specific motivators. This study suggests that modern society is one of the main contributors to slow tourism.

However, a few demand side representatives – both local and foreign tourists – indicated that their daily activities have informed their activities while travelling, showing that slow tourism can also be regarded as an extension to daily life, not an escape from it. Slow tourism as an extension of daily life was not emphasized by the supply side representatives and is therefore one of the main differences how tourists and tourism destination marketers understand the motivators for slow tourism.

The extension of daily life as a push for slow tourism has not gained much attention in the literature so far. A link between home and destination activities has been discussed in the literature only in relation to the environmental practices of tourists while on holiday (Dickinson et al., 2011). There is also a study among Slow Food members showing that their destination activities are similar to their activities at home, at least in relation to food, and that 'escape' is not among the travel motivations for Slow Food members (K. H. Lee et al., 2014). This adds another dimension to the understanding of slow tourism motivations.

The tourists and tourism destination marketers mentioned four intrinsic motivations for slow tourism – novelty; education or learning new things; re-connecting with oneself, other people or with nature, and being active. These motivations have also been identified in the literature in the context of slow tourism.

Interestingly, local tourists and tourism destination marketers identified patriotism as a push for slow tourism among local tourists. While a sense of pride among local communities has been discussed in the context of tourism development or destination branding in general (Morgan et al., 2003), a willingness to explore and learn more about one's own country for patriotic reasons has not been identified as an important aspect in slow tourism.

While there is an assumption that people can engage in slow tourism anywhere and the respondents suggested many pull factors, two strong pull factors for slow tourism were identified. Firstly, both the supply and demand side representatives identified nature as one of the most important pull factors. It was not surprising taking into account that many respondents linked slow tourism with nature-based tourism and mentioned escape from the urban environment and a stressful life as a push for slow tourism. While

physical factors such as absence of stress and noise have been suggested as pull factors for slow tourism (Heitmann et al., 2011), the importance of nature as a pull for slow tourism has been overlooked in the literature.

Secondly, local tourists and tourism destination marketers identified patriotism not only as a push but also as an important pull factor for local tourists; some factors can work as both push and pull. So far, patriotism as a pull factor has been discussed in relation to the Caribbean diaspora and returning nationals who could be potential slow tourists in the Caribbean due to sentimental and patriotic reasons (Conway & Timms, 2010) but not in relation to local tourists.

5.1.5 Objective 5

To identify and examine the role of the slow destination brand as a pull factor in Latvia

Usually destination brands work as pull factors, i.e. they try to attract visitors to the destination. However, tourism destination marketers acknowledged that the slow destination brand has a limited capacity to be a pull factor for Latvia for first time visitors because Latvia as a tourist destination has low recognition and an unclear image among foreign tourists. This mirrors the viewpoint which is discussed in the literature in relation to the Cittáslow brand. There is an argument that this brand is not a pull factor for first time visitors; potentially it can be a pull factor in future (Robinson, 2011).

The findings of this study show that tourism destination marketers considered the Latvian tourism brand “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” to be a tool to influence the attitude of tourists towards travelling, especially in the case of local tourists. One of the brand’s objectives is to change the attitude of people – both the tourists and service providers. Firstly, it attempts to change the attitude of local tourists towards travelling locally – that there is no need to rush and look for interesting things abroad, that there are plenty of interesting things to see locally which might be small but at the same time are beautiful. Secondly, the brand is addressing service providers and encouraging them to think about strategies to keep tourists longer. While the Latvian tourism destination brand performs

the role of a pull factor, this study argues that the potential of the brand lies in addressing both push and pull factors.

5.1.6 Objective 6

To evaluate the implications of applying the slow philosophy in destination marketing and management in Latvia

The findings of this study show that there are both opportunities and challenges in applying a slow philosophy in destination management and marketing.

In terms of the application of a slow philosophy in destination management, the study highlighted the implications in three areas: the constraints for slow tourism, the role of storytelling and slow tourism offerings. Firstly, both tourists and tourism destination marketers suggested three types of constraints for applying a slow philosophy in destination management: 1) destination constraints, 2) tourism service provider constraints and 3) tourist constraints; these can be classified as structural and intrapersonal constraints (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). While many authors have identified constraints for tourism in general, constraints for slow tourism have gained little attention in the literature so far, apart from time and travel mode related constraints (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

Secondly, both tourists and tourism destination marketers emphasized the role of storytelling in facilitating slow tourism. Storytelling is considered to be one of the key methods to stage unique experiences (Mei, 2014) and to contribute to the entertainment dimension (Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011). A theme or a story about the destination can also give tourists a more meaningful experience and at the same time can be used to promote tourism products (Mossberg, 2007). While the importance of storytelling in tourism has been emphasized in the literature (Bryon, 2012; Moscardo, 2010; Mossberg, 2008; N. Scott et al., 2009), it has been overlooked in the context of slow tourism.

Thirdly, this study provides some insights into the development of slow tourism offerings. The respondents saw the potential in slow tourism offerings, yet had mixed opinions about the type of offerings that could be compatible with slow tourism and consequently about their economic viability as well. Some respondents regarded slow

tourism products as more sophisticated, exclusive, expensive and high-quality tourism offerings while others associated slow tourism with non-commercial or less-commercial tourism offerings that are provided by small, family-owned businesses. While many tourism offerings were said to be compatible with slow tourism, currently the slow tourism label is not used to market such products. At the same, the respondents expressed a need for complex tourism offerings that would allow tourists to enjoy different experiences during the same trip and encourage them to stay longer at the destination.

