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Slow adventure: from natural concept to consumer desire

Peter J. Varley, Edward H. Huijbens, Steve Taylor, Daniel Laven

Slow adventure: from natural concept to consumer desire

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Table of contents

Abstract vii

Biographical notes ix

Preface xi

1 Introduction 1

2 Adventure tourism 3

2.1 Slow adventure: selling ‘nothing’? 3

2.2 Contrasting ‘fast’ adventure 4

3 Methods 6

4 Discussions of Findings 8

4.1 Nostalgia and tradition 8

4.2 Doing and sharing 9

4.3 Escape and disconnection 10

5 Conclusions 12

6 Acknowledgement 14

7 References 15

Abstract

The emergent theme of slow adventure suggests potential for a more sustainable form of tourism in sparsely populated and remote areas. However, research into viable consumer markets, mind-sets and ideologies, and ways to address them, has been lacking to date. This lacuna is addressed with results from a three-year European research project. First, the slow adventure concept's applicability for peripheral areas is interrogated; second, present consumer trend and media analysis research is discussed, linking nature and mediated, shared outdoor living experiences to emergent contemporary consumption practice. Finally, the potential for marketing outdoor experience packages is considered, as is the appeal to contemporary consumer dreams: escape, communitas, shared learning, and simplicity.

Keywords: slow adventure; nature; periphery; consumer trends; digitisation

Biographical notes

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Preface

Slow Adventure in Northern Territories (SAINT) was a three-year project (2015-2018) co-financed by the European Union's Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme (http://www.interreg-npa.eu/). The SAINT project (http://saint.interreg-npa.eu/) drew together a range of partners – research centres, local government and SMEs – in Scotland, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Northern Ireland and Sweden. It sought to capitalise on the current interest in nature-based outdoor experiences, building on the exploratory work undertaken on slow adventure in two 'parallel' projects supported through the NPA and the North Atlantic Co-operation . The project aimed to help the NPA address a number of challenges facing the region, from peripherality and low access to international key markets to diversifying rural economies and population issues such as youth out-migration.

The focus of the SAINT project was primarily to work with micro-businesses to improve their promotion of what the project conceptualised as slow adventure activities and extend their marketing reach to new overseas and domestic consumers. To effect this the partners sought to make SMEs more aware of new, lucrative markets to which to promote slow adventure activities and to increase SME awareness of how to effectively target these markets, through the use of new, technology-oriented marketing models and clustering approaches, both local/regional and trans-national.

The project had four core 'work packages':

- National/regional research to try to quantify and define the existing market and to determine and understand a) what the new related consumer trends are; b) which consumers to target and why; and c) how ro engage these customer groups.

- The core of the project was a work package aimed at helping SMEs in this sector to develop and test new marketing and collaboration approaches, to: create a new joint brand, target high-value customers and trans-nationally cluster SMEs together.

- New technology and the slow adventure experience, exploring the use of new, predominantly mobile, technologies in supporting the development of 'greater market reach' for SMEs in the sector.

- 'Two-eyed Seeing' sought to examine and integrate the combined strengths of both Western and Indigenous ways of packaging and marketing 'slow adventure' activities and understanding the cultural, health, linguistic, environmental and psychological benefits of such experiences.

The aim of this report is to situate the development and concepts of slow adventure experiences in an analysis of consumer trends, and consider how these experiences can appeal to consumer yearnings for an escape from the pace and strictures of contemporary urban life.

1 Introduction

> It's only 8pm, and as I drift off towards sleep, a tawny owl's hoot echoes around the valley and rain patters on gently the canvas. The tent interior has a silvery moonlit glow and my woolly hat smells of the smoke from the campfire. Tomorrow we will pack up and trog through bracken and bog, then up and over the pass to the sea, and our boat to take us home. Right now that's a long way away, and it feels fine.
>
> Observations during a "Wild Norway" orientation experience 'Hotel Spruce'
>
> Trondelag, Norway. May 2015

The emergence of 'slowness' as a politicised lifestyle theme in the late 1970s entailed a cultural shift towards a simpler, less materialistic and more actively sustainable pace of life, set against the accelerating pace of a digitalised globalising world (Armitage, 2000; Redhead, 2004; Gottschalk, 2018). Following this, the 'slow movement' as a consumer ideology has predominantly been related to slow food (Slow Food, 2015), whereby fast food culture, epitomised by Fordist methods of rationalisation towards assuring efficiency and product consistency, is critiqued (Ritzer, 1993). In a similar fashion, slow tourism mobilities and their associated experiences have become an emergent theme of research within the wider cultural zeitgeist of slowness (Fullagar, Markwell, & Wilson, 2012). This paper follows this emergent theme by situating outdoor adventure tourism practices within a wider gamut of slow tourism.

