**CHAPTER**

**Embedding Slow Tourism and the ‘Slow Phases’ framework: the case of Cambridge, UK.**

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This chapter addresses current and future tourism opportunities and challenges for Cambridge (UK) and illustrates the potential role of ‘slow’ tourism as an antidote to what the authors previously referred to as the ‘one day tourist’ problematic (see Wilbert and Duignan, 2015). It outlines how the historic and internationally famous city of Cambridge is considering a reworking of its perspective on tourism management and the development of its destination experience. This process is currently underway with the 2016 introduction of Cambridge’s new regional Destination Management Organisation (DMO): ‘Visit Cambridge and Beyond’ (VCB). Decisions that regional tourism policy makers take will partly determine how visitors better engage with the city. Current policy now includes seeking tourists whom: i) stay longer, ii) increase tourist spending in the region, and more importantly iii) encourage tourists to visit a wider area than the main city centre where the current main tourist attractions are located. The new DMO and Wilbert and Duignan (2015) argue that it is through connecting up spaces and places that currently sit in individualised silos out of view by ‘normal’ visitor streams that a ‘slow tourism’ approach can be sought.

Through embedding a ‘slow tourism’ approach, aided in part by the ‘Slow Phases’ (SP) framework proposed in the latter section, regions can better re-distribute economic spending derived through the visitor economy toward less visible and more locally based businesses and communities and divert visitor experiences away from the more ‘spectacular’ elements of cities. This is particularly important in light of neoliberal globalisation; the on-going shift toward corporate chains through the ‘clone town’ effect, and the valorisation effects underway in central urban environments. It is in light of these arguments that we must consider Miles’s (2010) critique that the increasing appeasement of global consumers as opposed to local and host communities illustrates how public money can tend to support private interests. The authors argue that the principles associated with ‘slow tourism’ offer a potential antidote to the problematic addressed in this paper, helped through embedding the ‘Slow Phases’ (SP) framework.

The chapter is the part of the output of a three-year collaborative project (*Centrality of Territories*) working with six other western European universities on an urban sustainability agenda focused on small cities. Several in-depth interviews with key informants, including the Chief Executive of Tourism in Cambridge, and regional festival directors, alongside views from major attractions and small businesses underpin the empirical analysis presented. This compliments observational fly-on-the-wall experiences from the authors based on initial experiences sitting on the Advisory Board of the DMO. It is through in-depth detailed analysis of Cambridge’s tourism idiosyncrasies and linkage to theories of slow tourism and political economy that this chapter makes a useful contribution.

**The Cambridge Context**

The city of Cambridge in England can be understood as a small city with an official population of some 123,900 in the UK census (UK Government, 2011). It is, of course, well known for its main university, increasingly so in Asia and especially China, where it has become a major brand. On the other hand, Cambridge shows that it is not size of population that is so important in terms of influence a city has. In a world perceived as one of increased inter-urban competition and global urban orders - characterized by networks of connection and urban hierarchies - it is as much about reach and influence (Jayne, 2006: 5). Indeed over the past few years Cambridge has been touted as Britain's most successful city in various media stories (Anderson, 2015), though the reasons for this are often couched in vague business investment jargon that fails to grasp wider spatial factors at work.

Cambridge might be thought of as one of many urban growth poles, centers of certain ordering and organizational activities as part of what is termed globalization. Here, we might follow Doreen Massey, who has argued that we need to see that globalization is as much locally produced as the local is globally produced (Massey 2006). Massey is also at pains to point out that the global should not be seen as the opposite of the local, with the latter being seen as good and the former as bad, for this is too simplistic and insular a view. We need a broadened sense of place and indeed of a city like Cambridge, away from just an internal view about investors and people like students and tourists coming to this place and about 'our' hospitality. As Massey also reminds us, geographies of places aren't only about what lies within them (Massey 2006: 64). There are all kinds of connections that also run out and through 'here' – trade routes, investment routes, political and cultural influences that go around the globe and link with the fate of other places. These connections raise questions of responsibility for some of these wider geographies of place, as well as responsibilities for what happens inside this place (Massey 2006). This has some bearing on the thinking and practice of slow tourism, where the local can easily tend to be valorised as being clearly more authentic and sustainable. Massey's view is that we should be careful about setting up such dichotomies, and many have also argued that locally produced things are not always the most sustainable, though sometimes they may be, but that needs to be a question that is continually asked. Moreover, when we ask about the sustainability that is often posited as being connected to slow tourism we need to ask questions such as 'what is to be sustained, and who for'.

