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A model of pilgrimage tourism: process, interface, people and sequence

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to examine the elements of the main process of pilgrimage tourism (PT), occurring between pilgrims, hikers and tourists along a trail towards a holy site. PT is defined as a process consisting of three sub-processes over time and across contexts: pre-process, main process and post-process.

Design/methodology/approach – Explores the core reasons for PT through active participation and observation.

Findings – This study reveals different layers, levels, views, approaches and perspectives involved in people-based processes. The study attempts to conceptualize the elements involved between people committed and dedicated to PT.

Research limitations/implications – The introduced model of PT stresses the processes and interfaces involved over time and across contexts between people, with the same or different sequences. There is, to the best of the authors' knowledge, no previous research that explores and describes the processes and interaction between pilgrims, hikers and tourists.

Practical implications – The ultimate experience at an individual level differs, depending upon the outcome of the PT-elements of the model of PT (i.e. processes, interfaces, people and sequences).

Social implications – From a social science perspective, the research examines the motives of different traveller types and looks at their different perspectives of being involved with the same physical activity of travel. The study emphasises that we can be involved in the same physical activity, but embrace it with different levels of personal and emotional engagement.

Originality/value – A conceptualized model of PT containing four elements (process, interface, people and sequence) – all of which offer a foundation for structuring and assessing empirical research, and provide additional insights and knowledge into the dynamics and complexity involved specifically in a people-based process consisting of interfaces and sequences when travelling.

Keywords Tourism, Pilgrimage

Paper type Case study

Introduction

Historically, people's religious desire to visit a holy site or destination resemble what is nowadays one of various forms of tourism activity. Specifically, it refers to religious tourism. Rinschede (1992) explains:

Religious tourism distinguishes itself, as do all other types of tourism, by a dynamic element – movement in space, a journey – as well as a static element – a temporary stay at a place other than the place of residence.

Subsequently, there is a connection between religion and conventional tourism (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005; Santos, 2003).

There are many different religious destinations worldwide, which are associated with the world's principal religions:

- Christianity and Jerusalem;
- Islam and Mecca;
- Hinduism and the River Ganges; and
- Buddhism and Lumbini.

Holy sites or destinations across religions attract millions of people in a search of spiritual enrichment (Digance, 2003). Recent studies (Collins-Kreiner, 2010) indicate that annually, three to five million Muslims make the Hajj; approximately five million Catholic pilgrims go to Lourdes in France, and approximately 28 million Hindu pilgrims visit the River Ganges in India. Research acknowledges the important roles of religion and spirituality as a determinant of who we are and who we want to be (Holloway and Valins, 2002).

A pilgrimage is a religious and cultural phenomenon of human society and an important feature of the major religions worldwide (Collins-Kreiner, 2010). Barber (1993, p. 1) defines pilgrimage as: "A journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding". According to Collins-Kreiner (2010), pilgrimage is nowadays defined by dividing it into two integrated components:

(1) a traditional religious journey; and
(2) a modern secular journey.

Subsequently, pilgrimage tourism (PT) describes people who follow something religiously, but it does not necessarily have to be linked with a religious experience *per se*, but just something, a journey for example, that evokes a passion *equivalent* to "religious" zeal. The reasons or motivations for the latter are similar to a religious pilgrimage: devotion, a sacrifice and going that extra mile to get there.

Broadly speaking, the common criteria of tourism and pilgrimage are about leaving one's everyday life behind, seeking a different experience and or gaining insights from other cultures, which potentially implies a spiritual component. Both pilgrims and conventional tourists share this behavior, which is associated with an inevitable return to ordinary life at the end of the journey. Religious tourism is thus often related to holiday and cultural tourism (Rinschede, 1992). Consequently, pilgrimage and tourism are united in terms of requiring a certain degree of disconnection from daily life. PT has political, economic, social and cultural effects, consequences and implications, as well as influencing global trade and personal health. PT requires movement across contexts.

Collins-Kreiner (2010) reviews contemporary research in the area and outlines the main transformations in pilgrimage research:

- from differentiation to dedifferentiation;
- expansion of standard areas of research;
- from external and general elements to the individual inner experience;
- movement from object to subject, and from objectivity to subjectivity; and
- from an "either-or" approach to a "both-and" approach.

The theme is about continuity and transformations of pilgrimage research. The author concludes (Collins-Kreiner, 2010, p. 454) that research may be advanced based upon the possibility for co-existence of a multiplicity of truths, rather than only one privileged one, and these ideas are consistent with current research trends.

This study explores the core reasons for PT by means of active participation with and observations of pilgrims, hikers and tourists along a trail towards a holy site. The study attempts to conceptualize the elements involved between people who are committed and dedicated to PT. There is, to the best of the authors' knowledge, no previous research that explores and describes the processes and interaction that form the subject of this study.

This study defines PT as a process consisting of three sub-processes over time and across contexts, as shown in Figure 1:

(1) pre-process – refers to actions undertaken in an initial sequence of PT preparation (e.g. at home until the point of initiation);

(2) main process – actions in subsequent sequences during the actual PT; and

(3) post-process – actions undertaken in an ultimate sequence after finalizing the PT (e.g. at the destination prior to returning to home).