Combining slowness with outdoor adventure might appear counter-intuitive, with the latter generally associated with thrill and adrenaline-pumping excitement. What makes for one's sense of adventure is indeed culturally specific in this way, and thus highly subjective. Moreover, authors contributing to what might be termed the Nordic School of tourism research situate adventures in outdoor settings as part and parcel of a socially constructed 'wilderness' (Sæþórsdóttir, Hall, & Saarinen, 2011; Sæþórsdóttir, 2014). These wild areas of Northern Europe offer wide-open spaces, low population densities and a cultural history celebrating outdoor living skills and practices. Much of the Nordic tourism literature provides key insights into tourists' search for connection and engagement with natural environments, construing their own wilderness spaces through a range of activities labelled 'friluftsliv', clumsily translated as 'free-air-life' – outdoor life and leisure (Gelter, 2000; Huijbens & Benediktsson, 2013; Rantala & Valtonen, 2014; Varley & Semple, 2015; Røkenes, Schumann, & Rose, 2015). Little attention, however, has been paid to how wider consumer trends and associated travel desires might be leveraged in the process. The idea of 'slow adventure' tourism rests upon experiential products for urban consumers, curated and delivered by a human resource base of talented outdoor guides. To date, little research has focused on the veracity of the concept in terms of potential market demand.

This paper will address these concerns and is developed around some of the key findings derived from a three-year European project. The principal aim of the project was to work with outdoor recreation businesses and local policy makers in identifying opportunities for slow adventure, through concepts originally conceived to address the lacunae represented by the over-focus on risk and excitement in adventure tourism (Varley & Semple, 2015). In this paper, the original slow adventure ideas are combined with an analysis of the relevant consumer trends. The first step is to situate the concept, and then to consider how these trends support the notion that such tourism products are part of a new 'responsible' and 'romantic' consumer zeitgeist supportive of small-scale sustainable rural business.

2 Adventure tourism

For Urbain (1989) all recreation and tourism activities are essentially a form of 'identity adventure'. Framed by modern day culture, the constructed 'meaning' of adventure is stretched along a continuum. It is propelled by the lived, emotional and bodily experiences and interpretations of the individual (Varley, 2006). It is this subjectivity that is, according to Weber (2001), underrepresented in both the articulation of adventure and in associated research. If, following Mitchell (1983) and, later, Varley (2006), adventure is in essence predominantly a state of mind, the challenge is how to sculpt some organizational form from a notion whose very existence depends upon the fluidity of our emotions, imagination and physiological responses.

2.1 Slow adventure: selling 'nothing'?

In the wide-open spaces of mountain regions, national parks and lightly populated areas of Northern Europe, 'nothingness' presents problems in terms of tourism development (Müller, 2011). Firstly, small mountain and coastal settlements tend to have fragile, seasonal economies and low tourism carrying capacity. Secondly, tourist focus tends to be on a few key vistas or attractions (waterfalls, fjords, or mountains, for example). The draw of these particular phenomena is either their romanticised consumption as places free from human encroachment, and/or the draw to adventure in the outdoors – in the mountains, on the sea, in the forests. Oddly, this would seem to downplay their potential 'nothingness' by introducing a host of resources and gear to tackle particular challenges in the wild, such as white water rafting, ice climbing, rock climbing or super jeeps to traverse inhospitable and challenging terrain (Huijbens & Benediktsson, 2015). Alternatively, however, we posit that the latent value of these places may in fact be their openness for journeys, their emptiness, the lack of development, where the lives lived are imagined as simpler, closer to nature, less alienated… and slower.

Since the 1980s the slow movement has grown to encompass a variety of human practices including gastronomy (e.g. Slow Food) and the intersection between tourism and food (Robinson, Getz and Dolnicar, 2018; de Jong et al., 2018), city life (slow cities), economics (slow money) and travel (slow travel) (Salazar & Graburn, 2016; Slow Movement, 2018). Varley and Semple (2015) apply these values to outdoor leisure practices in coining the term slow adventure tourism. Their thesis is one favouring slow, immersive journeys, living in and travelling through wild places and natural spaces, and experiencing nature in its timeframe and rhythms (see also: MacNaghten & Urry, 2000; Edensor, 2010; Huijbens, 2016).