**Cambridge – a tourist-historic city?**

Cambridge might be thought of as a tourist-historic city (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000). However, the city and regional economy is diverse, with education and technology companies driving an economy that has been thriving even at times of national recession that emerged from bailout of banks by national government, leading to high demand for housing, and growth in development throughout areas of the city. Indeed it has been estimated that there are about 900 high-tech businesses employing about 37,000 people – close to a quarter of all jobs (EEDA 2011: pii). Some new housing and technology business developments are being led by Cambridge University and Colleges of the University that reflects the continued importance of the University and Colleges in the city and the fact that they are major landowners in the city, and have access to large amounts of capital for investment. In recent years a large Medical Research Council bio-medical campus has been developed next to the Addenbrookes hospital. Global pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca PLC is building a new research site here. New housing and offices have been developed around the railway station, and a £1 billion development is being led by the University of Cambridge in the northwest of the city, creating 3000 houses, research facilities, spaces for 2000 postgraduate students, along with schools and additional infrastructure. Moreover, a separate £1 billion government development of, and around, a new railway station (set to open in 2016) is being completed in the city to service the Science Park and north of the city. Originally created in 1970 by Trinity College (one of the oldest University Colleges), this was the first Science Park in the UK. Moreover, health and education have in recent years become major aspects of the Cambridge economy, accounting for more than 30% of employment in the city region (EEDA 2011:piii). By comparison, tourism-related employment was estimated to account for about 6% of total employment for Cambridge, or about 5,000 jobs (EEDA 2011: p121).

In many ways urban tourism reflects the attractiveness of a city generally, and a city that is attractive to tourists is also likely to attract new residents. Apart from employment, tourism provides things that local people can benefit from such as more and more diverse places to eat, specialty shops, as well as helping to underpin events like Strawberry Fair, Cambridge Folk Festival, various food festivals, among other things. However, as the final government appointed East of England Development Agency report on Cambridge (before it was abolished) also argues, “Local attitudes to tourism are ambivalent and have been so for many years: visitors generally seen as adding to city centre congestion and noise” (EEDA, 2011: p120). This ambivalence is also reflected in local newspapers and in talking to local residents. Pressures of congestion have been evident in Cambridge for several decades. It might be argued that, being more visible, tourism gets blamed for congestion when it is only one part of the problem that leads to crowding.

**Challenges: Cambridge’s Tourism**

Cambridge’s economic strength and ability to ward off the harshest consequences of recession can be attributed to several factors and contributing industries. This evidently includes education; specifically English language (EFL) and Higher Education sectors, but also the technological and scientific hub at the Cambridge Science Park and Silicon Fen – and now – health and medical industries with the construction of one of Europe’s largest hospitals (Addenbrookes) and the inward investment of AstraZeneca’s headquarters. On reflection, given the size and growth of these industries and the continued economic fortification they provide for the city and regional economy, it almost feels as though tourism as an industry could quite well rest on its laurels, helped by Cambridge's reputation as a globally recognized heritage city. Critically speaking, this may have been true until the introduction of the new DMO in what can be considered a challenging moment in Cambridge’s tourism system. Emma Thornton, Chief Executive of Visit Cambridge and Beyond illustrates this point:

One of the real challenges for Cambridge from a tourism perspective is that it is still perceived by many as a day trip destination. The opportunity exists now, through the development of the new Destination Management Organisation, which has no geographical boundaries, to develop and promote the narrative of the broader area,  therefore encouraging visitors to stay longer, explore further and create more value from our vibrant visitor economy (Personal Communication, 2016).

With respect to the ‘one day tourist’ problematic Tourism South East (2010) illustrates that out of what they calculated to be 4.08 million annual day and staying visits, just over 3.245 million constituted day visits (Tourism South East, 2010), with a significant 87.4% staying between 3-9 hours, as shown below in Figure [1] below.