The pre- and post-processes vary between people, as do the main processes as well.

The objective of the study is limited to examining the elements of the main process of PT based on El Camino (In English: The Way of St. James) in North Western Spain, *but excluding the pre- and post-processes*. The study examines the interactions between people during several days of wandering along the trail. It includes three categories of people, namely, pilgrims, hikers and tourists, all of whom have similarities and differences. The empirical findings of the study are reported in this paper.
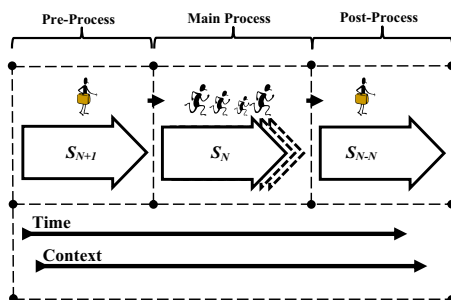

Figure 1.
Process of PT

The study reports about a conceptualized model of PT, which consists of the following elements:

- process;
- interface;
- people; and
- sequence – (PT-elements).

The sequence element refers to one or several fixed time-periods within the main process, while the sequences of pre- and post-processes are flexible time periods before and after people's wanderings have been initiated and terminated.

Subsequently, each sequence consists of people referred to in this study as pilgrims, hikers or tourists within the main process of PT. Within sequences, these three groups are directly or indirectly interconnected, while, in different sequences, they are mostly disconnected from each other physically, although there are overlaps between sequences. The interface element connects those of process, sequence and people vertically (e.g. parallels between sequences or people) and horizontally (e.g. between preceding and "postceding" processes interfaces, sequences and people).

In summary, PT in this study is defined as *a process consisting of interfaces between people that occur in sequences*. It is a dynamic model over time and across contexts (process), considering the interaction taking place (interface) in daily wanderings (sequences) between pilgrims, hikers and tourists (people).

Frame of reference

Since the 1990s, pilgrimage research has focused on the similarities and differences between pilgrims and tourists (Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Timothy and Olsen, 2006; Collins-Kreiner and Kliot, 2000; Digance, 2006, 2003; Ebron, 1999; Frey, 1998; Cohen, 1998; Vukonić, 1996; Cohen, 1992a, 1992b; Smith, 1992). This distinction has been misconceived in that the religious and secular spheres of tourism are rapidly merging. As religious tourism assumes a more prominent market niche in international tourism, pilgrims have become tourists and tourists have become pilgrims.

There has been an ongoing debate on the definitions of pilgrimage, tourism and other terms since the early 1990s, contributing insights regarding secular sites and aspects of pilgrimage research (Badone and Roseman, 2004; Digance, 2003; Margry, 2008; Reader and Walter, 1993; Seaton, 1999, 2002). Collins-Kreiner (2010) identifies and assesses an older paradigm of research studies that is based on the notion that religious elements underpin the core of a pilgrimage, while a newer paradigm of research studies consists of recent studies focusing on secular models of travel.

The latter provides an alternative and complementary approach to definitions of tourists and pilgrims. Collins-Kreiner (2010, p. 442) demonstrates the trends of deconstruction (or of breaking down existing theories), the prevalent tendency to emphasize the subjective over the objective and the increasing attention paid to individual experiences. Recent research in this area focuses on movements and centers, global flows, social identities and the negotiation of meanings (Badone and Roseman, 2004).

Nowadays, research also recognizes other types of relevant sites, such as spiritual festivals and sites, war memorials and graves, secular shrines, sports activities, sacred

constructions and other experiences (Margry, 2008; Reader and Walter, 1993). The relationships between people and place are labelled the "pilgrimage landscape" (Alderman, 2002), which is a social construction, as no site is intrinsically sacred. Sites undergo a process of "sacralisation" (Seaton, 1999) and tourism destinations become quasi-religious sites (Seaton, 2002).

Nolan and Nolan (1992) identify three categories of visitors to religious sites:

(1) traditional pilgrims;

(2) visitors on religious tours; and

(3) mass tourists "ticking off sites on a list".

Murray and Graham (1997, p. 517) discuss different demands and motivations in trail-oriented tourism, such as El Camino to Santiago de Compostela, commenting that their belief leads wanderers to make the entire journey on foot as pilgrims, sometimes leading to conflicts of motivation. Gesler (1996, p. 102) argues that the visitors to Lourdes in France are not just one mass of people with a single-minded devotion to Mary and possessing religious fervor. Consequently, the occurrence of conflict is present, due to different visitor interests (Gesler, 1996):

• pilgrim versus tourist;

• cleric versus secular commercialism; and

• organizers versus helpers.

PT has often been researched as a tourism activity from both an anthropological or economic perspective (Fleischer, 2000). The former explores the individual perspective and societal perceptions of him or her. It is not uncommon for research to distinguish between the determining characteristics of pilgrims and tourists. However, Fleischer (2000) argues that explicit differences between tourists and pilgrims do not necessarily exist and that these alleged differences are not distinguishable, especially from the tourism business and infrastructure perspective.