Slow adventure experiences are those conceived as having some affinity with feelings of oneness and connection with nature in wild places (McDonald, Wearing, & Ponting, 2009). A further elaboration of the concept can be construed through the four original components of slow adventure (from Varley and Semple (2015)):

- 'Time' is inevitably an important experiential component, and the awareness of time passing during outdoor journeys is felt during the 'passage' (see below) of the journey itself, and via natural change such as light and dark, tides and weather. In slow adventure, time does not merely pass, but is felt, in bodily rhythms of tiredness, sleep, wakefulness, and effort.
- The effects of 'nature' and of our membership of it are acute in slow adventures, due to the extended period of exposure to them. It is this direct engagement with natural forces which insists that participants envelop themselves in their environment; surrender to it even.
- Similarly, the term 'passage' refers not only to the journeying through a physical landscape, as opposed to the passage over the landscape of the passenger, but is also a journey of change and transformation: the navigation of self through time and space.
- 'Comfort' equally has several meanings in the context of slow adventure. Firstly, there is the process of becoming comfortable with the challenges presented by the journey and how it becomes inevitably inscribed upon the adventurer's body.

2.2 Contrasting 'fast' adventure

The fundamental counterpoint of slow adventure vis-a-vis fast adventure is that the latter adventure experiences are activity focused and tightly managed, with little time for engagement or immersion within the cultural contexts and natural environmental arenas of the action. The 'products' present as 'adventure in a bun' (Loynes, 1998), where convenience, conformity, comfort and ease of access are paramount and "disassociate people from their experience of community and place" (Loynes, 1998, p. 35).

To counter this, the slow movement favours a recognition of the often-overlooked richness of 'place': the elements, the landscape, the traditions and culture (Sims, 2009). Slow progress made through a landscape, nights spent under the stars attuned to natural flows, sleeping close to the ground, waking with the sunrise, engaging all the senses and the imagination: all open opportunities for enactment of a new temporality, a new 'everyday'. Slow adventure is thus grounded in place-embedded relationships and the reciprocal interactions of body and environment, such as the rhythmic plod of feet on earth and the slop and suck of a kayaker's paddle.

Slow adventure thus emerges here as a journey that is one of transformation and discovery, as a semi-nomadic practice of dwelling-in-motion, accepting life on its own terms and creating stories (Heidegger, 1971; Obrador-Pons, 2003; Ingold, 2010) which articulate a range of interactions, meanings and feelings through a contextually grounded and sensually experienced narrative. As such it contrasts notions of hyper- and lifestyle mobilities that have in many ways co-opted dwelling-in-motion (Cohen, Duncan, & Thulemark, 2013); being mobile per se is not enough to underpin a slow adventure tourism product.

Significant points of departure from the general thrust of much adventure tourism literature in general are therefore contingent upon the accent on slowness and the slow movement's ineluctable rise to prominence in global consumption practice. Here the paper builds on extensive three-year project in Northern Europe that focusses on new consumer consciousness and values, as likely new drivers for the consumption of slow adventure.

3 Methods

Key to situating the concept of slow adventure as outlined above is to relate it to particular settings and consumer typologies. This was the task of the authorial team during the project. It entailed a multi-partner analysis of a range of secondary consumer research data, thematically analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify the patterns and trends and related to existing wider tourism literature. These form the basis of the evolving discussions below. From a methodological perspective, this approach borrows from well-established qualitative research methodologies (see for example: Patton, 2015), applied in recent studies (see for example Moyle, Moyle, Chai, Hales, Banhalmi-Zakar & Bec (2018))

Before situating the concept, an action-research intervention was conducted in which all project partners were prompted to defend and agree upon their ideas of what 'slow adventure' should and could be from a consumer perspective, building on the original ideas from Varley and Semple's (2015) paper. The refined definition, thus outlined and theoretically framed, came partially from the practitioner partners who were keen to establish professional parameters and ethical standards for the integrity of a potential slow adventure trademark (see Laven, et al., 2019). This provided a meter for the subsequent research, specifying what the slow adventure concept should entail as a tourism product.

Following this, the next research phase involved assembling a bricolage of contemporary consumer trends, market development reports, blogs and published research. This included a multi-partner, multi-method trawl, and a co-ordinated communication across the research effort led by the writing team, engaged in member sense-checking and discussion of moot points and disagreements (for example, whether there must be a 'night out' camping as part of the defined experience). This was an iterative process of distillation, theme development and refinement which arrived at the discursive headings used below. Data were collected from all the project partners, striving to capture the knowledge and expertise represented by the diversity of partners in the project, including academic institutions, tourism operators, regional policymakers and associated governmental organizations.

