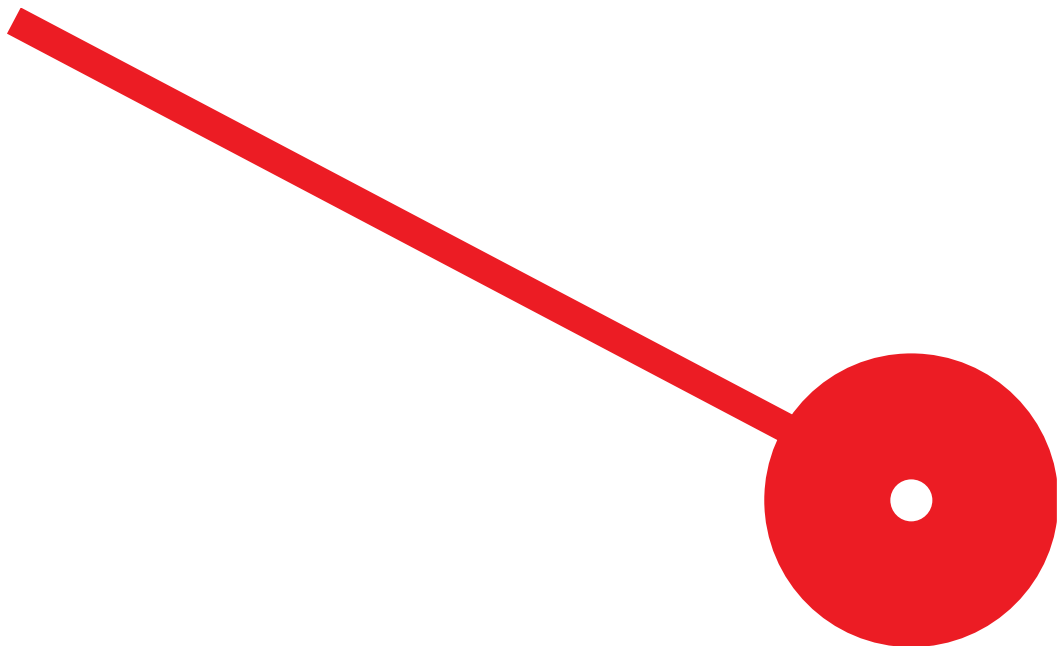


The Transformation and Development of the Camino de Santiago: From a Religious Pilgrimage to a Cultural and Economic Tourist Phenomenon

Krystyna Kopii

Final Version (includes the jury's input and suggestions)

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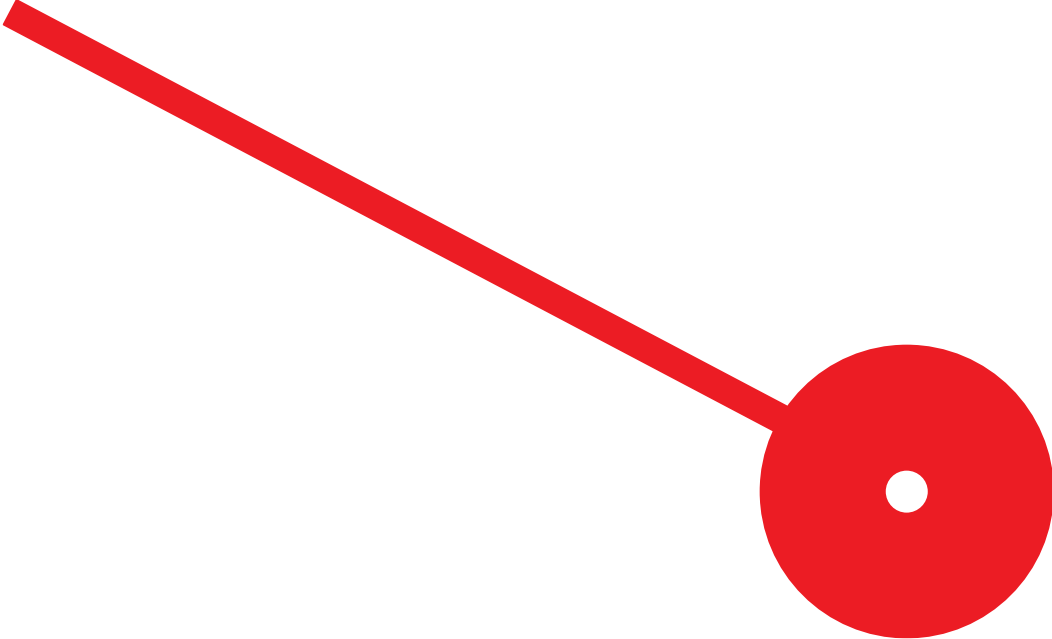
Krystyna Kopii. The Transformation and
Development of the Camino de Santiago: From a
Religious Pilgrimage to a Cultural and Economic
Tourist Phenomenon
10/2024

The Transformation and Development of the Camino de Santiago: From a Religious Pilgrimage to a Cultural and Economic Tourist Phenomenon

Krystyna Kopii

Dissertation

Presented to Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração
do Porto to obtain the Master's degree in Intercultural Studies for
Business, under the supervision of Prof. Laura Tallone



Acknowledgments

First, I wouldn't be on this course and wouldn't be writing this work if I hadn't participated in a scholarship program called Nexus 2.0 with the support of Galp. I am grateful to them for the chance to not only get a European education, but also for the opportunity to find new orientations and build a future in a new environment and place.

I am also grateful to all the professors in the course who put themselves into the lectures and provided us with challenges in the form of various projects and assignments for our professional and personal growth. Special thanks to Clara Sarmento, our course leader, for her enthusiasm and belief in the course and the potential of the students.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Professor Laura, for her support and guidance during the writing of this work. Her advice was valuable and helpful, and our collaboration was very comfortable and productive.

Finally, I want to thank myself for the effort and diligence I put into studying this course, for the stamina and courage to study again and go through this journey to the end. I hope one day to be proud of myself to walk the remarkable Camino I have written about in this work.

Resumo:

O Caminho de Santiago, historicamente uma das rotas de peregrinação cristã mais significativas da Europa, sofreu alterações significativas e tornou-se um importante destino turístico. Esta dissertação examina os factores que impulsionam esta mudança, centrando-se na peregrinação religiosa e no turismo cultural. Recorrendo a uma revisão da literatura e a dados estatísticos, o estudo examina como o turismo moderno, a comercialização e a digitalização influenciaram a evolução do Caminho e mudaram a forma como os viajantes encaram a peregrinação. O estudo mostra que embora as motivações espirituais continuem a ser importantes para alguns viajantes, uma maioria crescente é atraída pelas atrações culturais, históricas e naturais da rota. O estudo examina o papel crescente da tecnologia digital na promoção do Caminho, tornando a viagem mais acessível e atrativa para um público global. Aborda também o impacto da comercialização na autenticidade de um percurso, com o património religioso e cultural a ser mercantilizado e a peregrinação a tornar-se uma experiência mais pós-secular. Estes resultados sugerem que a transformação do Caminho de Santiago reflecte tendências mais amplas no desenvolvimento do turismo religioso e cultural na era moderna. Este trabalho contribui para o debate em curso sobre o turismo do património cultural, o equilíbrio entre a preservação das tradições e a adaptação às tendências turísticas modernas, e a sustentabilidade de tais rotas culturais em tempos de digitalização e de um mundo globalizado.

Palavras-chave: turismo cultural, peregrinação, Caminho de Santiago, digitalização, comercialização, sustentabilidade.

Abstract:

The Camino de Santiago, historically one of the most important Christian pilgrimage routes in Europe, has undergone significant changes and has become a major tourist destination. This dissertation examines the factors that have driven this shift, focusing on religious pilgrimage and cultural tourism. Using a literature review and statistical data, the study examines how contemporary tourism, commercialization and digitalization have influenced the evolution of the Camino and changed pilgrims' attitudes towards pilgrimage. The study shows that while spiritual motives remain important for some travellers, an increasing number are drawn to the cultural, historical and natural appeal of the route. The study examines the growing role of digital technologies in promoting the Camino, making the journey more accessible and appealing to a global audience. It also explores the impact of commercialization on the authenticity of the route, with religious and cultural heritage being commodified and pilgrimage becoming a more post-secular experience. These results show that the transformation of the Camino de Santiago reflects broader trends in the development of religious and cultural tourism in the modern era. This work contributes to ongoing debates about cultural heritage tourism, the balance between preserving traditions and adapting to modern tourism trends, and the sustainability of such cultural routes in the age of digitalization and a globalized world.

Keywords: cultural tourism, pilgrimage, Camino de Santiago, digitalization, commercialization, sustainability.