Several authors (Smith, 1992; Santos, 2003), cited by Maak (2009), propose a differentiation of two models according to religious motivation, measuring different gradients, depending on their intensity and places tourism and pilgrimage at two opposite ends of a travel continuum (Smith, 1992), whilst, at the same time, both groups may be experiencing their own sacred and secular attitudes. It can be argued that the gradient depends on the degree of dedication and adherence to religion corresponding to the event (Maak, 2009).

Gatrell and Reid (2002) argue that pilgrimage and tourism are embedded within a complex of socio-spatial processes that are historically, culturally and locally dependent. Both are complex systems consisting of perceptions, expectations and experiences (Gatrell and Reid, 2002; McCann, 2002; Petric and Mrnjavac, 2003; Collins-Kreiner, 2010). Subsequently, visitors experiences of being involved in pilgrimage or tourism is not homogeneous, but in fact quiet varied.

The reasons for visits are different – from superficial curiosity to a search for the meaning of life. It is important to stress that individuals visit sites or places (i.e. holy and not holy) subject to coexistence, although the reasons for their visits may well be very different, just as the activities taking place at the site may vary. Research on pilgrimage and tourism emphasizes the impact on the local community and its population, and there

appears to be a relatively minor emphasis within the research on the impact on the visitors themselves (Collins-Kreiner, 2010, p. 453). By extension, no attention is paid to the process and interactions taking place between people, with regard to trail-oriented PT, even though the process provides an opportunity for them to interact through their physical presence.

In summary, this study distinguishes between three categories of wanderers, namely, pilgrims, hikers and tourists – all of which are considered in greater detail later in the paper. To reiterate, PT in this study is defined as *a process consisting of interfaces between people in the form of sequences*. It is a dynamic model over time and across contexts (process), considering the interaction taking place (interface) in daily wanderings (sequences) between pilgrims, hikers and tourists (people).

El Camino

El Camino or St. James' Way (Spanish: El Camino de Santiago: French: Chemins de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle: German: der Jakobsweg) is a set of trails that lead to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in North Western Spain. The origin of these trails is derived from the belief that the remains of the apostle Saint James are buried in this city.

About the trail

Along with Rome and Jerusalem, Santiago de Compostela is one of the most important Christian pilgrimage destinations. El Camino was declared the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in 1987 and is also on the list of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites (reference number: 347).

Today, approximately 240,000 pilgrims, hikers and tourists wander in 2014 the variety of different trails from different points of initiation around Europe to Santiago de Compostela. Most of them do so by foot, while others may use bicycles, and some even horses and wheel chairs.

Pilgrims, hikers and tourists may wish to document their trail of wandering. This task is done with a document resembling a passport (referred to as credentials) that is available at different locations, such as churches and tourist agencies in Spain. It enables wanderers to gain access to inexpensive accommodation locations along the trail. The credentials also provide a document for collecting stamps as proof of where pilgrims, hikers and tourists ate and/or slept. To claim a certificate of completion (i.e. compostela) of El Camino, the credential document needs to be presented at the Pilgrim's Office in Santiago and is used to verify that the journey was accomplished according to an official route and a minimum distance of 100 km by foot or 200 km by bicycle or horse.

Methodology

This study is based on a research team's direct and active participation, observations and conversations with pilgrims, hikers and tourists for 18 hours a day along the trail, as well as interacting with the participants on the trail at intermediary and main stops during several days of El Camino.

Active participation and interaction

The intensive involvement and interaction with pilgrims, hikers and tourists on a daily basis of this study enabled making in-depth observations beyond the readily visible. The active participation with them and having the opportunity to engage in

conversations along the trail revealed unexpected insights and impressions. These are summarized and illustrated in Figures 1-3.

We would never been able to gather the same data using a questionnaire or interview guide because it was necessary to get into the same atmosphere and emotional status as the sample, to examine the elements of the main process of PT taking place between pilgrims, hikers and tourists along a trail towards a holy site.

It is not only a physical journey but also an intellectual and meditative one (and for some, spiritual). The essence of PT is not the holy site itself, but the journey itself, which opens up new mental horizons to wanderers.

We gathered insights about the pre-process, main process and post-process for pilgrims, hikers and tourists in the context of El Camino. Their reasons and causes vary, their expectations, experiences and perceptions along the trail are different, as well as their assessment of the benefits achieved after reaching Santiago de Compostela.

Trail details
The part of the trail covered in this research is from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela in the Northwest of Spain (the Province of Galicia), which is one part of the so-called French Way of St. James. This trail is the most popular and well-known of the various trails to Santiago de Compostela. The research team followed the recommended distance of daily wanderings of 20-30 km, commonly applied by most pilgrims, hikers and tourists on this trail.