Figure [1] – Day visitors and staying visitors (Tourism South East, 2010)

The introduction of Visit Cambridge and Beyond (VCB) is, in part, driven by the central government cuts to local governments like Cambridge City Council, where between 2010-2015 local authorities in England have experienced cuts of 40% to central government funding as part of ideologically driven austerity policies from the coalition rightist government (Local Government Association, 2014) and the Conservative Government that gained power in 2015. City Councils like Cambridge have thus reviewed the services they offer and how they offer them. As growing tourism was not a statutory City Council service, but a discretionary one, this sector was somewhat deprioritized and arguably depoliticized. In October 2014 the Cambridge City Council agreed to review the role of the private sector to take the lead role in tourism development. The resulting DMO was formed and run, in the main instance, by the private sector [80% private, 20% public funded]. Such private-led partnerships are an aspect of national government policy, and the City Council in Cambridge has followed this path.

The city’s tourism [strategy] has started - and will continue - to become a prime focus for economic development stimulating increased visitor revenues, associated multiplier effects and employment opportunities. It aims to provide a boost to small business within - and beyond - the realm of Cambridge’s invisible walls, while simultaneously promoting a new brand and destination image, inviting would-be and current visitor to stay longer and enjoy the fruits of Cambridge’s traditional but vibrant regional economy and society. This is reflected in the ‘Vision’ of the VCB: “Cambridge will be recognised and celebrated globally as a world class leisure and business destination”; “Visit Cambridge will be the leading voice for the visitor economy for Cambridge and the surrounding area.”

The need to move Cambridge beyond the ‘one day tourist’ problematic was also reflected in one of the key DMO ‘Strategic Priorities’ for “running targeted marketing campaigns to change perceptions of Cambridge to a short-break destination (not just a day trip) and develop new markets”. Recommendations outlined across this study thus strategically align, not only to the current DMO objectives and vision, but to the historically hoped-for but rather discretionary tourism objectives of the City Council as outlined in their *Tourism Strategy* as part of the *Cambridge Local Plan* consultation (Policy 8.56) to ensure the city “focuses on the desire to ‘extend’ the length of stay of visitors” (Cambridge City Council, 2014). As mentioned, the Tourism unit of Cambridge City Council had for some time recognized the problems of an overly centralized and narrow range of attractions. In policy 79 of the *Cambridge Local Plan 2014* concerning “Visitor Attractions” it is stated that: “Proposals for new visitor attractions within the City Centre will be supported where they: complement the existing cultural heritage of the city; are limited in scale; and assist the diversification of the attractions on offer, especially to better support the needs of families” (Cambridge City Council, 2014). This point is emphasized even more showing political support for: “attractions that draw visitors beyond the City Centre attractions and encourage the development of alternative attractions throughout the sub-region are also encouraged” (point 8.57).

The reasons why the city suffers from short visitation impacts are wide reaching. Firstly, a significant proportion are from the local region and would quite obviously only visit for a day as Cambridge is an important place for activities and services such as shopping and night-time events and socializing. Secondly, international visitation from London can be seen as both a benefit and burden – attracting tourism to the city, while simultaneously stunting their capacity to stay for longer periods of time. The close proximity to, and ease of travel accessibility, between Cambridge and London (direct non-stop train service from Kings Cross Station to Cambridge in 46 minutes) is a strong reason for this where by the city becomes an easily done day trip, allowing a quick whistle stop tour of the city by overseas visitors predominantly visiting and staying in London [for example in 2012, London attracted two thirds of holiday visits from international holiday tourists (VisitBritain, 2014)].

The third and final major factor here is how standardization and corporatization of high street shopping may be contributing to a poorer tourism and cultural offering, as one central shopping and leisure area becomes much like that of another (New Economics Foundation, 2010). On the one hand such retail chains can evidently be attractive to regional shoppers and consumers. Yet, it has become common parlance among national and local government and in business policy and strategy, that in order to survive, cities like Cambridge need to continue to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to urban governance to compete for seemingly mobile capital – what David Harvey (1989) refers to as a shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism in urban governance. Business competitiveness, rather than social justice or equity or citizenship is the internalized logic of entrepreneurial governance, whereby cities make themselves “as attractive to footloose international finance as possible, foregoing any social programmes likely to be a burden on business by multinational companies who might otherwise invest in the city” (North, Nurse, 2014, p. 8). The effects of this entrepreneurial governance on the urban experience can be significant, particularly in light of tourism experiences (for example, as outlined in the context of events see Pappalepore and Duignan, 2016). Western capitalist countries such as the UK are not only seeing an erosion of public space in favor of private ownership, but such policies often make way for more homogenous forms of urban space, particularly the loss of diversity and corporatized standardization of the high street and centralized urban areas (see Miles, 2010).