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Abbreviation List

Camino— Camino de Santiago

ADEGA — Association for the Defence of the Environment of Galicia

CETUR — Centre for Tourism Studies and Research

DTI — Network of Smart Tourism Destinations

FEMP— Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces)

GIS — Geographic Information Systems

ICT — Information and Communication Technologies

LEADER — Liaisons Entre Activités de Développement de L'Economie Rural (Links Between Rural Economy Development Activities)

PREDIF — Plataforma Representativa de Personas con Discapacidad Física (Representative Platform of People with Physical Disabilities)

PRODER — Programa Operativo de Desarrollo y Diversificación Económica de Zonas Rurales (Operational Program for Development and Economic Diversification of Rural Areas)

RRTP — Spanish Recovery, Transformation, and Resilience Plan

REDS — Red Española para el Desarrollo Sostenible (Spanish Network for Sustainable Development)

SA de Xestión do Plan Xacobeo— La Sociedade Anónima de Xestión do Plan Xacobeo

SDGs — Sustainable Development Goals

Xacobeo – Holy Year

INTRODUCTION

Pilgrimage routes and religious sites have played a significant role in human and commercial movements throughout European history. Many of the historic routes were designated as Cultural Routes by the Council of Europe in the late 20th and early 21st centuries (e.g. the Pilgrimage Routes of Santiago de Compostela) or as exceptional sites united by a single theme, such as the Cluny sites, Cistercian abbeys and Jewish heritage sites. These types of cultural and religious sites have been the beginnings of a network of European sites that have attracted travellers, traders, and pilgrims from the Middle Ages to the present day. Domestic and international tourists, travellers, pilgrims, secular tourists, and locals converge and connect along these routes and sites. They represent more than potential tourist destinations, they also offer an integrated cultural, social, and spiritual experience and a way of interacting with the landscape and the environment.

The definition of “route” in its modern understanding is not interpreted exclusively in terms of the physical dimension of the “path”; it is used in a broad conceptual sense to designate a network of places or geographical areas with a common theme, creating a certain identity of the place and a form of its perception (Berti, 2015). The term “cultural route” goes beyond the geographical boundaries of the route and defines the route according to the scale and significance of its cultural heritage. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (Icomos) has proposed the designation of the Cultural Route as a concept or category that does not contradict other categories or types of cultural property – such as monuments, cities, cultural landscapes, etc. – but includes them in a single system that enhances their individual and common significance. In this integrated, interdisciplinary, and general concept, new links are created between the different categories, and a more complete and multifaceted vision of history is provided (Icomos, 2008).

Cultural routes play a key role in shaping and reflecting the historical, cultural, and social landscapes of different regions. Often following ancient pilgrimage, trade, or migration routes, these routes preserve cultural heritage and historical value. This allows modern travellers to have a multifaceted experience and explore diverse cultural traditions and historical connections.

The Camino de Santiago, as one of the most famous cultural routes in Europe, is valuable due to its historical significance as a pilgrimage route (Pérez, 2010). The term "Camino" refers to the network of pilgrimage routes from several European countries leading to the shrine of the Apostle St. James in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, collectively known as the Camino de Santiago or the Way of St. James. In this thesis, I

use the abbreviated term “Camino” to denote the Camino de Santiago, using the original Spanish naming.

The Camino de Santiago has evolved into the whole network of historic pilgrimage routes, which includes such individual routes as the Camino Francés (French Way), Camino Portugués (Portuguese Way), Camino del Norte (Northern Way), Camino Primitivo (Original Way), Via de la Plata (Silver Way), Camino Inglés (English Way) and others. Although these routes are in different geographical regions and have unique historical and cultural features, the Camino de Santiago is characterized as a single concept. The Camino is identified not only as a physical route but also as a symbol of spiritual and cultural unity, connecting different regions and cultures through a common historical and spiritual experience.

In this work, I explore the Camino de Santiago as a religious pilgrimage and a cultural and touristic phenomenon that shapes individual experiences and global socio-economic trends. The dual nature of the Camino, combining sacred and secular elements, offers a unique case study for exploring the intersection of religion, culture, tourism, and economics. It illuminates the significance and dynamic development of the Camino in contemporary society, demonstrating it as both a pilgrimage route and a powerful cultural, economic, and touristic force.

A cultural route is a form of heritage that is difficult to measure and define due to its diversity in attributes, styles, scales, forms, and temporal and spatial extent (Sugio, 2005). Their distinctive feature is their ability to transcend the local level and extend to a global level, spanning several countries and regions. Consequently, cultural routes require an organized form of protection, planning, and management at national and international levels.

In addition to the Camino, other cultural routes also offer different perspectives of historical and cultural exchange. For example, the Via Francigena pilgrimage route stretching from Canterbury to Rome is like the Camino de Santiago in its spiritual and historical dimensions but differs in its geographical and cultural context (Fina, 2014). This route passes through a variety of European landscapes and reflects the different cultural characteristics along the route. The ancient Roman road stretching from the Adriatic Sea to Asia Minor called Via Egnatia offers a special perspective of historical and religious tourism. It was not only a major trade route, but also an important route for religious pilgrimages in the early Christian era (Bowersock, 1994). The route facilitated the movement of early Christians and missionaries and played a significant role in the

spread of Christianity in the Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor. The Via Egnatia has a broad historical and religious context and has influenced the spread of Christian beliefs and practices throughout the world, while the Camino is focused on a pilgrimage to a single shrine and a destination (Gros, 2006).

Each cultural route, including the Camino de Santiago, the Via Francigena, and the Via Egnatia, represents a unique asset of historical and cultural significance. The Camino reflects a religious pilgrimage and spiritual journey, while the Via Francigena and Via Egnatia combine the interplay of cultural exchange, historical narrative, and geographical diversity. Overall, cultural routes enhance understanding of human interaction across time and space, revealing the enduring significance of histories and routes in contemporary cultural landscapes and heritage.

The motivation for choosing and studying this topic is my interest in cultural heritage, the impact of tourism on cultural heritage, and the tourist and economic development of cultural places and routes. In particular, the topic of the Camino is a very relevant and diverse case for studying the transformation of cultural and religious heritage into a tourist route.

In recent decades, the Camino de Santiago has undergone many transformations and changes, because of which its popularity and the number of visitors has increased and turned it into the most popular cultural routes in Europe, which is an interesting topic for research in the field of business and cultural heritage. As a historically and culturally significant route, the Camino de Santiago covers the topics of heritage conservation, cultural and economic management, and development strategies in the field of tourism.

Since the beginning of its history, the Camino has turned into a full-fledged cultural phenomenon, which was included in the number of pilgrimages along with Jerusalem and Rome. The Camino is now much more popular than Italy's Via Francigena: it attracts above 300,000 pilgrims a year, with more pilgrims each year, compared with tens of thousands on the Via Francigena route (Caminoways, n.d.).

The Camino de Santiago is a great example of how cultural routes can be successfully transformed into outstanding tourist attractions through the implementation of tourism and heritage management strategies. This study also examines the economic impact of the route on local businesses and communities, and how tourism can be used to support the local economy while preserving the cultural value of the place. The economic and governance changes that have accompanied this evolution, analysing how these factors have influenced the Camino's status as a major cultural tourism destination. The

study is aimed to understand the interactions between heritage conservation, tourism development, and economic impacts along the route.

This topic is particularly relevant in the context of the trend towards sustainable tourism and its implementation in the management of cultural heritage to ensure the long-term preservation of the cultural and historical significance of the Camino in a context of constant tourism development and growing tourist flow due to the growing demand for authentic, unusual and culturally rich tourist destinations.

Once a sacred pilgrimage route, it has evolved into a multifaceted cultural and tourist experience for travellers with different values and motivations. The transformation of the route at this stage of development reflects the ideas and trends of post-secularism, where spirituality intersects with personal interests. It has also changed the approach to the management of the route, which aims to preserve the spiritual value of the route and meet the needs of a wider and more secular audience, including tourists. The changing motivations of Camino visitors and changes in the management of the route open a wide field for academic research, including understanding how spiritual and cultural heritage can successfully exist in the context of modern tourism, which is also explored in the work.

The renewed interest in the Camino de Santiago only confirms the relevance and potential of this topic. The case of the Camino raises important questions of commercialization and preservation of cultural heritage, balancing the tourist and cultural components of the route. The specific focus of this dissertation is to investigate the development of the Camino de Santiago from 1990th till nowadays and its transformation from a traditional religious pilgrimage route into a renowned cultural and tourist destination.