As stated earlier in this paper, pilgrims, hikers and tourists are required to wander at least 100 km to claim that they have wandered El Camino. The research team decided to start at Sarria, as the distance to Santiago de Compostela is 115.3 km. From Sarria, each daily recommended wandering (i.e. sequence) is as follows:

- Sarria to Portomarín – 22.4 km;
- Portomarín to Palas de Rei – 25.0 km;
- Palas de Rei to Arzúa – 28.8 km;
- Arzúa to O Pedrouzo – 19.1 km; and
- from O Pedrouzo to Santiago de Compostela – 20 km.

Another reason for the research team to start at Sarria is that the number of pilgrims, hikers and tourists increases substantially at this point, due to the minimum distance required to Santiago de Compostela, to gain the certificate of completion of El Camino. Another factor influencing this choice of departure point for wanderers is that there is also easy access by bus to Sarria and the trail is nearby and followed by means of signs by signs.

Trail process followed
The research team partially followed the recommended daily sequence of wandering, so that it could overlap and engage with other pilgrims, hikers and tourists belonging to another sequence ahead, so as to ensure extended participation, observation and conversation with them.

The research team extended its daily sequence on two occasions:

(1) from Portomarín, the next stop was not at Palas de Rei, but continued another 3.5 km to San Xulian do Camiño; and

(2) from Arzúa, the next stop was not at O Perdrouzo, but continued another 6.7 km to Amenal.

Subsequently, every two (i.e. first, third and fifth sequences) followed the recommended and frequently followed sequences, while the other two did not (i.e. second and fourth sequences).

The research team also maintained a deliberately slower walking pace to enable pilgrims, hikers and tourists of their own sequence to catch up with the research team for further daily observations and conversations, thus achieving multiple and repetitive encounters with them during the five-day wanderings along El Camino.

On arrival in Santiago de Compostela, the research team returned immediately by car to follow the trail backwards, to observe as soon as possible the pilgrims, hikers and tourists who had been behind and thus beyond observation within the research team's sequence. The research team continued half way back along the trail and stopped at crucial crossing points along the road to observe whether they recognized any pilgrims, hikers and tourists who passed those points. Again driving back to Santiago de Compostela, the observations continued in the same manner, through attempting to recognise fellow travellers. The reverse approach along the trail to observe pilgrims, hikers and tourists revealed additional and complementary insights reported below in the section on empirical findings.

Empirical findings
This study reports three main aspects of El Camino:

(1) descriptive statistics;

(2) *wanderers* (people) – who are they and why do they do it; and

(3) *trail* (processes, interfaces and sequences) – what are the elements involved and how do the elements interact along the trail?

Subsequently, the first aspect is about describing the people along the trail, while the other is about the dynamics and complexity of processes, interfaces and sequences involved in the journey.

Descriptive statistics
The empirical findings from this study along El Camino reveal a number of insights in relation to a process consisting of people over time and across contexts, that contain at least a certain degree of interaction between groups of individuals.

The cathedral of Santiago de Compostela declares a Holy Year when St. James's Day, which is July 25th, falls on a Sunday. It occurs with an interval of 5, 6 and 11 years. The next Holy Years will occur in 2021 followed by 2027 and 2032.

The number of wanderers along the trail is nowadays very large, as shown in Table I, and not only provides an injection of capital for the local economy in Galicia, but it also offers business and employment opportunities for people in the region. Wanderers need accommodation, food and a range of other things. The trail also places the region on the map among people worldwide, due to its historical significance and importance over the centuries. As stated earlier, the trail is also a part of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites – reference number: 347.

Data from the archbishop's pilgrims office (Statistical Report, 2014) show that a total of 237,886 pilgrims completed El Camino in 2014 – 42.5 per cent (101,013) indicated that they made the journey for strictly religious reasons, another 50.6 per cent (120,412) indicated other reasons as well (e.g. tourism) and the remaining 6.9 per cent (16,461)

Year	No. of pilgrims
1985	690
1992	9,764
1993	99,436 (Holy Year)
1994	15,863
1998	30,126
1999	154,613 (Holy Year)
2000	55,004
2003	74,614
2004	179,944 (Holy Year)
2005	93,924
2009	145,877
2010	272,703 (Holy Year)
2011	179,919
2012	192,488
2013	215,880
2014	237,886

Source: The archives of Santiago de Compostela

Table I.
Pilgrims to Santiago
de Compostela – 1985
to 2014

indicated no religious motivation. Subsequently, just over half of the wanderers do so for religious reasons, while just less than half also indicated other reasons as well. Only a small number wander along the trails without any religious reasons.

The gender of wanderers was (Statistical Report, 2014): 54.0 per cent male (128,500) and 46.0 per cent female (109,386). Their age was:

- $<$30 years – 28.3 per cent;
- 30-60 years – 55.4 per cent (131,764);
- (67,348); and
- $>$60 years – 16.3 per cent (38,774).

The modes of transport were:

- by foot – 88.7 per cent (210,944);
- bicycle – 10.7 per cent (25,324);
- horse – 0.64 per cent (1,520); and
- wheelchair – 0.04 per cent (98).

There is a fairly even spread between men and women along the different trails, while the wanderers by foot predominate, followed by bicycle. It is rare for people do it by horse or wheelchair.