The study also aimed to evaluate the implications of applying the slow philosophy in destination marketing. The literature suggests that slowness is an effective marketing concept (Matos, 2003) and slow tourism can be used as a viable promotional tool in destination marketing (Conway & Timms, 2010; de la Barre, 2012; Murayama & Parker, 2012). So far the slow brand has been used to promote cities – as in case with the Cittáslow brand – and the studies show that it is a useful tool in destination marketing (Mayer & Knox, 2006; Nilsson et al., 2011). The findings of the research provide insights into attitudes towards a slow destination brand and marketing challenges related to the application of the slow philosophy in destination marketing at the national level.

The respondents demonstrated a positive attitude towards the brand “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” suggesting that is a successful tourism brand for Latvia. Whilst the slow destination brand was said to be appropriate for the country, the opinions of the tourism destination marketers varied as to whether the regions, cities or towns should be associated with ‘slow’. Currently the regional and local DMOs prefer to use their own brands, logos and slogans in destination marketing and little attention is given to the national tourism brand. This questions whether slowness is an effective marketing concept and a viable promotion tool for a destination at the national level.

The results also show that there is mixed commitment to the brand among various stakeholders. The current application of the brand by DMOs at regional level can be grouped into three categories – applying the logo/visual application, customizing the slogan and implementing the brand/conceptual application. Such varied application of the national tourism brand at regional and local level can be explained by the limited capacity of the LTDA to encourage the application of this national brand, coupled with a lack of clear guidelines as to how the brand could be used.

The results of this study show that the practical application of a slow philosophy in destination marketing and management is encumbered and complicated. Tourism policy makers need to address not only stereotypes associated with the 'slow' brand by ensuring the ongoing communication of the brand and its values but also to provide practical guidelines on how such a brand can be implemented.

5.2 Contributions

5.2.1 Theoretical contributions

This study furthers understanding of slow tourism, slow tourists and the application of a slow philosophy in destination marketing and management. The theoretical implications of this study are discussed below.

1. The literature review revealed four dimensions of slow travel and tourism – environmental (Dickinson et al., 2010; M. B. Lipman & Murphy, 2012), experiential (Gardner, 2009; Heitmann et al., 2011), economic (Conway & Timms, 2010; Groenendaal, 2012), and ethical (Clancy, 2015; De Salvo et al., 2013) – that this study proposed to integrate in a single model to better reflect the essence of slow travel and tourism. These dimensions or components of slow travel and tourism have not been integrated in a single model so far. The empirical research confirmed the existence of these four dimensions; yet it has found that their relative importance varies. Both supply and demand side representatives highlighted 'experiences' as the key element in slow travel and tourism; hence the experiential dimension is the most important component of the slow travel and tourism concept. In other words, people engage in slow tourism primarily because of its experiences. While other aspects of slow travel and tourism – environmental, economic and ethical – are part of the concept and were mentioned by the respondents, they are of lesser importance. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing theory by showing that the experiential dimension is the underpinning dimension of slow tourism. This is reflected in the

model of revised dimensions of slow travel and tourism where the experiential dimension is portrayed relatively larger than the other three dimensions – environmental, economic and ethical. The model has significant implications for defining the slow travel and tourism concept and can be used as a base for further studies.

2. The results of the study suggest that slow tourism can be considered as an approach to tourism (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011) rather than an umbrella brand (Conway & Timms, 2010; Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010) or a separate tourism niche (Moore, 2012). Although this idea has been expressed in the literature, this study supports this idea and provides empirical evidence of this notion. It is further strengthened by the fact that both supply and demand side representatives refer to slow tourism as a way tourists approach their travel. Next, this study shows that as an approach, slow tourism is compatible with various types of tourism, such as nature-based tourism, culture or cultural history tourism, gastronomy tourism and rural tourism. While slow tourism has been linked before with culture tourism (Pecsek, 2016) and gastronomy tourism (Heitmann et al., 2011), links with nature-based tourism and rural tourism have not been emphasized in the literature so far. Overall, these findings imply that slow tourism can be found and defined within particular existing types of tourism.
3. The results of this study provide empirical evidence that the mental or attitudinal slowness or the slow mindset of the tourist is the key criteria for identifying slow tourists. This is a consequent implication from the previous point which suggests that slow tourism is an approach to tourism, i.e. it is a way in which tourists approach their travel. By adding the supply side perspective, the findings of this study complement the earlier work of Oh et al. (2014) among tourists (on the demand side) which suggest that slow tourism is a mental activity. The results of this study show that both demand and supply side representatives (including tourism destination marketing organization representatives) consider attitudinal slowness as the main characteristic of slow tourists. While physical slowness is important, attitudinal slowness or a slow mindset is the main criteria for identifying slow tourists. Therefore, this research extends knowledge of the characteristics of slow tourists by providing an holistic perspective from both

demand and supply sides. The results also suggest that tourists can have different degrees of engagement with slow tourism and that the ideal type of slow tourist – for whom all tourism trips and tourism experiences would be slow (Dickinson et al., 2011) – rarely exists. Therefore, another theoretical implication of the findings is that slow tourists cannot be considered as a distinctive market segment but rather as a fluid tourist identity that can change from one trip to another – and even during the same trip.