My previous academic education in tourism also gave me a solid basis for researching this topic in the course. I was particularly interested in understanding the phenomenon of the Camino de Santiago, how, despite the modern development of tourism, medialization, and commercialization, it retains its cultural, historical, and religious integrity, and how much its fundamental values have changed over the past 30 years due to the influence of tourism and modern management. Such topics as sustainable tourism, heritage and cultural preservation, and commercialization of cultural sites are increasingly being researched and discussed in the tourism and business sectors, making this topic a relevant area of study.

This thesis has examined several key areas related to the development of the Camino de Santiago as a cultural and tourist route, such as:

- an examination of the motives and interests of pilgrims and travellers, as well as the increasingly post-secular nature of the route.
- an analysis of the economic impact and an examination of how the development of the Camino has affected local, regional, and national economies along the route.
- an analysis of the strategies applied to develop the Camino and promote it as an internationally significant cultural tourism route.
- an examination of the route development strategies and sustainable tourism practices to preserve the cultural and historical integrity of the Camino for future generations.

In Chapter 1 we will discover the concept of religious and spiritual tourism, the evolution of the Jacobine pilgrimage and its post-secular transformation, and we will explore the motives of modern pilgrims and travellers.

In Chapter 2 we will explore the economic and touristic development of the Camino de Santiago, paying attention to the transformative Xacobeo 1993 and 1999, and analyse the Camino's impact on the local economies and communities.

In Chapter 3 we will discuss the digitalization and mediatization of the Camino de Santiago, as well as the risk of commercialization of the route. Also, we will explore the modern management of the Camino and the implementation of sustainable development plans such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This research can be used as a successful example of cultural route development and can be applied to the successful development of similar cultural routes around the world.

The main argument of this dissertation is that the transformation of the Camino de Santiago into a cultural and tourist route has been driven by planned economic and governance strategies, taking advantage of its historical and cultural significance. This transformation has not only increased the economic impact on local and regional communities but has also influenced the creation and implementation of new methods of managing the Camino that can balance tourism development with the preservation of its spiritual and cultural heritage. While these changes have significant economic benefits, there are also risks associated with preserving the Camino's historical and spiritual integrity as its popularity grows as a tourist destination.

The study field of this thesis is limited to examining the development of the Camino de Santiago from the late 20th century to the present day with a focus on the latest decades with the greatest changes and implementation of significant management approach, discovering Holy Years, or Xacobeo, in 1993 and 1999 and contemporary changes in the development of the routes until now. In the thesis, I use the term Xacobeo in Spanish to describe specific Xacobeo in 1993 and 1999 and the term Holy Years in English to denote the general phenomenon of years when the Feast of Saint James falls on a Sunday.

The study primarily examines the Spanish section of the route, given its centrality to the Camino's identity as a cultural route of global significance and the availability of relevant data for analysis. While the thesis acknowledges the spiritual origins of the Camino, the analysis focuses primarily on its evolution into a cultural tourism route. The study is limited to economic and managerial aspects, with less emphasis on socio-cultural dynamics, but includes an analysis of pilgrims' motivations and interests and identifies a common segment of contemporary visitors of the Camino routes.

The study focuses on the socio-cultural dynamics that are most relevant to the contemporary transformation of the Camino de Santiago since the mid-20th century. It examines the transition from religious pilgrimage to cultural and economic tourism, emphasizing secularization, globalization, and the role of local communities and governments in preserving traditions and identity of the Camino. The study excludes broader sociological themes such as general travel behaviour unrelated to religious pilgrimage or aspects of cultural and heritage tourism unrelated to religious themes.

The research methodology used in this dissertation combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyse the development of the Camino de Santiago. The main methodologies used include literature review and data analysis. The basis of the study is built on a thorough literature review of existing academic studies, reports, and historical documents related to the Camino de Santiago. This review includes a range of sources such as books, journal articles, government reports, and publications. The literature review provides a critical understanding of the historical evolution of the Camino, the economic and governance changes over the past decades, and the wider context of cultural tourism development.

To assess the economic impact and trends in tourism on the Camino de Santiago, the dissertation uses statistical data from a variety of sources including government organisations, tourism agencies, economic reports, and relevant databases. The key indicators for the analysis are the number of visitors and economic statistics in the tourism

industry. Thus, statistical analysis allows us to evaluate the development of the Camino and its impact on the economy quantitatively.

Finally, the study synthesizes the results of the literature review and data analysis to conclude the economic and governance changes that have contributed to the evolution of the Camino de Santiago. This synthesis provides a holistic understanding of the factors that have shaped the route's transformation and provides insights into the challenges and opportunities of managing a cultural heritage site in the context of contemporary tourism.

This dissertation is the culmination of my research and work in the Intercultural Studies for Business course, which demonstrates the application of interdisciplinary ideas and methodologies acquired during the course. By examining the Camino de Santiago as a cultural and economic unit, this work reflects the basic principles of intercultural studies and their relevance in a business context. The analysis conducted in this dissertation illustrates the intersection of culture, economics, and management. It illustrates how cultural phenomena can be explored and managed within the framework of business, tourism, and economic development.

The dissertation contributes to the academic fields of cultural and business studies and serves as a practical reflection of the skills and knowledge of the Intercultural Studies for Business course. It contains knowledge and ideas for professionals involved in the management of cultural heritage sites and tourism businesses, as well as the development of sustainable tourism practices. Thus, this work represents a successful application of the program's interdisciplinary approach to a significant and relevant cultural phenomenon.

CHAPTER I – The evolution of pilgrimage: religious and spiritual tourism, post-secular transformation of the Jacobean pilgrimage, the motives of modern pilgrims

This chapter examines the conceptual foundations of religious and spiritual tourism, focusing on contemporary pilgrimage, exemplified by the Camino de Santiago. It examines the evolution of pilgrimage over time and the transformations that have made the Camino a contemporary cultural and tourist destination, even more so a phenomenon.

Furthermore, this chapter attempts to explore the underlying motivations and interests of contemporary pilgrims, as well as the motivations and intentions of ordinary travellers and pilgrims. Through this study, the chapter seeks to uncover the comprehensive significance of the Camino de Santiago in contemporary religious and spiritual tourism, as well as its post-secular transformation from a religious route into a cultural and mass-tourist destination.

1.1. Concept of modern spirituality, spiritual and religious tourism

Travelling has long gone beyond the usual visiting of popular places and getting acquainted with local culture, traditions, and food. Today, tourists travel to acquire new experiences and find new selves in these experiences, as well as in search of personal development and spiritual enlightenment. Spiritual tourism is a type of tourism aimed at searching for spiritual benefits, combined with religious practices. Pilgrimage is the most common manifestation of spiritual tourism, where religious doctrine, practice and travel combine into one (Norman, 2018).

In the last decade, the demand for spiritual experience has grown as it has begun to be promoted as a lifestyle and philosophy. Spiritual tourism is a journey to find meaning and purpose in one's life (Rao, 2020), and in the modern world, where personal growth has become a real movement, its boundaries are expanding at enormous speed. Spiritual experience is viewed as a search for personal, unique discovery or knowledge, and the act of discovery is itself a spiritual experience (Norman, 2012; Rao, 2020). Moreover, in recent years, spirituality as a component of religious tourism has begun to be separated from it. This may be due to the increase in non-believers or non-religious people who practice meditation or engage in other spiritual practices for self-development. Smith and Puchko (2009) argue that spiritual development is a key element in balancing the body, mind, and spirit.

To separate spirituality from religiosity, researchers on this issue have found that the purpose of spiritual travel is a psychological switch from an ordinary way of life to something unusual, not routine (Cheer et al., 2017). By breaking away from the usual environment, a person eliminates stress or other factors that prevent him from focusing on achieving a goal or searching for himself internally. Spiritual tourism is an opportunity to recognize, explore, and develop spirituality in ways that may not be available in everyday life.

Spiritual tourism also changes and expands in its definition depending on the travellers who practice it, making it different from religious tourism. Fedele (2009) refers to people who practice spiritual tourism as “new pilgrims.” According to Hall (2006), spiritual tourism refers to “a global way of reimagining and living life” practiced by believers and non-believers in God. He explains the spiritual part of tourism as something that “comes from within,” as a motivation to find more, rather than to practice what has already been found and lived by others. That is why in recent years spirituality has become an increasingly popular social phenomenon, creating a separate niche in the tourism market for spiritual tourists and pilgrims interested in the spiritual area of life (Hampu & Coroş, 2022).

The participation of tourists in this type of travel and leisure suggests that modern society is interested in the topic of spirituality and enlightenment. Regardless of whether they attend religious practices while travelling or also engage in them in everyday life, they are somehow already involved in the trend of developing their spirituality and finding themselves. Spiritual tourism shows us, first, the role and importance of such types of travel in modern society, as well as the place of spiritual practices in it.