Report Type	Source	Country	Year
Marketing report	Metsähallitus	Finland	2012
Consultancy report	Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research	Scotland	2014
Industry report (adventure tourism)	World Tourism Organization	N/A	2014
Marketing report	VisitScotland	Scotland	2014
Marketing report	VisitScotland	Scotland	2014
Industry report (tourism)	Peak Adventure Travel Group and Skift Team	USA	2014
Newspaper article	The Guardian	UK	2015
Industry report (tourism)	Future Foundation	UK	2015
Marketing report	Visit Finland	Finland	2016
Industry report (adventure tourism)	Adventure Travel Trade Association	USA	2017

Table 1: Consumer trends research analysed

Building on the analysis of consumer trends, the research next determined, as far as possible: the relevance of new consumer trends and social commentaries; which individuals and groups could be favourably disposed to slow adventure ideas; and what are their motivating values, meanings and ideologies.

Lastly, utilising the methodological steps for thematic analysis described by Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules (2017), the authors' immersion in the emerging research material allowed them to identify core themes to be described. Regular core team communications allowed the researchers to review, agree and report the identified themes, having negotiated their meanings, insights and validity.

4 Discussions of Findings

The results of a focus group of project partners provided the conceptual architecture for situating slow adventure as a new marketing concept. The slow adventure experience definition was agreed to incorporate most or all of the following facets or elements:

- Human/nature-powered journeys.
- Physical effort.
- Cultural interpretation.
- Environmental interpretation.
- Practical outdoor skills.
- Local, slow or wild food and remedies.
- Wildlife tracking or watching opportunities.
- Storytelling.
- Inspiring emotional connection with the outdoors.

From these emergent definitions of slow adventure considerable accord was identified with the broader consumer/tourist trends from table 1. Building on the consumer trends analysis and following an iterative process of distillation and member-checking the following three themes began to emerge from the corpus.

4.1 Nostalgia and tradition

The term simplicity is used to denote a range of characteristics and feelings, all bound by a nostalgic fascination with a bygone era. Some of these sentiments are more immediately captured, e.g. in notions of tradition or a back-to-basics philosophy. Others have looser associations, whether a desire to spend time in wild areas in the face of people's increasingly urban modern lives, or a recognition that previous generations were less enticed by the sedentary entrapments that exemplify much of our urbanised contemporary leisure activity. Links to simpler times are popular, not only as part of the lifestyles of the bohemian avant-garde, perhaps best personified by the 'hipster' (Cumming, 2015), but also increasingly by consumer society at large.

In Iceland, for example, commensurate trends could be identified, where the revitalization of traditions, culture and craft as part of local identity have become more prevalent; these are manifest, for example, in new cuisine, where old household recipes are being remade by the latest restaurants in wild settings using foraged ingredients as observed in SE Iceland. Clothing can further reflect this. Designers and fashion stores in Reykjavik hark to a bygone era of Iceland with avant-garde wool garments (Lund, Kjartansdóttir, & Loftsdóttir, 2018). At the same time, research in Sweden and Norway suggests that tourists are attracted to natural areas to experience elements such as wilderness, remoteness and solitude (Wall-Reinius & Fredman, 2007), provoking a wealth of sentiment and support for diversifying tourism products with slow adventure.

Wall-Reinius & Bäck (2011) note two apparently competing, antagonistic trends in outdoor recreation: one supports a high level of wilderness, while the other favours a high level of comfort and infrastructure. The noticeable trend in increasing demand for higher levels of comfort, even in remote natural settings (Wall-Reinius, 2012; Fredman, Romild, Wolf-Watz, & Yuan, 2012), is tied to a growing middle-aged and older market segment (Ryan and Trauer (2005), cited in Wall-Reinius & Bäck, 2011). There are therefore two rather different recreational segments in the Scandinavian mountains, whose interests, needs, preferences and attitudes towards recreational landscape diverge yet can be combined, as observed during a project workshop in Fjallnas, Sweden. This combination could also be experienced in Scotland, where 'glamping', well-documented in the UK, suggests an embracing of tradition, nostalgia and comfort combined (VisitScotland, 2014), and a desire to converge these in wild, if not wilderness, areas.