4. The findings confirm the previous concept of slow tourism as experience-based tourism (see the section 2.3.3 “Experiential dimension”); yet provide a better understanding of the nature of such experience. So far, the authors have looked at slow tourism experience as a monolithic concept, referring to it as the ‘overall tourism experience’ (Dickinson et al., 2011) or ‘whole travel experience’ (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). This study contributes to the existing body of literature on slow tourism experiences by deconstructing slow tourism experiences and analysing them using the four realms of an experience that was originally designed by Pine and Gilmore (1998). This study has identified that the slow tourism experience is not a homogeneous concept as tourists are not looking for one specific experience during their trips. On the contrary, tourists are looking for heterogeneous experiences during their slow trips. The data suggests that experiences that can be classified as escapist, educational and aesthetic can be considered as the dominant or core slow tourism experiences. Both supply and demand side representatives have mentioned these three types of experiences and references to them can be found also in the literature (De Salvo et al., 2013; Dickinson et al., 2011; Heitmann et al., 2011). At the same time, respondents have suggested that storytelling is an important aspect of slow tourism which implies that entertainment experiences are also part of slow tourism experiences. Hence, this study has revealed entertainment experience as supporting experience in slow tourism, which has not been identified in the literature so far. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing knowledge by showing that all four realms of experience – escapist, educational, aesthetic and entertainment – exist in slow tourism. While escapist, educational and aesthetic experiences can be considered as the dominant or core slow tourism experiences, entertainment experience can

be regarded as a supporting experience in slow tourism. Slow tourism experiences have not been analysed using the four realms of experience so far. This represents an integrated perspective from both supply and demand sides and therefore extends the understanding of the nature of slow tourism experiences.

5. This study extends the knowledge of various push and pull factors for slow tourism. The results of this study suggest that push factors for slow tourism can be grouped in two broad categories – extrinsic and intrinsic. In relation to extrinsic push motivators the results of this study support the idea of slow tourism as an escape from daily life. Escape as a motivator for slow tourism has been identified by multiple authors (Oh et al., 2014; Robbins & Cho, 2012). At the same time, the results suggest that slow tourism can also be an extension of daily life. This extrinsic push motivator category has not been identified in the literature so far. Interestingly, this push factor was emphasized by demand side representatives but not by supply side representatives. This shows the gap in understanding of motivators for slow tourism between the supply and demand sides. These opposite push factors – escaping and extending daily life – indicate that slow tourism is a complex dual phenomenon. In relation to intrinsic push motivators the results confirm previously identified factors such as novelty, education or learning new things, and reconnecting with oneself, other people or with nature, and being active (Dickinson et al., 2011; Fullagar, 2012; Oh et al., 2014). In addition a new motivating factor has been identified in relation to the local tourists – patriotism – which works as both a push and pull factor. Nature was identified as another important pull factor for slow tourism which has been overlooked in the literature. Overall, the findings of this study complement those of earlier studies and at the same time suggest new push and pull factors that are relevant in slow tourism.
6. This study furthers understanding of the application of the slow philosophy in destination management. The results provide theoretical insights in two areas. Firstly, the study has identified several constraints for slow tourism. So far constraints for slow tourism as an area of discussion have gained little attention in the literature. The only constraints that have been explicitly stated in the literature are the availability of time and constraints related to travel modes

(Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). The results suggest that there are structural and intrapersonal constraints for slow tourism. The structural constraints are related to destinations and service providers while intrapersonal constraints are related to tourists themselves. Intrapersonal constraints are tourist-specific while structural constraints are country-specific. The actual behaviour and practices of tourists while on holiday are a response to the tourism systems available in that particular place, and are mainly determined and constrained by factors external to them. Consequently slow tourism practices in particular destinations are influenced by country-specific factors especially in relation to mobilities. While the individual constraints might not be specific to slow tourism, a combination of destination, tourism service provider and tourist constrains that were identified in this study provides a framework for better understanding the barriers to slow tourism. Secondly, the findings suggest that storytelling positively contributes to slow tourism. The importance of storytelling in tourism in general has been emphasized in the literature (Bryon, 2012; Moscardo, 2010; Mossberg, 2008; N. Scott et al., 2009), but not in the context of slow tourism. Yet both the supply and demand side representatives emphasized that storytelling plays an important role in facilitating slow tourism. These new insights contribute to the existing body of literature regarding the application of a slow philosophy in destination management.

7. This study also contributes to the knowledge by furthering understanding of the application of a slow philosophy in destination marketing. While previous studies have examined this concept at city level in relation to Cittáslow brand (Mayer & Knox, 2006; Miele, 2008; Nilsson et al., 2011) or at regional level (de la Barre, 2012), this study analysed the application of a slow philosophy in destination marketing at national level. The results provide theoretical insights in two areas. Firstly, this study has identified the main challenges for the successful application of a slow destination brand. The results of this study show that the effectiveness of a slow destination brand as a promotional tool at national level depends on the capacity of the national tourism destination marketing organization to encourage the application of that brand, ensuring the ongoing communication of that brand and its values, and providing clear guidelines on how the brand can be used.