Norman (2018) described the problem of defining a pilgrim and a spiritual tourist who travels the Camino not for religious reasons, but for personal reasons. He proposes to find a way to distinguish one from the other and define their terminology. Since the definition of “spiritual” means the desire for selfhood, and separation from the institutional influence of religion, a separate term needs to be introduced for spiritual tourists. The designation “spiritual tourist” helps not only to distinguish them from overtly religious pilgrims but also to highlight their motives for travel, such as self-discovery and personal meaning in life. At the same time, this term does not exclude the definition of spiritual tourism as a way of rest, relaxation, and leisurely pastime, which are also its components.

Dewsbury and Klock (2009) define spirituality as an inclusive concept; spirituality does not necessarily have to be religious but can include other subjective factors. Spirituality is a cornerstone of the post-secular era (Blom et al., 2016a; Pace & Giordan, 2012), and modern society needs new spiritual and religious movements and teachings where the main figure is the individual, not the church (Blom et al., 2008a; Blom et al., 2016b; Farias & Lally, 2008; Mikaelsson, 2012a).

Spiritual tourism is often closely associated with the concept of the New Age¹. With its emergence spiritual tourism became a growing market, especially in terms of pilgrimages and practices motivated by “personal growth” (Attix, 2002). Actively developed in the 1970s, the New Age movement’s main idea remains the search for a new spirituality of each individual and the need for self-analysis (Digance, 2003).

Huck and Jackson (2006) describe the difference between the purposeful spiritual tourist with deep inner intention, for whom “the main reason for pilgrimage is personal spiritual growth” and the casual spiritual tourist for whom "personal spiritual growth is a secondary motivation for visiting" and who has less spiritual experience in general. There is also a difference between a traveller going on a spiritual journey and a person going on a religious pilgrimage. Spiritual travellers get what they consider to be a “spiritual” experience without adherence to religious beliefs (Heelas, 1998). Likewise, many people who consider to be spiritual do not consider to be religious, and vice versa (Olsen & Timothy, 2006).

As the diversity of religious and spiritual experiences increases, so does the tourist experience, their intersection gives us insight into the merging of both phenomena in the modern world. The uniqueness of modern spiritual tourists lies in the fact that they lack a traditional commitment to a particular religion and religion in general (Norman, 2018). They typically travel to destinations and participate in religious practices or traditions without affiliation with the local religion which, in many cases, have no day-to-day connection to the practices or traditions in which they participate. For example, in Asian countries, one can find tourists doing yoga or meditation who are not related to the Buddhist religion. And in Europe, every year many tourists take part in the pilgrimage to

¹New Age is a contemporary religious movement born in the 1960s, which differs from traditional religious movements. It is not represented by any one specific spiritual teaching or religious denomination, but includes many different spiritual metaphysical teachings, practices, and concepts (Attix, 2002).

Santiago de Compostela in Spain, without having Christian beliefs or strictly following a religion.

Recently, spiritual tourism has become widespread, finding application in many previously “secular” popular places, as well as in religious ones. In Western Europe, there are not many places for spiritual tourism, even though some places attract large numbers of spiritual tourists. Some of them stand out for their “attractiveness” or “pull” factors (Dunn, 2016) when spiritual tourists choose to visit them, for example, Lourdes in France, Glastonbury in the United Kingdom, Fatima in Portugal. The most remarkable and visited place by spiritual tourists in Western Europe is the Camino de Santiago, along the routes of more than 300,000 pilgrims annually (Norman, 2018).

One of the reasons for the increase in popularity of spiritual tourism is undoubtedly the abundance of literature about the pilgrimage in popular culture by eminent authors, such as *The Pilgrimage* by Paulo Coelho who personally made the pilgrimage in Camino, and Elizabeth Gilbert’s *Eat, Pray, Love*, as well as the emergence of travel blogs and forums on the Internet and columns in print publications. In particular, the work of Paulo Coelho was a turning point in the presentation of the Camino as an important spiritual route, accessible to anyone who wants to go on a journey for truth and answers.

For a long time people have made pilgrimages to places they consider sacred, special, or separate from the ordinary, everyday world (Eliade, 1961). Jackson and Henry (1983) define sacred sites as “that part of the earth that is recognized by individuals or groups as worthy of devotion, allegiance, or respect”. The perception of the sacredness of a place is central to this idea, as sacred space exists only for those who know its characteristics and the reason for its specialness (Shackley, 2001). The sacredness of the Camino lies in the opportunity to step away from the routine and immerse oneself in the process of searching for spirituality and religious identity if such a motive is pursued.

The role of sacred destinations or places in creating spiritual and religious experiences plays a somewhat controversial role in spiritual and religious tourism since the inner journey is often given more attention than any external environment. However, Norman and Pokorny (2017) discuss that spiritual tourism usually takes place in special spaces that are “alternative” to the spaces of travellers’ everyday lives, and for pilgrimage purposes, these are often quiet, slow, provincial places, far from the bustling cities and megapolises. Kato and Prozano (2017), as well as Howard (2012) suggest that pilgrimage in the form of walking trails is a type of slow tourism that combines the healing properties of the natural environment with spiritual engagement. Many spiritual travellers tend to

visit so-called sacred landscapes and places, which represent “the relationship between bodily presence, sensory experience, and belief in something unmanifested but spiritually powerful” (Dewsbury & Cloke, 2009).

According to Frey (1998), there is no one true and suitable definition of the spiritual journey for all pilgrims, but in most cases, this definition is associated with the idea of “an uncontained, unstructured, personalised, individual and direct relationship of man to ultimate reality”. It also provides an opportunity to experience catharsis, which reveals the deepest experiences, traumas, and memories of the past and helps to clear them. This highlights the pluralism of the concept of spirituality and reinforces the importance of religiosity for both society and the individual (Blom et al., 2016a; Davie, 2000).

Travellers embarking on a journey choose religion and spirituality as a source of answers to questions that trouble them, as help and direction, landmarks they seek to find, and in some sense even relief or consolation. According to Poria et al. (2003), religion is a fundamental element of culture and is closely intertwined with various elements of people's lives. Religion takes physical form in the form of places, scriptures, and figures who preach this culture. But first, a person needs to experience a place physically and be connected with their spirituality. A place may become sacred for several reasons, such as the founding of a particular religious movement, the birth or burial of a religious figure or saint, the presence of an important sacred relic or artifact, or the site of a miracle according to religious legends.

The Camino can undoubtedly be considered sacred since the city of Santiago de Compostela claims to contain the remains of St. James, who walked the sacred route in medieval times (Jaffer, 2019). That is why it is important as a route, a sacred place where people can feel their spirituality and belonging to the spiritual, which they can experience along the route, as well as in the city of Santiago. The popularity of religious and spiritual tourism is growing, as well as the expectations of travellers according to what needs and motives they will be able to satisfy in the journey.

1.2. Evolution of Jacobean pilgrimage and motives of modern travellers

Pilgrimage, one of the oldest forms of population mobility (Collins-Kreiner, 2010), exists in all major world religions (Pavicic et al., 2007). It is also a journey beyond the ordinary and familiar, a spiritual inner quest for those who seek a sense of mystery,

wonder, power, meaning, and connection with others (Turner & Turner, 1978; Coleman & Eade, 2004). A pilgrimage is a journey made among other people striving for the same goal (Hall, 2006). Moreover, it is seen by many as a temporary escape from a harsh existence to a united spiritual motivation (Digance, 2003).

Vukonic (1996) argues that traditionally pilgrimage was a physical journey in search of truth, the sacred or holy. Sallnow (1987) states that people are drawn to sacred places “where divine power is present.” Preston (1992) argues that it is due to spiritual magnetism. Often the motivation is the search for truth, enlightenment, or escape from daily routine in search of authenticity (Olsen & Timothy, 2006).

Tuan (1984) claims that people occasionally need to go beyond familiar surroundings and immerse themselves in an unfamiliar environment, where it is possible to break away from daily routines and, in a sense, rediscover one's identity. The pilgrimage represents a special spiritual transition, from the process of separation from home, then transition (the journey itself to a sacred place) and until incorporation (arrival at the destination). The modern traveller is looking for original experiences that are different from his everyday life. The Camino satisfies this need, which is embedded in postmodern values of sociability and leisure mobility (López J., & Santos, 2019a).

The journey makes it possible to change the usual environment and not only the place but also the traveller himself, who finds new meanings and visions of life. And upon returning home, the traveller returns to a familiar place but changes inside (Park, 2004). This is the main transformative property and value of pilgrimage as a phenomenon and process.