4.2 Doing and sharing

The term sharing has different meanings within the context of the contemporary consumer culture. It pertains to the social aspects of consumer experience in the 'sharing economy' and the sharing of information and social capital, as well as loftier ideals around the notion of access and collaboration, as opposed to ownership, with great significance in terms of how people travel (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015). The impact of the present surge of innovations in internet-based sharing applications eases all kinds of exchange such as searching, exchanging and transferring experiences, dreams, ideas and stories. As with previous economic structural changes the nature of the firm is challenged, as is the trajectory of individual careers. Indeed, the internet-based economy seems to be breaking down barriers of all kinds, amongst them the structure of formal employment. Here, the success of AirBnB is illustrative, albeit one of the more widely discussed and contentious issues in tourism to date (Karlsson, Kemperman & Dolnicar, 2017; Ert & Fleischer, 2019; Mody, Suess & Dogru, 2019). From our findings a fascination with the opportunities present in that sharing economy could be observed: Firstly, from the perspective of entrepreneurs hoping to communicate their specific products and their stunning remote environments, and secondly, through allowing those visiting to communicate their stories of connectedness with nature and being.

Indeed, time shared with friends in nature can be an important motivation, providing 'post-experience communal effervescence' – sharing the excitement and stories of the day around a bar or the campfire in the evenings – is acknowledged as an important element of a slow adventure and a crucial soft skill for facilitators of such experiences (Taylor, Varley, & Heinenon, 2014). The Danish expression 'hygge' succinctly encapsulates this sense of community and cosiness (Varley, Farkic, & Carnicelli, 2018). It is recognised that there is growing trend away from 'what we did' or 'what we saw' to 'who we met' (Peak & Skift, 2014), making greater emotional connections to destinations and sharing time, and stories, with local folk. The enthusiastic embrace of social media platforms creates credible, free and effective sharing opportunities. The greater significance of peer power, as review sites become more trusted, is becoming a more important consumer driver, and

imaginative use of stories and powerful imagery undoubtedly sells products and was identified as playing a large role in promoting slow adventure experiences.

Knowledge and skills acquisition and storytelling form a valuable part of the experience, whether absorbing narratives about the history of the area, wildlife and nature, or indeed people's own ancestral connections, and these are stories people are keen to share. In this sense the current growth of the sharing economy can be a catalyst for both supply and demand.

4.3 Escape and disconnection

The theme of escapism has, unsurprisingly, long been a core theme in considerations of tourism motives and ideologies (see for example: Tuan, 1998, 2003; Cohen, 2010). Furthermore, in a world where millions share information, feelings and photos through their tablets and smartphones, digital disconnection may well become a selling point. 'Switching off the clock' (Martin, 2015) and having that personal space to reflect remain important drivers for many outdoor recreation enthusiasts, seeking the space of wild areas to find silence, solitude, and an absence of people (Wall-Reinius & Bäck, 2011). Unlike the 'social capital seeker', the future 'cultural purist' often sees "'technology' as a barrier between themselves and an authentic engagement" (The Future Foundation, 2015, p. 40). This group sees travel as a break from everyday pressures and is motivated by things 'untouched and uncharted', even if these elements are curated for them. VisitScotland (2014, p. 7) recognises this trend and cites the example of the Scottish Youth Hostel Association, which trialled such a digital detox, encouraging customers to "reconnect with nature, and undertake digital free pursuits". Similarly, 'silence, please' presents Finland as an antidote to the hectic pace of everyday life (Visit Finland, 2016).

This is not to suggest that slow adventures are bereft of the self-promotional social media(ted) images of the Snapchat and Instagram generations. Indeed, the spaces and places of slow adventure provide a perfect stage for the narcissistic subject, gazing wistfully to the horizon across wild vistas for their smart phone. Yoga in a clearing in the woods, kayaking around remote islands or the gaze from a canvas awning across an early dawn landscape all translate, beyond the existential peace, into valuable, hard-to access social capital; rich ingredients in the unfolding story of the postmodern tourist (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2016; Lyu, 2016).

"Arguably the most significant, systemic trend in worldwide tourism today is the demand for experiential travel" (Peak & Skift, 2014, p. 7); while the phrase 'experiential travel' is overused, "basically people want to travel better, on a deeper emotional and more personal level" (Ibid., 2014, p. 7). Quality, or 'travelling better', suggests a number of interpretations, from more meaningful and immersive experiences to comfort and luxury. The expertise of guides is a high value component of those experiences. Great levels of emotional awareness are required in the guides, as well as detailed knowledge of the landscape, environment and history that contribute much to the customer experience (see de la Barre, 2013). Slow

adventurers have time and opportunity to pause in the landscape and in nature: guides appreciate that 'wow' moments occur when this reflection time is allowed (Taylor, Varley, & Heinonen, 2014).