Secondly, this study suggests that a slow destination brand has the capacity to work as a pull for repeat visits by foreign tourists and as both a push and pull factor for local tourists. The slow brand as a pull factor for repeat visitors has been suggested at the city level in relation to the Cittáslow brand (Robinson, 2011) but not at the national level. The potential of the brand to address both push and pull factors for local tourists has not been recognized in the literature so far. These empirical findings provide new insights into the application of a slow philosophy in destination marketing at national level.

5.2.2 Methodological contributions

The methodological contribution of this study is related to sampling slow tourists. It is suggested to use specific criteria to identify people who engage in slow tourism rather than look for self-identified slow tourists in non-English speaking countries. This is related to the fact that non-English speaking tourists are often not aware of 'slow tourism' and do not use 'slow tourist' label to identify themselves. The criteria for sampling slow tourists can be their length of stay at the destination and their willingness to explore the destination more thoroughly, experiencing local culture and getting to know local people and their traditions.

5.3 Recommendations

This study provides several managerial implications; these are related to tourism policy makers and tourism service providers wanting to provide offerings that are compatible with slow tourism.

5.3.1 Recommendations for tourism policy makers

1. Currently it would make little sense to promote slow tourism as a new form of tourism in Latvia. Therefore, tourism policy makers would be better off incorporating and promoting the slow philosophy within existing types of tourism.
2. This study highlights the necessity of developing a practical toolkit for implementing a slow destination brand. Tourism policy makers are advised to provide clear guidelines and develop a practical toolkit for actual brand implementation strategies that tourism industry in Latvia could use. Such toolkits have been used elsewhere in tourism destination marketing such as a Sense of Monmouthshire toolkit aimed at small and medium sized tourism businesses in Monmouthshire County in south-east Wales (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2010).
3. Tourism policy makers need to ensure ongoing internal communication with the tourism industry about the brand and its values. Currently there is insufficient communication about the national tourism brand and its meaning that lead to various interpretations – and sometimes even confusion – about what the brand stands for.
4. In terms of external communication aimed towards tourists, tourism policy makers need to communicate different messages to local and foreign tourists. The results of this study show that slow tourism is linked with appreciating local tourism resources and that patriotism can work as both a push and pull factor for local tourists. Therefore, tourism policy makers are advised to continue their work on addressing the attitudes of locals regarding travelling locally. This can be done by emphasizing local values, the local resources that are worth visiting and the benefits of local travel. The results also show that slow tourism can potentially be a second trip or repeat visit for foreign tourists. Tourism policy makers can take the opportunity of tourists who are already in Latvia for a short visit (e.g. a city break or a business trip) by providing inspiration for their next trip to Latvia and encouraging them to return.
5. Tourism policy makers can make use of extrinsic and intrinsic push motivations as well as pull motivations that were identified in this study in order to attract

tourists. It is also possible to use a combination of different motivations in marketing communications.

6. Another area of improvement where tourism policy makers can have a co-ordinating role is the provision of comprehensive information about tourism service providers and tourism in general that would be user-friendly not only to local but also to foreign tourists. While examples of good practice exist throughout Latvia, fragmented information about tourism service providers and tourism in general was identified as one of the constraints for slow tourism.
7. Tourism policy makers need to ensure consistent strategic direction in terms of tourism destination branding policy. In other words, it is recommended to develop and promote the existing tourism destination brand which has gained acceptance and is perceived positively within the tourism industry. A change in the current destination branding policy can result in tourism policy makers losing their reputation and trust and can cause frustration within the tourism industry.

5.3.2 Recommendations for tourism service providers

1. This study suggests tourism service providers consider using all four realms of experience – escapist, educational, aesthetic and entertainment – in developing slow tourism offerings. Tourists are looking for a variety experiences in slow tourism; therefore service providers should look for ways how to offer such experiences.
2. If offering all four types of experiences mentioned above is challenging for individual service providers, diversity can be ensured across a broader region through the co-operation of other service providers. Such complex tourism offerings contribute to longer stays and facilitate slow tourism. Therefore, it is recommended that tourism service providers create opportunities for longer stays by offering complex tourism experiences either themselves or in partnership with other providers.
3. This study suggests service providers use stories and storytelling to make experiences more meaningful to tourists and consequently slow them down. The

results show that storytelling can add an entertainment aspect to tourism offerings. As a result, by providing stories and storytelling service providers can not only diversify their tourism offerings but also facilitate slow tourism.

4. Tourism service providers are advised to use the slow label with caution. Few people are familiar with the slow tourism concept and the slow tourism label lacks wider recognition in Latvia. Those tourists who know the brand often expect more sophisticated, exclusive, expensive and high-quality tourism offerings. Tourism service providers should be aware of such expectations and critically evaluate whether their tourism offerings can meet them if they consider labelling their tourism offerings as 'slow'. At the same time it is advised to incorporate the elements of slowness in various tourism products even if they are not labelled as 'slow'.
5. Although the results of this study show that slow tourists are not a distinctive category and slow tourism can be practiced by anyone, tourism service providers could think about developing strategies regarding how to attract and encourage longer stays from certain market segments such as small groups of friends and families with children. These segments have been identified during this study as the most appropriate and most willing to engage in slow tourism. However, tourism service providers should consider the compatibility of different segments when developing such strategies.
6. The results of this study show that interaction between tourism service providers and customers can enhance slow tourism experiences. Therefore, tourism service providers should recognize the importance of this and create opportunities for such interactions.
7. Tourism service providers should ensure that they provide comprehensive, detailed and user-friendly information for local and foreign tourists as well as destination marketing organizations. The results of the study show that slow tourists are relatively flexible in their trip planning and especially in relation to their en route activities. Therefore, adequate information about the activities at the destination is important in facilitating slow tourism.