Alongside these so-called ‘clone town’ effects, another challenge for Cambridge is the over-reliance on central urban visitor attractions. Even at the national level, images of Cambridge projected by VisitBritain are by and large centred around highly centralized, densely populated, commercial urban areas that consist of a few major visitor attractions: (1) leisure activities like punting on the River Cam (listed as number 23 of 101 things to do in England by VisitEngland in a 2013 marketing campaign); (2) the historic cultural tourism of the Cambridge Colleges (e.g. King’s College), and (3) Central Market square. Promoted tourism attractions in Cambridge are very much focused on the Cambridge University colleges. A visitor survey of 2008 on “Reasons for visiting Cambridge” did not include a category for the University colleges, though “heritage/museums” was the top reason given by 24% of respondents (http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/tourism). Theatre and concerts were also popular at 16%, while shopping and visiting gardens were rated slightly lower.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Secondary Attractions**

Such aforementioned issues may well provide an incentive for a one-day whistle-stop tour of the city by international tourists especially. However perhaps by virtue of unintended consequence, this limits the length of visitor stay. Interviews undertaken as part of our research with a series of cultural attractions like that of Kettle’s Yard museum and art gallery indicate that they feel they are places that would be mainly visited on the second or third day of visits; peripheral and somewhat superfluous to the main perceived tourism offering.

In light of these concerns, we thus identify an alternative issue for Cambridge: the potential need to develop and illuminate more secondary, peripheral and eclectic forms of visitor engagements and attractions. At this point it is also important to note that suggestions to enhance tourism is not to specifically increase overall tourism numbers within the city parameters (as to do so may increase the congestion problems the city currently faces), but rather to seek to help change the focus of tourism for some visitors especially in terms of a wider geographical visitor footprint. It is to specifically consider how to diversify tourism in the city: (1) enhance visitor experiences, and (2) lengthen stay, thus increasing likeliness to experience more local attractions and services (including accommodation, theatre and local events, restaurants etc). Furthermore, the overall aim of a more active visitor management is emphasized.

The above points become of interest if we link these to some current ideas in urban tourism and beyond to practices and ideas around slow tourism. For example, in terms of new variations and trends in what some tourists seek in urban tourism Robert Maitland (2007, p. 27) has argued that, while many cities have taken a supply-side perspective to attracting visitors, there has been comparatively less research into the characteristics, attitudes and want of visitors or the roles they play in shaping new tourism areas. This is reflected in one overt strategic objective by the DMO to “establish a programme of research to understand current visitor profiles and identify growth opportunities”. Maitland (2007) suggests that distinctiveness of destinations may be more important than notions such as authenticity to particular aspects of the tourism market. Moreover, some visitors, especially experienced travellers, may want a more eclectic mix of experiences including aspects of the everyday as well as more standardized forms. For example, such experienced tourists may want to see how people live in a city, as well as then staying in quite standardized hotel accommodation (Maitland, 2007, p. 28). That is, some tourists seek some deeper experiences of place, but still wish for a certain reassurance of being in the average semi-luxury or budget hotels that can be found in most cities.

Maitland (2007) goes on to argue there may also be an increasing overlap between what tourists, day visitors, and residents and workers do on their evenings and days off. He suggests this may be seen in the main in polycentric large cities like London. But it may well be the case that this can also be found in smaller cities like Cambridge that attract particular types of cultural, educational, and Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) tourists in significant numbers. With respect to the VFR segment, it is likely that as a city with two universities, many migrant workers and international students, VFR totals are significantly undercounted. This is typically true of many cities. Moreover, research on VFR, and of university cities (Bischoff, Koenig-Lewis, 2007) has shown that universities are large, frequently underestimated generators of VFR tourists, and that VFR visitors typically spend more time in destinations than many other visitors. VFR visitors are therefore visitors that may be seeking wider experiences of the local region as a secondary aspect of their visit and could respond positively to marketing a wider range of attractions to them – though how to do this becomes an interesting question.