The professions of wanderers (Statistical Report, 2014) are widespread:

- employee – 23.1 per cent (55,051);
- student – 19.0 per cent (45,223);
- retiree/retired – 12.4 per cent (29,518);
- independent – 11.7 per cent (27,892);

- technician – 11.1 per cent (26,395);
- teacher – 7.3 per cent (17,342);
- official/public servant – 5.0 per cent (11,843);
- housewife – 2.2 per cent (5,222);
- unemployed – 2.1 per cent (5,007);
- manager – 1.9 per cent (4,622);
- worker – 1.6 per cent (3,802);
- artist – 0.9 per cent (2,190);
- priest – 0.6 per cent (1,382);
- religious – 0.5 per cent (1,104);
- farmer – 0.3 per cent (792);
- sailor – 0.1 per cent (301); and
- athlete – 0.1 per cent (155).

There is a broad spectrum of wanderers' backgrounds, indicating a mix of lifestyles from which they come.

The wanderer's country of origin is worldwide (Statistical Report, 2014), but more than 80 per cent were from:

- Spain 47.7 per cent (113,624);
- Italy – 16.3 per cent (20,241);
- Germany – 13.2 per cent (16,345);
- Portugal – 9.4 per cent (11,655);
- USA – 9.3 per cent (11,577);
- France – 7.5 per cent (9,345);
- Ireland – 4.0 per cent (5,020); and
- UK – 3.5 per cent (4,395).

Half of the wanderers are Spanish, whereas other significant Western nationalities in neighbouring countries are represented including the USA. However, there are wanderers from all parts of the world, although in relatively small numbers.

The wanderers' point of departure (Statistical Report, 2014) along the trails were approximately 70 per cent from:

- Sarria – 24.6 per cent (58,554);
- S. Jean Pied de Port – 12.3 per cent (29,344);
- Tui – 4.9 per cent (11,575);
- Leon – 4.5 per cent (10,636);
- Porto – 4.5 per cent (10,636);
- Cebreiro – 4.3 per cent (10,260);
- Ponferrada – 3.4 per cent (7,979);
- Roncesvalles – 3.3 per cent (7,848);

- Ferrol – 2.9 per cent (6,817);
- Astorga – 2.4 per cent (5,810);
- Oviedo/Camino Primitivo – 2.1 per cent (4,919);
- Pamplona – 1.9 per cent (4,573); and
- Valenca – 1.9 per cent (4,551).

The most frequent point of departure is from Sarria in Galicia/Spain followed by S. Jean Pied de Port in France, where the French trail starts. The other major ones are in Spain or Portugal.

The different "Caminos/Trails" to Santiago de Compostela attracted the following numbers of wanderers (Statistical Report, 2014):

- the French trail (El Camino Francés) – 68.1 per cent (161,994);
- the Portuguese trail (El Camino Portugués) – 14.9 per cent (35,491);
- the North trail (El Camino del Norte) – 6.3 per cent (15,071);
- the trail of "Via de la Plata" – 3.6 per cent (8,490);
- the Primitive (i.e. original) trail (El Camino Primitivo) – 3.5 per cent (8,275);
- the English trail (El Camino Inglés) – 3.0 per cent (7,194); and
- other trails – 0.3 per cent (717).

It is evident that the French trail is the most popular one, followed by other trials from neighbouring countries or from within Spain.

Wanderers (the people)
The empirical findings indicate three main categories of wanderers along the trail: pilgrims, hikers and tourists. The characteristics for each category are described in the following paragraphs.

Pilgrim. A pilgrim's objective is to wander along the trail predominantly in search of a deeper understanding of themselves, their lives and the meaning of life in general – about the past, the present and the future: a religious experience. They are driven by inner personal reasons and often expect it to be burdensome and hopefully enlightening to wander along the trail.

The efforts and sacrifices required along the trail and through sacrificing the accoutrements of their modern life over the period of the journey are also often important reasons for them to participate. They carry their own backpack containing their clothes, shoes, equipment and other perceived necessities during the pilgrimage. Their choice of accommodation and food selection is often basic.

For pilgrims, El Camino is a spiritual process, entailing wandering along the trail reflecting upon the meaning of life, their inner emotions and well-being, and it is not about arriving at Santiago de Compostela – the Cathedral is a secondary benefit and destination of the pilgrimage. The trail is a means of achieving a kind of meditative condition that occurs after a time, as they engage spiritually with the various experienced efforts and sacrifices.

Pilgrims wander often for longer time-periods (i.e. number of days) and subsequently wander longer distances to arrive at the Cathedral. They make frequent stops at churches and religious sites along the trail. They might carry their bible or a hymn book. They also appear to adopt an *ad hoc*-approach to where they sleep and eat along the trail.

Their decisions appear to be spontaneous each day, as they wander with considerable flexibility along the trail. They are not governed by time, but by the cathartic and spiritual nature of the of the journey and its associated process.

In sum, the purpose and reasons of pilgrims are often introverted or internally oriented.