5 Conclusions

The findings of this paper are generated from a range of engagements in a Northern European project consortium, which focused on interrogating the veracity of the 'slow adventure' concept via analysis and application of Varley and Semple's original (2015) thesis. Consumer trends analyses, industry reports and monitors, academic articles and media stories were brought to bear on the problem, supported by case studies from Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Scotland. Three contemporary tourism themes for situating the slow adventure tourism concept emerged, underpinned by the original constituent elements of slow adventure: time, passage, nature and comfort.

Firstly, nostalgia and tradition are aspects of the trend for digitally savvy consumers to inhabit 'smart', sustainable modern homes but yearn to recreate simply, outdoors. This is already a fitting description of many lifestyles in Nordic countries but is likely to spread as a remedy to frenetic hypermodern, 'terminal' lives, lived in front of screens and keyboards (Gottschalk, 2018). The key element of time – slow, natural time and rhythm – is crucial in this context. The passing of the hours, of darkness into light, of moving weather and tide systems, all challenge industrial hyper-speed rhythms.

Next, a search for shared meaning (countering the much-documented isolation and fragmentation inherent in 21st century life) is most powerfully expressed in the doing and learning phases of outdoor adventure tourism, and particularly in slow adventures, where the customer is participant, not passenger. Remoteness, communal living and working towards a common goal are aspects of slow adventure that facilitate strong group bonding, co-created comfort and, in some, the formation of distinct ideas of identity or kinship as articulated by the concept of 'neo-tribes' (Maffesoli, 1996; Kiewa, 2002). Against a backdrop of the alienated and isolated modern subject (Auge, 2008; Gottschalk, 2018) outdoor recreation assumes an important role in bringing people together in subcultures where a sense of belonging, emotional commonality and communitas might be experienced (Wheaton, 2004; Robinson, 2008).

The final theme of escape and disconnection also touches on Varley and Semple's original conceptualization of slow adventure (2015). Escaping the press of urban lives and the disconnection from the pressure to be (virtually) in touch, to respond immediately, present yet never present, is enabled in many slow adventures. The journey itself, the physical effort and natural settings, remoteness and distance mean that constant attention to online activities becomes less of a priority, as accomplishing simple life, -crossing rivers, making shelter or preparing food - rises in importance. Thus the slow adventure traveller is not seeking out the distinct attraction, the spectacular or the wow factor of a defined destination; rather it is the 'journey, not the destination' that becomes focal, and the wilderness setting lends itself to experiences that are disruptive to the self and the body, whilst it conjures up and embraces the wild. The body "becomes the site of spatio-temporal praxis" (Rogers, 2015, p. 582) as it tunes into its own rhythms and the surroundings, producing the slow adventure experience.

The World Tourism Organisation declaration on adventure tourism (2014) underlines that the values of respect and sustenance for local communities, places and ecosystems should be at the core of every responsible tourism product, as enshrined in slow adventure's key principals. As such, 'slow adventure' is therefore not presented as a coherent theory, but rather as a conceptual framework for recognition of the significant potential for tourism development to the benefit of the world's more remote places and more fragile communities, and potentially also for society as a whole.

Today's nature-based traveller, whether conceptualised as ethical consumer, hipster (of any age), creative, millennial or new-ager type, seeks connections with nature, outdoor experiences and 'digital detox' beyond what is offered via high-adrenaline fast adventure activities. The idea of 're-connection via disconnection' – to self, to an apparently distant wilder world, and, perhaps more immediately, to others (Tribe & Mkono, 2017) is a significant one for tourism and society in the future. Against the backdrop of the Anthropocene, slow adventure thus draws attention to ontologies of being in the world, as opposed to merely consuming it; potentially of great relevance when it comes to reorienting our mind-sets faced with our current planetary state of emergency (Gren & Huijbens, 2019). The journey, and 'being there' in nature, become the superordinate values, as opposed to the glossed thrill, image capture and focused activity of extreme packaged adventure. What we have shown is that this slower adventuring orientation fits with a wider, emergent and questioning discourse on the future of tourism, on long-haul travel, and on the identity politics of consumption of the spectacular. Instead of thrills, spills and selfies, we argue that more correlative to contemporary consumer trends focusing on making, doing and being are the nearness, simplicity and authenticity of the slow adventure experience.

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