**Theorizing Slow Tourism**

Dickinson, Lumsdon and Robbins (2011) argue that there are three identifiable behavioral categories of what can be termed slow tourism. Firstly, there are studies that focus on modes of transport that have lower environmental impacts and less travel. This aspect focuses on alternatives to air and car travel, such as trains, buses, cycling, walking, both to and in a destination, and where the travel to and from the destination becomes part of the holiday. The second strand, focuses on better tourism experiences, where visitors engage in a deeper experience of place. The third focuses on transport as a tourist experience. Others have argued that slow tourism is better seen attitudinally rather than as a category of behavior, as categorical and behavioral approaches can too easily overlook aspects of slow tourism that appear in what might be termed 'fast tourism' (Oh, Assaf, and Bologlu, 2016: 208). In other words, these three behavioural aspects of tourism may be done together or separately, and there may be differing attitudes to why. In this study we focus more on the second category of Dickinson, Lumsdon and Robbins (2011), that of deeper experiences of being in the destination, as a general aspect of slow tourism, albeit one that coincides with other descriptions of some cultural tourists, and one which is still rather vague. In this we are not seeking to ascertain how tourists travel to destinations, but rather what they do when they get there. As such it reflects a pragmatic and investigative approach to helping develop slow tourism.

The slow movement approach applied to tourism is seemingly a call for a change of leisure life practice – the choice of ‘fast’ versus ‘slow’ - and in doing so to engage in modes of critical consumption that requires some reflection on the type of tourist and place we want to be. Slow tourism is more about savoring experience, as opposed to racing through - where the quality of the experience/visitation is purely determined by fast, efficient, quick, ‘productive’ and plentiful quantity of visits. Miles (2010) notes that global entertainment seduces and pacifies consumers, even perhaps determining the nature of our existence; where social life becomes more about owning and having, than ‘living’. In reality, many tourists may favor aspects of both differentiated local aspects and standardized aspects, as argued earlier. The ‘slow’ movement also calls for consumers to consider critically analysing the consequences of their consumption decisions, whereby consumers “use their power of choice to modify market relations, in order to make them fairer and more conducive to a good life for all” (Sassatelli and Davolio, 2010: 205). It is here that we consider the need for visitors to shift from what Miles (2010) refers to as ‘touristic consumerism’ for the sake of ‘having’. Sassatelli and Davoli (2010), amongst others, however highlight the political and economic complexities of shifting to a ‘slower’ mode of consumption - that slow food implicitly promotes a movement which values accessibility for all, but inherently promotes a middle class lifestyle, only inclusive for those with financial capability to consume ‘slow’ goods and partake in such modes of critical consumption. We must therefore consider these arguments in light of localizing slow tourism in the context of Cambridge city developments. The idea that consumers actively choose smaller producers, over more corporate entities, assumes the ability to afford the often-higher prices that local retailers may charge for goods/services due to their lack of economy of scale. The critical question to pose, then, is how far the shift to ‘slow’ is economically viable for those wishing to partake in critical consumption, particularly in the context of tourism?

**Embedding Slow Tourism**

In response to the ‘fast’ way of life and the addressed tourism problematic, planners and practitioners must consider ways to encourage longer and deeper visitor engagement. Building on Wilbert and Duignan’s (2015) initial four phases of embedding a slow tourism approach, this paper advances the framework. This is outlined in the ‘Slow Phases’ (SP) framework illustrated by Figure [2] below, and provides detailed empirical analysis to flesh out each part to provide a practical and contextual overview of Cambridge’s idiosyncrasies.

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| **Phases** | **Detail** |
| **Phase 1 – [Slow] Resource Examination** | Detailed exploration and examination of city, town, and regions resources that incorporate aforementioned ‘slow’ principles. |
| **Phase 2 – Stakeholder Alignment** | Identification of relevant, influential and strategically aligned stakeholder networks to be incorporated in to the negotiation and communication of slow tourism agenda |
| **Phase 3 – Strategic and Integrated Marketing Communications** | Comprehensive analysis of traditional and digital marketing methods from both theory and practice to: i) promote resources mapped from Phase 1, and ii) encourage amplification through effective stakeholder alignment addressed by Phase 2. |
| **Phase 4 – Theoretical and Practical Extension** | Continuous review of effective practice and theoretical development to refine and enhance efficacy of embedding slow tourism. This involves frequent reassessment and refinement of analysis conducted Phase 1 – 3 |