Hikers. The hiker's objective differs from the pilgrim's in terms of not being purely religious (though it may be so to some extent a combination of both). However, other reasons appear to predominate. It may be about having a travel experience, getting some serious exercise or a challenge in relation to their daily life back home. The experience itself is an adventure and a challenge for them.

It may also be a spiritual adventure in search of answers in life. A life-crisis or something serious may trigger an interest in wandering along the trail. Furthermore, like the pilgrims, they carry their own backpack clothes, shoes, equipment and other perceived necessities during the wandering. Their choice of accommodation and food selection may vary, mostly from basic accommodation in hostels and sharing a room with others, to lodges with private rooms, toilet and shower.

Hikers wander for both shorter and longer time-periods, depending on the available time-frame for their journey. The distance wandered will be either shorter or longer to arrive at the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, but they generally wish to cover a distance in excess of 100 km. To some extent, they appear to apply an *ad hoc* approach to where they sleep and eat along the trail, but mostly they follow the recommended stops for accommodation.

In sum, the aims and motivation of hikers may be both internal or external.

Tourists. The tourist's objective is different from both those of pilgrims and hikers. It is often more superficial, without major expectations of gaining deeper insights into life or of experiencing a spiritual awakening.

Tourists frequently do not carry a back-pack, but at best a very light bag or small back-pack. Their suitcases or other bags and belongings are transported from one accommodation location (e.g. at a lodge or hotel) to the next along the trail, thus requiring them to carry a minimum during their daily wanderings. They also dress as tourists (e.g. light shoes and clothes that are adapted to the weather forecast of the day, with no extras, in contrast to pilgrims and hikers, who carry far more in their back-packs in case of inclement weather).

Tourists follow a pre-determined program and are often dropped off at a location along the trail by a bus or taxi each day in the morning. Tourists tend to have rooms at pre-arranged accommodation for the entire time, as they go wandering along El Camino. The distance covered by a tourist varies from a few kilometres to those who wish to walk at least a 100 km to gain the certificate of completion of El Camino at the Pilgrim's office. Santiago de Compostela is in fact becoming a tourist destination with a cathedral, as is the case for so many other cities, and it is no longer primarily about the apostle St. James or exploring the inner.

In sum, the aims and motivation of tourists are often extrovert and externally oriented.

Trail (process, interface and sequence)
As an extension to the study of the wanderers – such as: pilgrims, hikers and tourists along the trail – the research team specifically observed the elements of the main El

Camino process consisting of the interfaces between people in sequences. These empirical findings are reported graphically and summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 1 conceptualizes the process of PT for this study, as consisting of three sub-processes over time and across contexts. The construct of PT was, as mentioned above, defined in this study as: "[…] a process consisting of interfaces between people in sequences […]". Figure 2 conceptualizes a model of PT consisting of the PT-elements and based on the empirical findings reported in this study.

The conceptualized model of PT consists principally of two layers, as shown in Figure 2, all of which are described in the following paragraphs. One layer is at a general level in relation to El Camino, while the other is at a specific level.

Outer layer. The overall layer of the model of PT consists of a general approach as shown in the upper section of Figure 2. This depicts a main process of four plus *n* sequences (e.g. day trips), in which each sequence contains a group of pilgrims, hikers and tourists with marginal overlaps between the sequences.

People within each sequence are generally disconnected not connected to people in other sequences as they progress along the same trail (e.g. El Camino) at a fairly similar walking pace and cover similar daily distances. They start in the morning from more or less nearby locations and arrive in the afternoon at more or less nearby destinations. Subsequently, there is a daily time-period during each sequence that is fairly empty of pilgrims, hikers and tourists. There are a lot of people who start from the same nearby spot in the morning and arrive at another nearby spot in the afternoon, and between these spots, there are very few hikers along the trail – in essence, batches of people move along the trail.

Surprisingly, for the research team, the empirical findings indicated only a moderate degree of overlap, due to longer or shorter day trips than the large majority of trekkers along the trail. Pilgrims, hikers and tourists adopt a quicker or slower walking pace
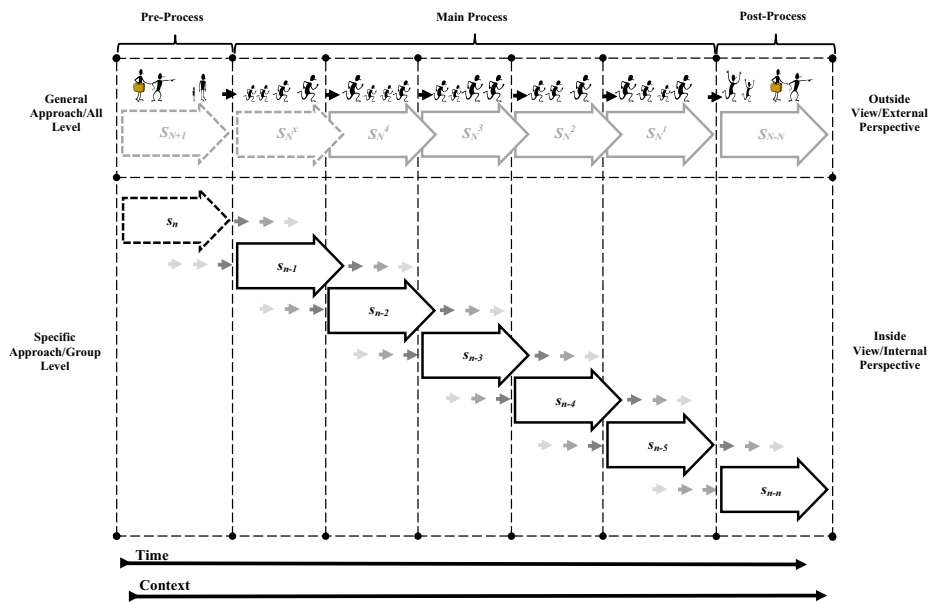