Barber (1993) defines pilgrimage as “travel for religious reasons, the external reason being to visit a holy place and the internal reason being for spiritual purposes and inner understanding.” Morinis (1992) presents pilgrimage as a “quest for the sacred,” characterised by “the pursuit of an ideal.” But he also believes that pilgrimage should include both the journey and the destination. All Camino routes, passing through different countries and regions, end at one destination, namely the city of Santiago de Compostela, where pilgrims complete their journey and visit the temple with the remains of St. James.

In many religions, people are actively encouraged to visit sacred places or shrines, which helps to initiate and promote pilgrimage (Park, 2004). Raj and Griffin (2015) stated that “in the ever-changing global political landscapes, religion has retained a significant place as a social movement with complex structures and functions that cut across cultures

and traditions". It is physical spaces and places that often restore belonging to religion or spirituality in general and help unite believers and spiritual people.

According to Shackley (2001), travellers may visit religious sites for worship or as adherents of a particular religious tradition; they may visit a place to see a message, a value system, or an interesting artifact. Others may visit the place simply as tourists to see the architecture and outstanding tourist attractions and experience the atmosphere of the place.

For many reasons, travellers go in search of authentic experiences that they can only get through travel formats such as pilgrimages or walking tours. It is also a challenging physical activity that some people find entertaining to complete. As a result, the phenomenal tourist popularity of the route in our time enhances the religious, historical, and cultural significance of Santiago and provides an opportunity to satisfy the various needs and motives of travellers, including the unique experience of pilgrimage as such.

At the same time, the post-secular approach influences new forms of pilgrimage. Post-secular pilgrims differ from medieval pilgrims; they carry different, modern values and ideas about religiosity. And although some of their activities are like modern tourists, their group is still clearly differentiated (Harman, 2014; Urry & Larsen, 2011). The big difference between modern pilgrims and medieval ones is the departure from organised and traditional culture and the focus on the spiritual component and subjectivity of each pilgrim (Geels, 2009; Heelas, 2008; Partridge, 2004; Sutcliffe, 2003; Sutcliffe & Bowman, 2000; Taylor, 2007; Guard & Hölzl, 2008; Mikaelsson, 2012b). The current revival of spiritual pilgrimage in Europe and the popularity of the Camino route confirms the truth of this statement.

The New Age has become an exemplary religious movement of our time thanks to the individual's self-development philosophy. The landscapes become a space for personal solitude and self-growth, spiritual practices, and connection with the sacred, which brings us closer to the concept of absolute time and merging with the environment (Raquejo, 1998). Also, pilgrimage sites celebrate the legends and traditions of national martyrs or contain their burial places and remains. This revives people's sense of national identity or religious affiliation, thereby recognizing the emergence of new places of worship.

The revival of pilgrimage routes has contributed to the development of the concept of post-secularism, according to which spirituality and religiosity retain their significance and acquire new interpretations and positions in the life of modern society (Beaumont &

Baker, 2011; Eade, 2011; Habermas, 2008; Paddison, 2011). At its core, Pilgrimage is a phenomenon associated with both religion and culture and has a clear relationship with place, which also connects it with the tourism industry.

In exploring the experiences of modern pilgrims, Turner and Turner (1978) characterised the new type of pilgrimage and called it a postmodern or secular pilgrimage, which is based on the individual emotional experience of each visitor. Each person who sets foot on the Camino interacts with it based on their motives, behaviour, and attitude towards spirituality, which makes this path a spiritual route of personal heritage for each traveller and pilgrim. It is an "experiential heritage environment" defined by Timothy and Boyd (2003), where each traveller expands the boundaries by touching on history, local culture, and atmosphere. Every traveller on the Camino is, to a greater or lesser extent, a pilgrim "if he sees in this journey an opportunity for spiritual and cultural enrichment" (Trono, 2014). Both tourists and pilgrims alike can enjoy visiting local churches, walking along the historical part of the route, and getting acquainted with local history, culture, and symbolism (Mikaelsson, 2012a).

Cultural walking routes include many significant and valuable attributes of modern tourism. One of them is an observation of local landscapes, nature, and architecture while walking. It is also the cultural and historical context that also forms the traveller's experience. The success of the route can be explained by the fact that the modern tourist combines religious or spiritual motives of pilgrimage with tourist motives, such as the search for diverse landscapes, the need for relaxation, communication with other travellers, and, importantly, escape from everyday life (Lois-González & Santos, 2014).

The Camino de Santiago also has great historical and cultural value, which also attracts tourists to visit this place for educational purposes. Educational motives also drive a huge number of tourists to walk the Santiago without any religious reasons. Travellers want to better understand the history of a place or understand a particular religious faith, its culture, and its beliefs (Olsen & Timothy, 2006). Tomasi (2002) states that "the desire to travel to achieve knowledge of worldly reality and heavenly mystery is the impulse that has constantly moved humanity." The sacred buildings dedicated to St. James (churches, monasteries, and cemeteries), as well as the various artistic, historical, human, and cultural sites and values along the Camino are vivid symbols and the decoration of its monumentalization. Such cultural and religious heritage forms part of its identity, recalling its historical origins and religious ideology. The uniqueness of the route and each journey lies in the connection between culture, history, and human perception, the

spirituality of each traveller. Moreover, the constant presence of monuments demonstrates the penetration of the sacred into geography, politics, and the social component of society's life.

The Camino journey can be defined as an experiential journey, with experiences and inner changes at the end that will be unique to each person on the journey. More personal motives are needed, in addition to spiritual or religious motivation, to walk the Camino. This diversity of motives and the opportunity to satisfy them make the pilgrimage experience unique for every pilgrim or traveller.

A spirituality-oriented pilgrimage is a type of therapy that heals on the physical, mental, and spiritual levels. Frey (1998) claimed that pilgrims face personal, physical, and mental challenges along the pilgrimage, but they also encounter powerful expressions of kindness and patience that can only be discerned through high sensitivity and focus on here and now. The pilgrimage has therapeutic and healing properties, which are hidden behind the two main reasons for pilgrimage for therapeutic purposes. The first reason is awareness of personal wounds and traumas that create gaps in one's life, like grief, frustration, or fear (for example, divorce, death of a loved one, loss of a job). The second reason is the need for renewal and transformation of a person at all levels. Pilgrimage is a process that exposes all wounds and reveals the suffering of the soul, but it also helps to transform and purify them if the traveller is open to changes (Mikaelsson, 2012a). Today, the Camino represents an "experience" in such a broad sense that in this journey everyone prepares for their catharsis (Santos & Lois, 2011).

Camino's "effect" helps restore a person's psychological health due to contact with nature and being alone with oneself (Ambrósio & Fernandes, 2021). Wilson and Sullivan (2021) note in their Associated Press article that mental health experts agree that pilgrimage promotes emotional healing for both religious and non-religious travellers. The term "healing" is widely used to refer to a feeling of spiritual renewal, which can also be called spiritual healing. This is often the main motivation for undertaking spiritual tourism and visiting sacred sites or walking routes such as the Camino.

In places with great spiritual potential, there is a certain spiritual magnetism due to historical, geographical, and social factors and human values that are the motivators of pilgrimage (Sallnow, 1987; Preston, 1992). A sacred site is a unique place in an international context because it contains something that cannot be found in other places. This uniqueness of the place plays a significant role in the strength of its spiritual magnetism. The Camino de Santiago is a place, that contains its sacred spirit and gives a

unique experience along the entire route. It is the ambiguity and versatility that can be assessed as the key to its current success. Landscapes along the Camino are transformed into therapeutic and healing ones, which together with the social conditions (interactions with other pilgrims) and personal perception create the right environment for recovery and healing (Gesler, 1996).

Spirituality and mobility remain two key features of the Jacobean pilgrimage. These qualities continue to evolve and change over time, and even if in modern pilgrimage they differ from their medieval connotations, they remain fundamental components of Jacobean pilgrimage. Thus, spiritual tourism reflects the entire spiritual essence of the route and is a source of spiritual enlightenment and fulfilment. The Camino is a physical and spiritual space for searching for new meanings and changes. This is a guarantee that the traveller will experience inner transformation and renewal, surrounded by historical and cultural heritage, as well as natural landscapes. The transition from the concept of religion to spirituality also generates economic and tourist prospects for expanding the route, creating new destinations and offers for tourists with different motives and demands. Participation in the Camino is identified with a simple and frugal lifestyle, so it is a tourist experience to suit different tastes and pockets, and many tourists can afford to visit the Camino or the city of Santiago. But the value of the journey is not in economic indicators, it is in the spiritual and enriching experience that every traveller receives, regardless of his financial capabilities and preferences on the journey. It is the simplicity and spiritual and cultural richness that create the uniqueness and popularity of the phenomenon called the Camino (López et al., 2017).