Figure [2] – ‘Slow Phases’ (SP) model

**Phase 1 – [Slow] Resource Examination**

The core objective for this phase was to identify all forms of tourism offering available in and around the municipality of Cambridge, which constituted the values of slow – following a common methodology developed by the participating cities of the network *Centrality of Territories*. This exercise contributed to the mapping of 113 alternative attractions researched from a range of on-line sources like Tripadvisor, official tourism sites, personal observation and empirical data. This mapping ranged from: typical tea gardens, the historic-now-latent comedy scene largely deriving from Cambridge Colleges (e.g. place of birth of Monty Python), right through to educational events and experiential leisure activities (e.g. star gazing in the Institute of Astronomy). The idea that cultural events and festivities showcasing local talent also emerged as a major way visitors to the city can provide a snapshot in to Cambridge’s diverse eclectic cultural offering.

The interesting distinction we found, particularly for more peripheral areas from the city centre, is the cultural diversity of the city, a diversity which has been less recognizable in the mainstream marketing of the Visit Cambridge tourism website. As such, diversity does not just point to smaller, local things which might be thought of as traditional in the typical form in which British heritage is marketed (that is as being predominantly white, and of the elites, wealthy, famous) but includes aspects that permeate what is, for want of better term, a small, but increasingly cosmopolitan, globally connected city. Those wishing to connect with a wider aspect of Cambridge can find more ethnic and cultural diversity than might be thought, particularly within the peripheral inner city districts of the city. The mapping of slow resources has also identified forms of nature based tourism and historic sites delivered by organizations such as the National Trust and English Heritage dotted around the periphery of the city, as well as the relatively new walking/cycling infrastructure that has been developed in and around Cambridge. The city has a strong cycling culture, which is uncommon for UK cities, though it is still hardly the friendliest of cycling cities as most roads are shared with cars, buses and lorries, and streets are often very narrow.

This cycling and walking infrastructure is supported via a network of stakeholder organizations, such as Sustrans and the National Trust, which develop walking and cycling routes in and out of the city and in turn links with the strategy of the City Council to host Stage 3 of the 2014 Tour de France between Cambridge and London on the 7th of July 2014. The initiative of cycling, bus ways linking the city with surrounding villages, and park and ride schemes, is part of a wider strategy to reduce car congestion in and around Cambridge. Integral to the mapping of phase one was the transfer of slow sites of consumption into a network of other European similar sized cities. The Geographical Information System (GIS) labelled as *Sevenbeauties* currently houses both the initial (and constantly updated) slow resources of Cambridge and other participating cities, including the lead city of Bergamo in Italy. (For an outline of the GIS system of Sevenbeauties see Wilbert and Duignan, 2015, p 210).

**Phase 2 – Stakeholder Alignment**

The responsibility of contributing to and pushing forward slow forms of tourism development falls on the shoulders of a multitude of stakeholders – from community groups, local policymakers to national and globally-oriented tourism bodies (see Sautter, 1999). This is essential as often urban policy, especially event policies can often be subject to limited community consultation (Cashman, 2002; Miles, 2010). Thus far this appears not to be the case in Cambridge. From the author’s experience on the new DMO advisory board, an integrated approach to community inclusion underpins a democratic approach to planning. As part of the author’s practical analysis, a mapping of local stakeholder organizations and powerful individual actors with the capacity to drive change were identified. These ranged from the City Council and the DMO, event and festival directors, through to organizations that embody the principles of sustainable development (e.g. Sustrans, and Cambridge Past, Present and Future (PPF). Interestingly, one interviewer for this project, a bursar of a University college, argued that Cambridge, unlike Oxford, had few attractions beyond the city centre and that such things as cycling tourism would be very niche activities. As such, not all stakeholders will share the view that tourism can be extended out of the city centre. The interviewee also stated that several colleges were planning visitor centres in or near the colleges to give more of a sense of the current research and investment that such colleges are engaging in, rather than being focused on the past.

Organizations such as Tripadvisor, Lonely Planet and VisitBritain also play a fundamental role in the perception of Cambridge’s tourism offerings. Analyzing these social actors’ strategic alliances provides an opportunity to share resources, ideas and collaborative power in an agenda that “needs plenty of qualified supporters who can help turn this (slow) motion into an international movement” (Portinari, 1989, p. 1).