5.4 Limitations

1. The findings of this study represent a status quo at the moment of time when data were collected. It is possible that the understanding and interpretations the respondents provided may change to some degree over time.
2. This study focused on slow tourism and slow tourists in Latvia. It is difficult to locate slow tourism within the administrative borders of one country especially if slow tourism is considered as the overall journey, including not only destination experience but also the journeys to and from a destination.
3. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the sample of respondents was relatively small. Different sampling strategies were used to ensure research participants could provide valuable and in-depth information for this study. This is referred to as 'the selection of information-rich cases' (Patton, 2002) that allows in-depth understanding of the phenomena to be gathered and examined.
4. There is a danger that some meanings might be lost in translation. The interviews have been conducted in three different languages – Latvian, English, and German. Interviews in Latvian and German needed further translation into English although direct translation was not always possible. Some participants have answered in English even though it was not their mother tongue which might have limited their ability to express themselves fully. In either case, the context of the conversation was always taken into account and the meaning was translated where direct translation was not possible.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

1. More research can be undertaken to test some of the concepts in a **quantitative study**. Future research can use a survey with slow tourists to measure the relative importance of four dimensions of slow travel and tourism. Another survey can be carried out to assess the relative importance of four realms of slow tourism experiences.

2. Further research might examine the role of **culture** in slow tourism, i.e. whether tourists from particular societies, cultures and countries are more inclined to engage in slow tourism. It is acknowledged that society and sociological factors affect tourist motivation (Sharpley, 1994) and some motivations are culture or destination-specific. For example, the study of Kozak (2002) among British and German tourists visiting Mallorca and Turkey shows that relaxation and pleasure are the most important tourism motivations regardless of the nationalities of tourists or the types of destination they had chosen. Other motivations, however, are culture or destination specific. For example, German tourists had more culture and nature-oriented motivations while British tourists were more likely to be motivated by having fun and socializing with other tourists (ibid.). Turkey was chosen more for cultural and physical motivations (e.g. getting close to nature, engaging in sports, and being active) than Mallorca. Another reason for examining the role of culture in slow tourism is that cultural differences influence the image that individuals hold about the destination (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). A study of Santana-Jiménez and Hernández (2011) shows that while Germans prefer less crowded destinations, Britons are less affected by overcrowding and are attracted to destinations with high densities of people. In other words Germans are more sensitive to overcrowding than Britons when it comes to choosing a destination to travel to. If escape from daily life is considered to be one of the push factors in slow tourism, perceived overcrowding can influence a destination's appeal and its pull.
3. While the role of travel **companions** was discussed in relation to the choice of transport, and interpersonal barriers were not identified as constraints (Crawford & Godbey, 1987) for slow tourism, future work should be undertaken to investigate the role of the travel party in slow tourism in general.
4. Further research might explore the possibility of engaging in slow tourism in a **group**. The results of this study show that slow tourism is associated with individual tourists. However, a few respondents noted that joining a group for a day excursion is compatible with slow tourism. Sometimes the option of joining a group was suggested as the easiest way to experience certain tourism offerings. In addition respondents acknowledged that some slow tourism related products are

available to groups and not individual tourists. In other words tourists cannot get these products individually but only as a member of group.

5. While only one foreign tourist was a repeat visitor to Latvia, further studies need to be carried out to assess the potential of slow tourism to generate **repeat visits** among foreign tourists. A potential market for repeat visitors are also people who are looking for their roots as well as 'homesick tourists', i.e. people who left the country due to the Second World War (Marschall, 2015). This potential target market for slow tourism was suggested by a couple of tourism destination marketers.

Appendix 1

History of Latvian Tourism Development Agency

1991	Establishment of the Department of Foreign Economic Relations with Tourism Section
1992	Establishment of Tourism Department within the Ministry of Transport
1993	Tourism Department transferred to the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (VARAM), establishment of the public organization Latvian Council of Tourism (LTP)
January, 1998	Establishment of State Tourism Administration under VARAM that proceeds the work of Latvian Council of Tourism (LTP)
October, 1998	Parliament adopts Tourism Law (in force from January, 1999)
February, 1999	Latvian Tourism Development Agency (LTDA) established
July, 2002	First official Latvian tourism brand “Latvia. Land that sings” (in Latvian – “ <i>Latvija. Zeme, kas dzied</i> ”) introduced providing unifying marketing theme in destination logo & slogan. The logo & slogan had been selected through open competition
September, 2002	Reorganization of LTDA
March, 2003	LTDA is under the Ministry of Economics (previously under VARAM)
September, 2007	Rumours about merging LTDA and Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA)
June, 2009	LTDA director U. Vitolins resigns after being in a post for 5 years
August, 2009	New LTDA director A. Slokenbergs appointed
March, 2010	Latvian Tourism Marketing Strategy 2010-2015
March, 2010	Presentation of Latvian new tourism brand “Latvia. Best enjoyed slowly” The logo and slogan is designed by an advertising agency
2011	Latvian Tourism Marketing External Communication Strategy 2011-2014
July, 2014	Rumours that LTDA director will be ‘rotated’ (appointed in a position in another government agency)
September, 2014	Plans to ‘rotate’ LTDA director to another institution; industry protests
January, 2015	LTDA director A. Slokenbergs resigns due to the lack of enthusiasm
March, 2015	Ministry of Economics announces vacancy for LTDA director; the search ends with no results
December, 2015	Parliament accepts changes in the Tourism Law which anticipates incorporation of LTDA in Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA)
February, 2016	Tourism policy and functions of LTDA are taken over by newly created Tourism department within LIAA; LTDA officially liquidated.