Figure 2.
A model of PT –
process, interface,
people and sequence

(e.g. speed and length of pauses) during a day trip, but at the end of the day, they end up in more or less the same location along the trail, following the recommended stops.

The overall layer offers an outside view of pilgrims, hikers and tourists at different locations along the trail, moving towards the ultimate destination (e.g. the Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela). It is the overall level that embraces "all" pilgrims, hikers and tourists during a specific time-period and is limited to a fixed number of sequences. Subsequently, it is an external perspective of the elements involved between sequences, people and interfaces over time and across contexts, regarding the model of PT.

Detailed layer. This layer of the model of PT consists of a specific approach, as shown in the lower section of Figure 2. The main process, following the progression of one sequence along the trail (e.g. El Camino), which contains one group of pilgrims, hikers and tourists who are more or less interconnected to each other day after day. The detailed layer also offers an inside view of pilgrim, hiker and tourist progression at different locations along the trail towards the final destination (e.g. the Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela). It is a "group" level that embraces pilgrims, hikers and tourists within the same sequence during a specific time-period and a fixed number of sequences. Subsequently, there is an internal perspective of the elements involved within sequences, people and interfaces over time and across contexts, regarding the model of PT.

Research implications

Through the study, El Camino reveals a number of both interesting and valuable aspects of a (tourist) product that is also a process of (tourism) activities over time and across contexts, with inherent dynamics and complexity of people and interfaces.

El Camino is different from many other wanderings that are limited to a single day and often return on the same trail back to the point-of-initiation after reaching the point-of-destination (e.g. mountaintop, safari sightseeing and bus tour).

The study yields a simplified classification of who the wanderers are and why they do it, as shown in Table II. This contributes to understanding some of the dynamics and complexity involved in such people-based processes. For example, peoples' expectations, perceptions and evaluations depend on their objectives and motivating for engaging in PT. The assessed case has been limited to wanderers along El Camino, but the same logic probably applies to other similar processes of pilgrimage and PT. Wanderers represent a spectrum of people with pilgrims at one end, tourists at the other and hikers in the middle.

One of the more significant research implications is not in fact about what characterizes similarities or differences between pilgrims, hikers and tourists, but how PT (El Camino) may be conceptualized in terms of the PT-elements involved (i.e. process, interface, people and sequence, as shown in Figure 2). This perspective has both managerial and academic implications, as well as providing foundations for further research.

Table II.
Classification of wanderers – who and why

Wanderer	Pilgrim	Hiker	Tourist
Purpose and Reasons	...introvert and internally oriented...	...a combination of both...	...extrovert and externally oriented...

A notable research implication of this study is that people are repeatedly interconnected to each other day after day within this context, but it is limited to more or less the same people within the same sequence. The overlaps between people in different sequences along the trail are marginal, in relation to the total number of pilgrims, hikers and tourists wandering towards the same destination. Wanderers along the trail follow roughly the same daily pattern of distances and walking pace from one location to another. Subsequently, wanderers' expectations, perceptions and evaluations along the trail depend up their sequence, the people within it and the outcome of their interfaces.

Interestingly, pilgrims and to some extents hikers do not approve of tourists along the trail, as they are not perceived as participating for the right reasons. A female French pilgrim said disparagingly: "They are not pilgrims, they are just tourists […] " and pointed to the suitcases in the lobby of an accommodation. An English pilgrim added: "El Camino is not about reaching the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, it is about the trail to it". The research team findings are valuable in revealing that people may wander along the trail in different modes. There might be a desire or need for a lighter or easier way to do it.

A final research implication is the relative lack of visibility of each wanderer along the trail from the outside, but for each wanderer, is highly visible along the trail from an inside perspective. An obscure grey mass of wanderers is seen from the outside, while wanderers see each other clearly from the inside. It may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for a wanderer, and many leave personal items of significance to them or even inscribe their names on rocks along the trial. While such a gesture is important to the individual in questions, other travellers may see no importance in the leaving of such mementos.

Managerial implications

A number of managerial implications from the empirical findings gained through direct and active participation, observations and conversations with pilgrims, hikers and tourists along the trail to Santiago de Compostela.