**Phase 3 – Strategic and Integrated Marketing Communications**

Given the project is in its initial phases, recommendations provided here consider ways in which the collaborating actors can push forward what is a promising project of enhancing slow tourism approaches for small cities and in the regions around them. Interestingly, the strategic alignment between the project’s slow focus and the Council’s broader tourism policy agenda emerged throughout 2015. The Cambridge City Council Visit Cambridge & Beyond visitor guide and business membership scheme (<http://www.visitcambridge.org/beyond-cambridge>) provides a snapshot in to the range of spaces and places on offer beyond the inner walls of the city, thus promoting at least some of the secondary forms of tourism identified by our Phase 1 resource mapping exercise. As explored earlier, the council's strategy to encourage the hosting of the Tour de France (July, 2014) coherently aligns with both the established problematic of city congestion, and the development of cycle routes in and around the city. The idea that velo-tourism may encourage longer stays as outlined in the strategy for Cambridge tourism mentioned earlier is being developed in practical tourism and events policy. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, one significant part of the visitors to Cambridge that seem to be both underestimated and little understood, is VFR tourism, especially in light of significant student numbers in the city. University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University, and the 30 plus other English Language Schools (EFL), means that there are likely to be significant numbers of friends and family visiting students and staff in the city and not just during term time. Also, as mentioned previously, research on VFR tourism has shown that VFR visitors tend to spend more time and non-accommodation based money in destinations compared to other types of visitors, as well as drawing local residents in to tourism activities (Seaton, Palmer 1997; Bakker, 2007). The notion that VFR visitors may be encouraged to seek wider experiences of local regions, guided by the host seems likely, but more research is needed on these visitors.

Cambridge also plays host to a variety of events and festivals for its size. This includes celebrating the diverse cultural offering the city has to offer. For example, a growing number of events are focused around food, drink, music, literary talent and scientific discovery that allow visitors and local residents to identify what Cambridge, as a city and the wider region, has to offer. EAT Cambridge 2013, 2014 and now 2015; Mill Road Winter Fair; country shows and science festivals typify these offerings. Interestingly, following recent economic and social impact analysis of the EAT Cambridge 2014 festival, respondents of the study (local independent participating food and drink traders) claimed these types of urban interventions potentially allow local people to engage in critical consumption – particularly the transformative behaviour of local people to break routines of choosing chains/on-line shopping outlets to experience the local more. The idea that both local (domestic and national) consumers may be drawn to the city to enjoy good local food may be an important one for enhancing Cambridge’s reputation for slow food. Respondents surveyed for the analysis repeatedly highlighted how the festival showcased “good Cambridge traders” with “positive engagement with local foodies” and helped improve “awareness of the street food scene in Cambridge”. With respect to the wider city image, one respondent claims the festival raised the “food profile of the whole city, giving more legitimacy to the idea of Cambridge having a great food-scene”. As mentioned earlier, interviews we undertook with some smaller Cambridge attractions, like Kettle’s Yard museum and art gallery, expressed a need to have more tourists staying overnight for them to benefit from tourism. Many smaller attractions with smaller profiles would usually only be visited by those staying for several days in the city. This is also recognized by the new tourism destination marketing organization. But persuading people to think of Cambridge as a place to stay for several days has, thus far, proved elusive. Creating a broader identity for Cambridge in terms of a slow approach is what we are seeking to encourage.

**Phase 4 – Theoretical and Practical Extension**

In these initial phases of the research the authors of this chapter have begun to develop and work through scholarly networks and public engagement. Partnerships are being developed with other stakeholders in Cambridge, in particular the City Council, but others too. Presentations at international conferences encompassing both academic and public stakeholders have highlighted Cambridge’s context and opportunities, and how academics and practitioners may develop aspects of the slower, more diverse forms of tourism. Methodologies have been discussed and shared in these meetings between different members of the network of small cities, alongside best practices ideas. The authors have also used local and regional television and radio media appearances to discuss issues pertaining to gentrification effects seen in the inner city areas of Cambridge – making the case for diversifying tourism offerings.