The modern pilgrimage on the Camino is the best example of spiritual practice, as it offers a variety of approaches to pilgrimage (Blom et al., 2016b; Mikaelsson, 2012b). Of course, the destination of the journey is no less important than the journey, but it is the experience of the journey that is fundamental (Murray & Graham, 1997). The Camino combines the tangible and intangible tourism experiences for pilgrims and spiritual tourists. This experience can be very diverse: in addition to religious and spiritual experience (development of spirituality, self-development, and connection with the divine), it can also be cultural (visiting churches, chapels or shrines, learning traditions and legends, etc.), gastronomic (tasting of traditional products and local dishes), physical and mental wellness (López et al., 2017).

Thus, the post secularity of contemporary pilgrimage changes the historical image of the medieval pilgrimage, as well as the historical purpose of pilgrimage (Trono, 2014)

into an “ongoing (re)construction of content and practice” (Blom et al., 2016a). Contemporary spiritual tourism also commercializes history depending on the values and meaning of pilgrimage for the tourist and the pilgrim. It is undeniable that spiritual experience becomes a commercial product that attracts customers in the tourism market. Walking the Camino has become a trend, a tourist product to be consumed in various forms. The broad concept of contemporary spirituality and the multifaceted nature of the Camino has led to the emergence of a complex set of interconnected motives, blurring the boundaries between the division of religious pilgrims and tourists with other motives.

The modern pilgrim of the Camino is an individual with mixed motives for the pilgrimage, not only religious and spiritual, but also personal growth, physical challenge or cultural exploration. The pilgrim can be described as a “post-secular traveller” who bridges the spiritual and secular worlds, reflecting the individualistic and pluralistic values of society and its contemporary socio-cultural dynamics (Amaro et al., 2018).

The modern pilgrim is seen as a special type of tourist who abandons the traditional tourist amenities and takes on the role of a pilgrim at the time of the journey, but also a tourist who enjoys the various benefits of humanity upon arrival in Compostela. According to Haab (1998), Camino walkers begin and end their journey in completely different ways: some begin the journey as pilgrims from the very beginning, some become pilgrims along the route, and some become pilgrims after completing the journey when they realize internal changes. The Camino pilgrimage defines a special type of traveller who becomes a pilgrim now of completing the route but also does not exclude his tourist identity, which is also inherent in him.

The overall intention and motivation for visiting sacred places from the point of view of a pilgrim or religious tourist can vary greatly but also coincide in some ways. The main difference in a traveller's motives for visiting a place is that pilgrims are driven by sacred or spiritual motives, while spiritual religious tourists are driven by secular interests and pleasures (Turner, 1991; Turner & Turner, 1978; Cohen, 1992; Rudge & Griffin, 2015).

According to Raj and Griffin (2015), religion and spirituality have been among the most common motivations for religious pilgrimage over the past few decades. From the above, modern pilgrims make such pilgrimage journeys not only for religious obligation or because of belonging to a religion, but also have much deeper and more diverse motives and reasons. Over time, the motivation for pilgrimage has been changing and, in some sense, expanding. From a spiritual reason, it can also move into educational,

cultural, and entertainment purposes to visit new places and gain new experiences. Tourists also visit sacred sites in search of unusual experiences, observe other pilgrims or rituals along the route, or seek the special sacred atmosphere of a place (Shackley, 2001).

The evolution of Jacobean pilgrimage has undergone great changes, and pilgrimage as a phenomenon has changed its meaning. Since its inception, the Camino has become a mainstay of Western European Christian culture, influenced the customs, legends, art, and spiritual life of Europe and given religious and spiritual significance to the pilgrimage. Today, the route represents a complex socio-territorial structure that has become an important tourist site (González et al., 2015).

Kim et al. (2019) discuss that most pilgrims are connected to the Camino spiritually in one way or another, and this connection motivates them to walk the Camino and search for their spirituality. The Camino continues to be a religious route, driven by inner goals, although in a more personal, interpretive, and spiritual sense. The concept of religiosity has changed in modern society, but the spiritual meaning remains the same as it was, which encourages large numbers of travellers to visit the Camino (Brumec et al., 2023). Moreover, the Jacobean pilgrimage truly transformed into a modern and open space for travellers and pilgrims of different views, beliefs, and goals.

The Spanish research centre CETUR (2007–2010) conducted a more extensive quantitative study, interviewing approximately 10,000 pilgrims walking the Camino between 2007 and 2010. According to the study, about 28% of respondents wanted to express or develop their spirituality, 18% of pilgrims walked the Camino for religious reasons, 17% of pilgrims said they were attracted to the natural heritage of the route, and about 12% of tourists were attracted to the historical and architectural heritage of the route. According to the Reception of Pilgrims, 11% of pilgrims walked the Camino for non-religious reasons, while according to CETUR this percentage is as much as 82%. Analysing these data, most travellers pursue spiritual and other goals on the Camino than religious ones, while to obtain a certificate they indicate “religious” as the main motive, which is different from their true motives. This suggests that travellers travel not only for a pilgrimage mission but also for spiritual enrichment and self-improvement, which classifies them as spiritual travellers as well.

The counting of pilgrims is carried out thanks to the Metropolitan Church of Santiago, which issues a certificate to pilgrims that they have walked a certain part of the path and reached the city. Travellers were also asked about their reasons for taking the

Camino. In 2019, about 11% of pilgrims said their motivation was “non-religious,” about 40% said they had “religious” motivation and 49% said they had “religious and other motives.” To obtain a certificate, it is necessary to confirm the religious reason for completing the path, which casts doubt on the authenticity of statistics about the motives of pilgrims.

Most spiritual tourists on the Camino indicate that their motives for making the pilgrimage are the desire to be alone, to think about life, and to find answers to questions that will help to move forward in their spiritual development. They go through this journey to have time for reflection, introspection, self-improvement, and spiritual healing (Norman, 2018).

Traveling to sacred places for any type of traveller comes with different expectations and intentions. In an era when travel is very accessible, the number of interested travellers has increased, who are ready to go on various types of travel and satisfy different needs there, find what they are looking for. Whatever the traveller's motivation, such trips should provide the traveller with a sense of personal achievement and satisfaction from the journey. Successful completion of these often long and difficult journeys requires high levels of mental strength, physical stamina, and financial support.

In a world where everything changes with varying regularity, it is important to sometimes disconnect from the general bustle and chaos and retire with yourself, as well as connect with something larger that surrounds us, which is often our faith, beliefs, spirituality, etc. In them, we look for direction and answers, and that is why we need to make pilgrimages and journeys towards ourselves. The main meaning of these trips is to preserve the spiritual motives and expectations of the journey, and not turn spiritual search into tourist consumption to satisfy momentary desires (Jaffer, 2019).

Nowadays the Camino along with the city of Santiago de Compostela is a more diverse and modern tourist destination that can satisfy both religious and spiritual travellers and ordinary tourists in the form of various products, offers, activities, and much more, providing them with a complex experience of pilgrimage and traveling into the sacred places. In an era of rapid growth in the tourism industry, the demands on regional and local sites hosting large numbers of tourists will only increase, and therefore there are significant prospects for the further development of spiritual and religious tourism as a postmodern tourism niche (Blom et al., 2008b).

Santiago de Compostela as a destination of the Camino meets the requirements of the category of religious attraction, as the place has religious, historical, and cultural

significance, including spiritual, social, and physical aspects to meet the different needs of travellers. In addition, Nolan and Nolan (1992) also included Santiago de Compostela into the category of religious festivals and events, since during Holy Years the administration of Santiago de Compostela holds several religious and cultural events that attract many times more tourists than in other years of pilgrimage.

Santiago is also classified as a postmodern place of pilgrimage, since today it creates conditions of supply to attract other interested groups along with religious ones, focusing on other forms of spirituality. Thus, the religious aspect ceased to be paramount in the pilgrimage and allowed the revealing of other aspects such as culture, history, gastronomy, sightseeing, and others.

As a tourist destination, the city attracts diverse visitors, including pilgrims completing the Camino de Santiago and travellers seeking to explore its rich cultural and historical heritage. The city offers a multifaceted experience from visiting the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral to exploring local Galician culture, gastronomy, and festivals, that combine the sacred and the secular traveling.

Ultimately, knowledge and understanding of the motivations of pilgrims and tourists help trace tourism management's influence and ways to develop the Camino as a tourism product. As evidence confirms that spirituality remains the primary motivation for tourists, new tourism markets and offerings associated with the Camino rely heavily on spiritual motivation. But, despite the changes in tourists' perspectives and motivations to make a pilgrimage, it still retains its meaning and its identity, remaining a spiritual space for every pilgrim to discover unexpected values in themselves.