Appendix 2

List of key empirical studies on slow travel and tourism and slow travellers & tourists (in chronological order)

Author (year)	Research topic	Perspective		Methodology		Comments	Terminology
		Supply	Demand	Qualitative	Quantitative		
Germann Molz (2009)	Speed and sense of pace in tourism mobilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (websites and blogs used to analyse popular discourses on slow travel) 		Analysis of media representations and social discourses; Interpretive approach			Slow travel
Dickinson, Robbins & Lumsdon (2010)	Slow travel and climate change		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (15 interviews, 18 participants; slow and non-slow travellers – future and past) 	In-depth interviews; Discourse analysis		Two-phase interview – before and after travel (with the same participants)	Slow travel , slow travellers
Dickinson, Lumsdon & Robbins (2011)	Slow travel and climate change		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (12 interviews, 15 participants; self-identified slow travellers – future and past) 	In-depth interviews; Discourse analysis		Data from two related studies	Slow travel , slow travellers
Lumsdon & McGrath	Conceptual framework of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (23 participants: tourism 		Grounded theory,			Slow travel

(2011)	slow travel, its categories	consultants, academics, writers)		inductive approach; In-depth interviews; Template analysis			
Yurtseven & Kaya (2011)	Concept of slow tourist		● (tourists – current)		Survey (391 respondents)	Survey – among Cittáslow visitors	Slow tourist
de la Barre (2012)	Relationship between remote regions and slow tourism	●		Narrative analysis; Textual data analysis		Texts from newspapers, magazines, documentary	Slow tourism, slow travel
Fullagar (2012)	Motivation for cycling as slow travel among women		● (17 participants – current)	Ethnography; In-depth interviews; feminist perspective		Interviews done during organized cycling tour	Slow travel
Gibson, Pratt & Movono (2012)	Community-based volunteer tourism / tribe tourism as a form of slow tourism	● (local community members involved in project)	● (tourists – current and past)	Case study approach; Semi-structured interviews; Personal observations	Online survey (205 past tourists)	Research team	Slow tourism
Groenendaal (2012)	Slow tourism initiatives by lifestyle	● (10 entrepreneurs)		In-depth interviews; Observations of	Content analysis (300 websites & weblogs);	First, quantitative, then qualitative	Slow tourism

	entrepreneurs			small tourism enterprises	questionnaires (101 respondents)	approach	
Lipman & Murphy (2012)	Relationship between slow tourism and work exchange programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (travellers – future, current, and past) 	Interviews (40 travellers)	2 Online surveys (pre-experience survey – 104 respondents; post-experience survey – 129 respondents)		Slow tourism
Robbins & Cho (2012)	Concept of slow travel, motivations of slow travellers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (analysis of 35 threads including 165 posts in online forum for slow travel) 	Netnography			Slow travel, Slow travellers
Robinson (2012)	Concept of slow tourist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (57 tourists – current; 136 slow supporters, online community members – researchers, practitioners) 			Survey (face-to-face; online); Quantitative analysis; Textual content analysis	2 surveys: 1) Cittáslow visitors; 2) members of online communities	Slow tourist
Tiyce & Wilson (2012)	Relationship between slow travel and wandering		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (travellers – current) 	Ethnography; In-depth interviews (62); Semi-structured		Interviews and conversations – with solo, partnered, and	Slow travel

				conversations (200); Constructivist, grounded approach to analysis		group travellers	
Oh, Assaf & Baloglu (2014)	Motivations and goals of slow tourism		● (tourists – past)	Expert interviews – written answers (3 respondents); Focus group (10 past travellers)	Online survey (1068 past tourists)	First, qualitative, then quantitative “Experts” – researchers who have published article on slow tourism or related topic	Slow tourism

Appendix 3

List of key studies on slow philosophy in destination marketing and management (in chronological order)