Since the *Centrality of Territories* network inception, we continue to encourage discussion pertaining to slow forms of development – through engagement via policy networks, stakeholder organizations, through event and festival engagements. Though there are hugely interesting possibilities ahead, the challenges of this slower, more sustainable approach to tourism should not be downplayed. To a great extent the dominant focus from the new DMO is on unconstrained growth of tourism. There are moves already developing through the new DMO to seek to diversify tourism in other spaces and places, mainly through marketing initiatives on the Visit Cambridge & Beyond website. Yet, not all local stakeholders will necessarily welcome the diversification of tourism in to the spaces they manage, as can be seen from the concerns that Cambridge Past, Present and Future expressed about the management of Wandlebury Country Park on the edge of the city. They were concerned that a growth in visitors would alter how the park is experienced and would lead to the need to fence off areas from access (interview with Cambridge Past Present Future 2015). Dialogue with local residents, small and micro businesses, conservation organizations and more need to be opened up both to try and reduce concerns, but also to take seriously such projected management problems.

**Supporting Practice: The Role of Universities and Educational Institutions**

This section illustrates how slow tourism as a strategy may be brought about through effective strategic and operational alignment between educational institutions and regional tourism policy makers. Building on a recent Association of Business School’s (2016) examination; the tourism team at Anglia Ruskin University has fostered successful relationships between the university, local communities of small businesses, festival directors, and key policy makers across Cambridge’s Destination Management Organisation (DMO): ‘Visit Cambridge and Beyond’. Establishing successful relationships led to the university’s attainment of the *‘Leadership in the Visitor Economy’* presented by the Association of Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE) sponsored by England’s national body for tourism: ‘VisitEngland’ in 2015.

Strategic alignment has been sought in several ways, and provides a series of ways in which educational institutions can play a major stakeholder role in invoking the ‘Slow Phases’ model. These include:

* Involving students in the planning and delivery of major slow food and drink festivals and supporting small businesses;
* Pro-bono analysis of regional events and festivals (including EAT Cambridge 2014, 2015 and 2016, and the Cambridge Half Marathon in 2016) to illustrate the economic and social benefits for grassroots activities that support a slow tourism approach;
* Co-authorship of regional business articles between the university and the DMO to present a ‘slower’ future of tourism management and development for the city and beyond;
* Embedding the tourism team in the development of regional DMO tourism policy, practice and strategy on advisory board and inviting students to be involved on the front end of real-tourism issues;
* Embedding the DMO in the development, assessment and guest lectures of the University BSc Tourism Management programme. This also includes using the strategic priorities of DMO to support the direction and writing of undergraduate dissertations;
* Involving aforementioned stakeholder groups in to the construction of academic publications

Bachelor of Science (BSc) Tourism Management students play a fundamental role in examining and tackling all aspects of the ‘Slow Phases’ model. Their experience illustrates the beginnings of an antidote to current neoliberal logic and marketization that is currently manifesting students-as-consumers – towards students-as-partners. This serves as both a strategic utility choice for enhanced resource deployment in academic and practical projects, but also as a major initiative toward creating authentic learning experiences which support ‘constructive alignment’ and ‘deeper learning’ through ‘active learning’ and ‘assessment for learning’ strategies. Although this chapter serves not to provide a pedagogic analysis; fostering student-staff collaboration and forging greater connectivity between student, academic and ‘Slow Phases’ model is a vital part of embedding a slow approach in regional contexts.

**Directions for Future Tourism**

As the discussion above shows, the short-term aim is to help transform dominant forms of tourism and to widen the potential benefits from tourism in the region by applying a slow model that diversifies and expands geographically tourism offerings. There is the potential then to link up with wider initiatives in Cambridge from groups in the city – such as the Transition Cambridge group that is part of the Transition Towns Network “working towards a lower energy, sustainable and prosperous future”. According to the network,

“In our vision of the future, people work together to find ways to live with a lot less reliance on fossil fuels and on over-exploitation of other planetary resources, much reduced carbon emissions, improved wellbeing for all and stronger local economies. The Transition movement is an ongoing social experiment, in which communities learn from each other and are part of a global and historic push towards a better future for ourselves, for future generations and for the planet” (Transition Network, 2016).

Aspects of slow tourism can be seen to fit with these wider visions in the short and longer term. However, tourism is not usually addressed in such network practices as of yet. The longer-term aim of such a slow tourism for Cambridge would be to link in to similar aims as the transition towns.

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1. Such visitor surveys tend to be tourist information office and Visitor Informational Centre-based, so will lead to some skewing in types of visitors questioned. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)