1.3. Evolution of the Camino de Santiago as a tourist and cultural destination

The origin of the Camino de Santiago dates to the 9th century when the remains of the Apostle James the Great were discovered. The importance of the route cannot be overstated in the development of European history, as it contributed to the spread of cultural and religious ideas, as well as the development of towns and villages along the route (Lois, 2000). In medieval times, the main motives for pilgrimage were spirituality and religiosity, and in the modern era, tourists began to visit the route for cultural and

educational development. The first religious movements were cultural and tourist journeys with destinations in cities and towns along the route, including the city of Santiago de Compostela, which is the final point of any of the Camino routes.

Relatively recently, in the 1980s, pilgrimages to the city of Santiago began to become popular. This was facilitated by the inclusion of the historic city on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985 and the proclamation of the Camino as the first European cultural route by the European Council in 1987. Also, in 1993 the route received international protection status, and, in the same year, the Holy Year took place along traditional routes. Later in 2015, the Caminos of the North received the same international status. This determined the fate of the route and turned it and the city of Santiago into one of the most visited tourist destinations not only in Spain but in the world (Santos, 2006; Santos & López, 2015).

Since the recognition of the Camino as a cultural route, the regional government has begun to actively promote it, which over the past few decades has led to a rapid increase in the number of Jacobin pilgrims (De la Fuente Robles & García de la Fuente, 2023). Over the past 20 years, the number of people travelling along this route annually has grown from 2,905 to 114,026 and continues to increase every year (Pilgrims Office of Santiago de Compostela). Various communication and advertising campaigns have also been implemented to increase the popularity of the route not only nationally but also internationally (Mondelo & Rodríguez, 2011), which will be discovered in the next chapters. In the city of Santiago de Compostela and the towns along the routes, many festivals and celebrations related to religious figures, local culture, history, and gastronomy are held annually, which is also an additional attraction for both tourists and pilgrims to visit the route at certain times of the year and dates. Naturally, with the increasing popularity of the route, pilgrimages, and tourist tours to Santiago acquired a more widespread and organised character and caused the development of commercial and tourist components along the Camino route (Pack, 2010).

Moreover, the route was influenced by the process of internationalisation, when the national culture began to change under the influence of the international flow of tourists and pilgrims, to which the local tourism and cultural spheres adapted (Rocha, 1998a). The fact that the number of pilgrims continues to grow every year justifies the tourist hype of the route, therefore it is quite natural to consider the pilgrimage along the Camino to Santiago as a tourist product (Santos, 2016).

The main reason for this tourism is the close cooperation between church and state (Tilson, 2005b). The increase in popularity of the route and the number of tourists from 2010 to 2021 underscores the ideological value of the Camino. Since 1993, the Church and the government have developed a program of activities that has given impetus to the regular increase in the number of pilgrims and the development of tourism in the regions where the Camino passes. The city of Santiago also played an important role in these changes. Originally it was only a sacred and religious place, today it is a popular and sought-after tourist destination not only among pilgrims but also by regular tourists visiting cultural and historical attractions and destinations (López J., & Santos, 2019a).

Today's tourism research includes extensive studies linking Camino's phenomenal tourism popularity to the revival of pilgrimage and religious tourism in general, as well as the development of new types of tourism and new terminology (Santos & Lois, 2011; Novello et al., 2013; Lois & Santos, 2015; Nilsson & Tesfahuney, 2016). They argue that the success of the Jacobin pilgrimage depends on the combination of requirements that characterise 21st-century tourism. It includes both the opportunity to study ethnographic culture and the study of the social and cultural components of the value of a tourist route or destination. All the above, as well as the factor of internationalisation and the multi-religiousness of the Camino, only confirm and strengthen its secular appearance.

The development of pilgrimage and spiritual tourism continues to set the pace for change in the city of Santiago and along the entire route: it combines a pilgrimage route, a communications route, a commercial route, a cultural exchange route, a spiritual tourism route, and is undoubtedly the star product of Spanish tourism. Once the route received official and institutional recognition as the first European cultural route, followed by UNESCO World Heritage Site status, its success no longer depended on the number of pilgrims pursuing the religious motive of pilgrimage. The gradual expansion of travellers' motives has given rise to new meanings and activities that have enriched the route's heritage over recent decades.

The growing tourist use of the route is the result of a process of acquiring new meaning and adapting the route to the needs and opportunities of the times in which we live (López & Pazos, 2009). Thus, the passage of the Camino can be safely called a tourist pilgrimage, a religious and spiritual route that satisfies the various expectations and needs of tourists and pilgrims. From the perspective of the city of Santiago, there is a desire to maintain its function as a sacred place and at the same time combine it with the function of a tourist destination of cultural and historical significance (Knott, 2005).

The pilgrimage space turns into a tourist space (Lois & López, 2012; López, 2013), where pilgrims and spiritual tourists intersect, and a demand arises for services along the route, which contributes to the development of tourism infrastructure and towns located along the Camino route. As a result of these changes, it became necessary to introduce new practices for managing and regulating the development of the Camino, as well as plans for the development of tourism in the regions and municipalities of cities along the routes, which will be described in more detail in the following chapters.

Santiago de Compostela has been trying to make the most of its historical and cultural heritage and protect its “identity” as an administrative capital of the region and a university city that can cater to other tourist demands in addition to religious and spiritual tourism and pilgrimage (De la Fuente Robles & García de la Fuente, 2023). Santiago remains an international stronghold for pilgrims and tourists, as well as students and traders coming here from all over Europe. The city demonstrates its international character and keeps pace with the social and economic changes taking place in the region and in the country. It has its own tourist and cultural image, which is associated with certain beliefs and experiences of travellers, and the presence of this image is of particular importance for the promotion and marketing of it as a brand. The goal of such tourism campaigns and promotions is to create a competitive and inclusive destination with great cultural and religious significance (Andrade Suárez & Caamaño Franco, 2016).

The Camino of Santiago has become a significant tourist and cultural phenomenon over the past decades and has been revived on a prodigious scale in the second half of the 20th century, marking a revival of traditional pilgrimage itself, with people travelling on foot or by non-mechanized modes of transport. Also, it has transformed from a cultural, historical, and religious sacred route into a tourist destination, connecting the fields of tourism and religion, which has opened new prospects and opportunities for its development in the tourism market.

The medieval route, created purely for religious reasons, is now changing its focus from a purely religious history to a spiritual and cultural one. Previously, it was believed that pilgrimage and tourism were incompatible, and pilgrimage could be undertaken solely for religious reasons (Santos, 2022). Also, the pilgrimage was a difficult and sacrificial act, since pilgrims walked long distances for a long time, often without amenities and with many risks to their lives. In modern times, pilgrimage has become a convenient and safe leisure activity, as well as comfortable due to the tourist infrastructure and an organized network of routes.

But with the passage of time and changes in the values of modern society, the Camino has also changed, but has not lost its relevance and significance, and thanks to the development of tourism, it has been revived with new strength and scale. The Camino itself is also a tourist destination, so it is now directly associated with tourism, even if it has traditionally been associated with hedonistic purposes rather than pilgrimage, which is aimed at religion. However, the development of the route as a tourist destination allows getting to know the phenomenon of the Camino and experience it as a spiritual pilgrimage route.

The Camino is a clear example of the connection between the route as a religious heritage and the tourism sector, as it contributes to the development of the route and its infrastructure, and both spiritual tourists and pilgrims use the tourism infrastructure. The development of the tourism sector has also skyrocketed with the merger of the hotel, restaurant, and tourism services sectors along the Camino to create one unified tourism infrastructure. Even the emergence and development of small private businesses and tourist services, such as selling souvenirs or providing overnight accommodation, influenced the comfort and attractiveness of the Camino for travellers and pilgrims.

The Camino is the focus of research in the field of spiritual, religious, and cultural tourism, which explores the adaptation of existing routes to the needs and demands of modern pilgrims, as well as the creation of new verified routes of the Camino as a cultural and religious heritage. There is also the intercultural and international dialogue that takes place within the Camino between representatives of different countries and cultures, as well as the various manifestations of religiosity and spirituality of travellers, expressed in cultural and tourist practices that interconnect and complement each other.

The success of the Camino as a modern route is hard to measure solely in quantitative and economic terms. The path as a tourist phenomenon carries cultural value, which has high market demand and relevance. This points to the need for travellers to experience the spiritual and cultural experiences that they can gain on a route such as the Camino. This has significantly enriched the tourism sector, becoming a means of innovation in the practical application and management of the tourism sector.