Author (year)	Research topic	Perspective		Methodology		Empirical data		Ideas relevant to destination marketing / management
		Supply	Demand	Qualitative	Quantitative	Yes	No	
Matos (2003)	Slow tourism in Alpine regions	•					•	Slow tourism as alternative to winter sports and sustainable tourism development in Alpine regions; Slowness as effective marketing concept
Knox (2005)	Slow Cities in fast world	•					•	Importance of promoting local distinctiveness and sense of place in Slow Cities; Opportunities and challenges associated with Slow City brand recognition
Mayer & Knox (2006)	Slow Cities as sustainable places in fast world	• (20 elected officials, planning staff members, environmental non-profit		Case study; Interviews (telephone, face-to-face); Observations ; Text analysis (planning		•		Slow Food and Slow City movement as alternative urban economic development (sustainable urban development); Slow City label as a

		representatives, small business owners from two Slow Cities)		documents, newspaper articles, online resources)				powerful marketing tool
Miele (2008)	Producing slowness in Cittáslow against fast life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (members, chefs, and governors of Slow Food movement; representatives of Cittáslow, civil servants) 		Interviews; Informal conversations; Participant observations; Text analysis (websites and planning documents)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		Territorial marketing and city branding practices by Cittáslow member cities
Pink (2008)	Sense and sustainability in Slow City context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (analysis of Cittáslow labelled projects, policies, and practices; producers and consumers) 		Ethnography; Case study; Sensory analysis; Participant observation, Interviews, visual ethnography methods		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		Cittáslow projects as sustainable urban development tools (model for local governance); Role of Cittáslow projects in helping to maintain smaller local businesses; Sensory engagement in Cittáslow projects and co-production of experiences
Conway & Timms (2010)	Slow tourism as alternative tourism for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ("prototype" examples of slow tourism described; 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Slow tourism as a viable promotional identity / promotional umbrella

	remote locales in the Caribbean	the Caribbean diaspora identified as potential tourists and entrepreneurs)						for alternative tourist offerings
Cho (2011)	Comparative study of Slow City and urban region		• (residents of both regions)		Questionnaire (268 respondents); Factor analysis, correlation analysis, t-test	•		Slow City as a regional development tool that contributes to residents' quality of life
Nilsson, Svärd, Widarsson & Wirell (2011)	Cittáslow as tool for destination development	• (local officials involved in Cittáslow projects and Slow Food representatives) (9 interviews, 10 participants)		Case study; Interviews; Observations in cities (before & after interviews)		•		Application of Cittáslow brand in destination marketing; Cittáslow as destination and tourism development tool
Timms & Conway (2011)	Slow tourism at the Caribbean's geographical margins	•					•	Slow tourism as a viable soft growth model in Caribbean geographical margins that diversifies & revitalizes mature mass tourism industry
de la Barre (2012)	Relationship between remote regions and	•		Narrative analysis; Textual data analysis;		•		Marketing territory as slow tourism destination by promoting experiential

	slow tourism			Texts from newspapers, magazines, documentary				values associated with slow travel
Gibson, Pratt & Movono (2012)	Community-based volunteer tourism / tribe tourism as a form of slow tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (local community members involved in project) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (tourists – current and past) 	Case study approach; Semi-structured interviews; Personal observations	Online survey (205 past tourists)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		Slow tourism project as tourism development and destination management tool (on an island)
Myrayama & Parker (2012)	Slow tourism as rural regeneration tool in Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (local government authorities, businesses, local people) 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Application of slow concept in regional planning and policy documents; Application of slow concept and slow tourism as promotional tool
Singh (2012)	Philosophical and practical aspects of slow travel development in Indian culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Practical aspects (management and marketing issues) of slow travel development in India
Cosar, Timur & Kozak	Influence of Slow City in context of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (24 owners & managers of) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (26 domestic tourists) 	Interviews (on site – in Slow City)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		Effects of Slow City on tourism development; Contribution of Slow

(2013, 2015)	sustainable destination marketing	tourism establishments; 22 local people)						City status as a promotional tool in tourism marketing
Cosar & Kozak (2014)	Slow tourism (Cittáslow) influence over visitors' behaviour		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (26 domestic tourists) (the same sample as in Cosar, Timur & Kozak (2013, 2015)) 	Interviews (on site – in Slow City)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		Slow City image as a motivator to visit destination for domestic tourists
Di-Clemente, Hernández-Mogollón, De Salvo & Campón-Cerro (2014)	Slow tourism as alternative model for local and tourist development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Conceptualization of slow tourism from supply side perspective – management and territorial marketing; Determining elements for slow tourism development approach
Ekinci (2014)	Cittáslow philosophy in context of sustainable tourism development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (11 mayors/ governors of current & potential Cittáslow) 			E-mail survey; Comparative descriptive analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		Cittáslow philosophy / membership requirements as a tool for sustainable tourism development

Appendix 4

YOUR TRAVEL EXPERIENCES IN LATVIA

September, 2014

Dear Hotel Guest,

My name is Zanda Serdane and I am currently conducting a research on “Slow travellers in slow countries: the case of Latvia” as part of the requirements for the researcher’s Doctor of Philosophy studies. Therefore, I am looking for travellers who would like to take part in the study.

Travelling slowly or slow travel is about taking time to explore the destination more thoroughly and to experience the local culture, staying at the destination for several days, getting to know local people and their traditions. It is also about quality over quantity – resisting the urge to rush and see as much as possible but rather taking time to discover and enjoy things which lead to deeper and better travel experiences.

If this travel philosophy suits you and can be used to describe your travel here in Riga or Latvia, I would be happy to hear about your travel experiences.