One particularly notable managerial implication, also providing an explanation of the marginal overlaps between people in different sequences, is that accommodation and food sites are located in proximity to the recommended stops along the trail, which contributes to reducing the mingling of people between sequences.

This observation offers potential for diversified managerial practices, so as to bring about a different flow of wanderers. For example, the last five to ten recommended sequences, where the number of wanderers increases dramatically, could contain a variety of accommodation and food sites halfway between the recommended locations of accommodation, to spread people out along the trail and also gain increased overlap between the sequences. This would also increase the capacity of wanderers along the trail, which would be very useful at present. It would also increase the level of interaction between groups in different sequences.

Wanderers start more or less at the same time of the day (within 2-3 hours) from nearby accommodation in the morning and arrive in a similar manner within a similar time-interval at nearby locations in the afternoons. An option could be to develop an additional sequence of recommended stops that would also make it easier for wanderers to choose between longer or shorter day trips than is the case at the moment. The flexibility and dynamics along the trail would increase and provide a broader spectrum

of options for people during the main process of El Camino. This would also make it more accessible and viable for people with disabilities.

The PT-elements studied along El Camino resemble and are applicable, to some extent, to the situations of rush hour traffic in cities in the mornings and afternoons – many cars during peak hours and then far fewer between those peak times. The same peak-load phenomenon occurs along El Camino – wanderers move mostly from their accommodation locations in the mornings to the next stop, leaving empty locations behind, but filling them up again in the afternoon at new locations. However, people travelling by car drive back and forth to their jobs more or less at the same time and routes during weekdays. Wanderers along the trail, by contrast, do not normally turn back, but continue towards the ultimate destination.

The PT-elements also resemble and are applicable to airport hubs with aircraft landing and taking off within certain time-frames on a daily basis. There are several peak hours when airports are crowded, while at other times, they are almost deserted.

Furthermore, charter travel is applicable to the PT-elements, with tourists usually arriving and departing on a weekly basis at tourist destinations, with marginal overlaps between batches or groups of tourists. Departing tourists are replaced by others arriving – not only at the tourist destinations (e.g. cities and hotels) but also at aircraft and other means of transportation.

Subsequently, the examples demonstrate the phenomenon of human batches at certain time-periods in relation to other time-periods with more sporadic movements on the roads, airports and tourist destinations. The difference between them is that the example with people in cars do so daily and repeatedly, while air passengers fly out and fly back much less frequently. The difference from pilgrims, hikers and tourists along El Camino is that wanderers do not repeat the same day trip twice, but strive towards moving forward until they reach the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela. There is an atmosphere and sensation of one unified group within each sequence moving forward together day by day, although they are not really one group, but wandering in small groups or individually along the trail. Nevertheless, the PT-elements appear to be applicable in settings other than a trail, such as El Camino. Charter travel is similar to wanderers along a trail such as the one explored in this study.

Conclusions, limitations and suggestions for future research
The principal contribution of this study is a conceptualized model of PT containing the PT-elements – all of which offer a foundation for structuring and assessing empirical research and providing additional insights and knowledge into the dynamics and complexity involved specifically in a people-based process (e.g. tourism and transports) consisting of interfaces and sequences such as El Camino or similar ones, and with respect to travelling in general.

Another contribution is that the study reveals different layers, levels, views, approaches, and perspectives involved in people-based processes. The model of PT introduced in Figure 2 emphasises the processes and interfaces involved over time and across contexts between people in the same or different sequences. The ultimate experience at an individual level differs, depending on the outcome of the PT-elements of the model of PT (i.e. processes, interfaces, people and sequences).
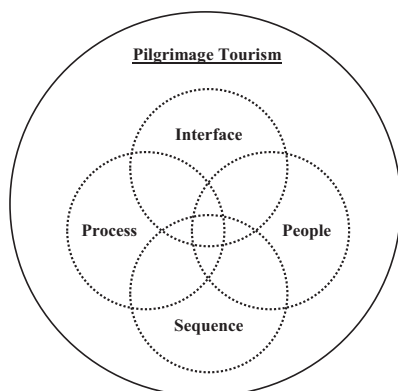
Figure 3.
PT and elements
interconnected

PT and the PT-elements are interconnected (*wanderers* – pilgrims, hikers and tourists; *trail* – process, interface and sequence) – without wanderers no trail, without trail no wanderers, without wanderers and trail no PT as shown in Figure 3.

Accordingly, PT depends on the outcome of the PT-elements. There are significant dynamics and complexity involved over time and across contexts in interfaces between people, in the form of sequences along El Camino and similar (tourism) products and (tourism) processes.

A limitation of the current study is that it focused at the overall and detailed levels of pilgrims, hikers and tourists along El Camino, but not at the individual level, which therefore offers an opportunity for further research. For example, what are the elements involved at an individual level along a PT trail that would complement the conceptualized model of PT of this study?

Incorporating an additional layer at the "individual" level offers opportunities for further research. Furthermore, this current study has been limited to the main process of PT, but further insights are required in terms of the pre- and post-processes.

Further research could evidently use the model of PT to assess its universal applicability in other settings. It could also be used in other contexts to verify it applicability.

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