You can contact me by email (z.serdane@edu.salford.ac.uk) or via skype (username: zansers). Besides Latvian, I can communicate in English, Russian, and German.

Thank you in advance for your help with this study!

Kind regards,

Zanda Serdane
PhD Candidate
Salford Business School
University of Salford
Salford, Greater Manchester
M5 4WT
United Kingdom

Appendix 5

List of research participants

Name	Category	Description / relevance to research	Type of data collection method
P1	Local tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Face-to-face interview
P2	DMO representative	TIC manager, Vidzeme region	Face-to-face interview
P3	DMO representative	TIC manager, Kurzeme region	Face-to-face interview
P4	DMO representative	LTDA representative	Face-to-face interview
P5	DMO representative	LTDA representative	Face-to-face interview
P6	Local tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism; has written blog about slow tourism in Latvia	Face-to-face interview
P7	Local tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism; Sports velo tourist	Face-to-face interview
P8	Private sector	Owner of a local travel agency which offers guided tours around Latvia for small groups; considers most of the clients to be slow travellers	Face-to-face interview
P9	Local tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Face-to-face interview
P10	DMO representative	TIC manager, Latgale region	Face-to-face interview
P11	NGO representative	Slow Food Riga representative	Face-to-face interview
P12	DMO representative	TIC manager, Vidzeme region	Face-to-face interview
P13	Private sector	Narrow rail railway	Face-to-face interview
P14	DMO representative	TIC manager, Latgale region	Face-to-face interview
P15	DMO representative	TIC manager, Latgale region	Face-to-face interview
P16	NGO representative	Member of Latvian Ecotourism society	Face-to-face interview
P17	DMO representative	“Live Riga” brand representative, foundation Riga Tourism Development Bureau	Face-to-face interview
P18	Local tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Skype interview

P19	Local tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Face-to-face interview
P20	Foreign tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Skype interview
P21	Foreign tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Face-to-face interview
P22	Foreign tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Written answers to open-ended questions
P 23	Foreign tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Written answers to open-ended questions
P 24	Foreign tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Written answers to open-ended questions
P 25	DMO representative	TIC manager, Vidzeme region	Face-to-face interview
P 26	DMO representative	Regional tourism association	Skype interview
P 27	DMO representative	TIC manager, Vidzeme region	Face-to-face interview
P 28	DMO representative	TIC manager, Vidzeme region	Face-to-face interview
P 29	DMO representative	TIC manager, Kurzeme region	Face-to-face interview
P 30 P 31	Private sector	Owners of an accommodation business; offer slow tourism related products	Face-to-face interview
P 32	DMO representative	TIC manager, Zemgale region	Face-to-face interview
P 33	DMO representative	TIC manager, Kurzeme region	Face-to-face interview
P 34	DMO representative	TIC representative, Zemgale region	Face-to-face interview
P 35	Private sector	Travel agency	Face-to-face interview
P 36	DMO representative	TIC manager, Kurzeme region	Face-to-face interview
P 37	Foreign tourist	Has engaged in slow tourism	Written answers to open-ended questions

Appendix 6

College of Arts & Social Sciences
Room 631 Maxwell Building
The Crescent
Salford, M5 4WT
Tel: 0161 295 5876

14 May 2014

Zanda Serdane
University of Salford

Dear Zanda

Re: Ethical Approval Application – CASS130021

I am pleased to inform you that based on the information provided, the Research Ethics Panel have no objections on ethical grounds to your project.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Woodman

On Behalf of CASS Research Ethics Panel

Appendix 7

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

The research – “Slow travellers in slow countries: the case of Latvia” – is being conducted as part of the requirements for the researcher’s Doctor of Philosophy studies, University of Salford, United Kingdom. As such, the research will contribute to the existing gap in knowledge about slow travellers and provide a better understanding of their actual slow travel practices and experiences. Outcomes are likely to include a PhD thesis and publications in academic journals.

The primary aim of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of slow travel practice and its antecedents through the motivations and experiences of self-identified slow travellers and the strategic marketing activities of the tourism destination marketing organization in Latvia (Latvian Tourism Development Agency). Therefore, the research will explore actual slow travel practices, by studying slow travel from both self-identified slow travellers’ and tourism destination marketing organization perspectives.

Your participation in the research is highly appreciated. It will involve an in-depth interview which will last approximately one hour. You will have an opportunity to withdraw at any stage in the proceedings without giving reasons and without penalty. Your anonymity will be ensured at all stages of the research process including any subsequent publication of the findings. Should you have any questions regarding the study, my contact details are provided below.

Thank you in advance for your help with this study!

Zanda Serdane
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University of Salford
Salford, Greater Manchester
M5 4WT
United Kingdom
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Appendix 8

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please, read the following statements carefully and tick each box if you agree:

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the research. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and have had satisfactory answers to any questions I have asked. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may, at any time, withdraw from the interview without giving any reason and without penalty. I am aware that my anonymity has been guaranteed. ☐
3. I agree that my discussion during the interview is audio-recorded for transcript purposes. ☐

OR

- I DO NOT agree that my discussion is audio-recorded for transcript purposes but agree that written notes are taken. ☐
4. I have been fully informed about the research and agree to participate in the study. ☐

_____	____/____/____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature

_____	____/____/____	_____
Name of researcher	Date	Signature

1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher

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