Thus, the destination, referring to a specific place, building, or attraction, is transformed into a place of appropriation of experience, impressions, and spiritual fulfilment depending on the behaviour and perception of the place by the pilgrim (Dupagne et al., 2004). This makes the Camino a fluid and multifaceted heritage as a personal experience rather than a physical place, where material heritage becomes

spiritualized and reimagined through individual perceptions. Heritage then appears not as a political or administrative asset with specific values, but as a social construction in which social individuals, tourists, pilgrims, and residents are actively involved. Heritage does not refer to specific assets, but to “the relationships of belonging, possession and identity that arise between certain assets and people” (Fontal Merillas, 2008). This is fundamental to the process of general culturalisation and spiritualisation that flows from the Jacobin experience turning into a dynamic, relational heritage shaped by personal and collective engagement. Culturalisation integrates local traditions and practices, enriching the pilgrimage with shared cultural identity, while spiritualisation imbues the journey with individual and communal meaning for any traveller or pilgrim.

Finally, with the development of tourism, the emotional, the attention to the significance of the Jacobin pilgrimage only increase, as evidenced by scientific studies of cultural tourism (CETUR, 2007–2010; Lois & López, 2012). The recognition of the Camino de Santiago as a significant cultural and spiritual route by UNESCO and the Council of Europe also played a role in increasing academic interest in it and prompted the restoration and development of other sacred routes. At the same time, the phenomenon of the Camino of Santiago showed the relationship between tourism and religion and proved their successful mutual existence in a continuous process of development and adaptation in the conditions of postmodern and post-secular society (Santos, 2022).

In the academic world, the connection between tourism and religion has led to an increase in research and publications on this topic, in which researchers are trying to study the presence of these connections, their complexity, and consequences, as well as the connection between spiritual and pilgrimage travel and the well-being of the human population. For example, Collins-Kreiner (2020) and Durán Sánchez et al. (2018, 2019) analyse the information, focusing on the phenomenon of religious tourism, in which the Camino plays a central role as one of the most prominent objects and manifestations in this field of research.

The more in demand and popular the Camino becomes, the more it arouses interest in the world of tourism, which analyses its phenomenon from different angles such as culture, religion, history, and geography, as well as from different disciplinary points of view and approaches to study and research its phenomenon. Moreover, the study and forecasting of the Camino phenomenon in its tourist perspective play an important role in the analysis of the transformations of this route in the process of changes in society and

the increase in the number of travellers in the era of mass tourism, which also affects the character and meaning of the Camino as a pilgrimage route and tourist destination.

1.4. Post-secular transformation of the Camino pilgrimage and the city of Santiago

With the advent of the new century and the development of the tourism sector, pilgrimage to Europe was revived and became even more accessible to travellers from all over the world. According to Wright (1997), already at the end of the 20th century about 20 million people visited European holy places annually, and this figure is only increasing in the new century due to even more accessible and cheap transport, the popularity of long-distance travel and the development of tourist infrastructure, as well as the revival of religiosity and spirituality in attempts to find contact with God.

The modern traveller is looking for original and unique experiences that he cannot experience in everyday life. The Camino pilgrimage satisfies the need of a tourist who strives for postmodern values of sociability and leisure mobility. In this sense, Santos and Lois (2011) argue that the success of the Jacobean pilgrimage is due to the combination of the demands of 21st century tourism and the ability of the Camino to meet these demands. A traveller can satisfy both his spiritual and religious motives and can contemplate the landscape and nature and study ethnographic culture. Moreover, modern tourists are looking for a relaxing holiday that promotes personal recovery, away from routine. The secret of its success and value lies in its positive social and cultural results because of intercultural and interethnic dialogue (López J., & Santos, 2019a). All these factors, along with the undeniable internationalization and multi-religious nature of the Camino, strengthen its secular interpretation and its tourist significance.

A historically religious site like Santiago de Compostela is a true example of the transformation of the pilgrimage concept, where the religious orientation of the pilgrimage is abandoned for a spirituality focused on the individual of a traveller (Mikaelsson, 2012b, Blom et al., 2008a). Even today's spiritually oriented pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela is informed by historical Christian content in the practice. This shift in the spiritual and religious orientation of pilgrims and changes in their priorities and the concept of pilgrimage express the post-secularity of Western society in the development of religious tourist destinations. Research shows that the spiritual content of

pilgrimage is a direct mirror image of contemporary post-secular trends in society (Eade, 2011; Lois & Santos, 2015). Post-secular preferences directly influence the development of new and alternative approaches to pilgrimage and change the perception of the idea and content of pilgrimage in a historical and religious context. This process involves a continuous re-establishment of essence and practice (Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Mikaelsson 2012b).

Santiago de Compostela and the Camino seem to be the best examples of the post-secular trend towards a regenerated spirituality. As a result of the transformations of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, its content acquires new spiritual characteristics that are the cornerstone of the post-secular era (Pace & Giordan, 2012).

From a tourism perspective, post-secularity and interest in spiritually oriented destinations have led to a significant increase in the number of pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela (Santos & Lois, 2015). The paradox of this phenomenon is that the Camino and the city of Santiago as a stronghold of the Catholic Church are losing their importance and relevance, and membership in communal religious groups is declining across Europe. This should have led to a decrease in the number of pilgrims, but not an increase, as happened with the Camino and the city of Santiago.

In the context of the contemporary Jacobean pilgrimage, it reflects a shift away from traditional, institutionalized Catholic canons to a more individualized and non-institutional form of spirituality that is tailored to personal beliefs and experiences. This post-secular religiosity departs from the doctrines of the Catholic Church, emphasizing personal self-discovery and spiritual fulfilment over adherence to established dogmas. Pilgrims often approach the journey as a transformative experience shaped by their own interpretations of faith and well-being, rather than as an act of formal religious observance. Consequently, the Camino has become a space where spiritual engagement becomes pluralistic and deeply personal, combining elements of religious tradition with contemporary values that differ from the canonical practices of the Church.

The literature on pilgrimage in recent decades demonstrates the phenomenon of profound transformation of pilgrimage and its traditions (MacCannell, 1976; Coleman & Eade, 2004; Collins-Kreiner, 2010), with authors such as Lois and Santos (2015) analysing the post-secular nature of the Camino. However, an important area for research is the question of why pilgrims choose the Camino and at the same time follow a non-religious approach and the ideas of modern spiritually oriented pilgrimage. On the same linear path, the traditional canons of pilgrims and the spiritual orientations of modern

tourists are combined, which further blurs the boundaries between their differences and makes the Camino phenomenon more and more interesting to study.

Discussions about the post secularity of society are believed to have originated in the 1990s, most notably by Habermas (2006) and Taylor (2007). There was much debate about secularism, with Berger calling the concept “false” (Berger, 1999). The decline and “disappearance” of religion in its traditional manifestation has also been questioned (Berger, 1999; Habermas, 2006; Gökariksel, 2009; Torpey, 2010).

Secular society presupposes a division between the religious and the political in society, while post-secularism rejects this division and reflects the appearance of religion in the political and social spheres of society. According to post-secularist Habermas (2006, 2008), the truth of post-secularism is that religion has never disappeared as an influential factor. It has always existed, but in modern society, it has been reorganized (Gökariksel, 2009). Following this theory came a discussion of how the transformation of society led to the emergence of a post-secular society, parallel to the existing secular society (Sigurdson, 2009; Beaumont & Cloke, 2012).

The phenomenon of post secularity is that religiosity has regained its position as a strong and influential institution in society and has contributed to the emergence of new discussions and concepts (Davie, 2000; Beaumont & Baker, 2011; Moberg & Granholm, 2012). Taylor (2007) has previously emphasized that we are on the threshold of an era in which “the supremacy of the mainstream narrative of secularization will be increasingly challenged”. Davy (2000) also emphasizes that the modern paradigm shift in religiosity is influencing political philosophy and social phenomena in Western Europe. At the beginning of the new century, religion began to restore its position in various spheres of society. Therefore, Habermas (2006) and Sigurdson (2009) believe that there is good reason to recognize the prominence of religion.

The rapid emergence and approval of new alternative religious movements is a clear manifestation of the transformation of religiosity in modern society. The post-aesthetic approach is that new is not new but is a return and rethinking of the traditional view of religion (Blom et al., 2016a). Some studies call this phenomenon the “return of religion” or the “return of the sacred,” as D. Bell (1977) defined it. Therefore, the post-secular approach should be considered not as “religious” degradation, but as the transformation of the old into the new with a different content. The modern form of religiosity focuses not simply on traditional beliefs and practices, but on the characteristics and principles of individual expression of beliefs and spirituality. Habermas (2006) claimed that the

practical expression of post-secular religion can be directed toward existential problems, human communities, and social solidarity. Moreover, post-secular religion can help recognize the expectations and desires of society in a social and spiritual context.

Early published research on the topic of “post-secularity” suggests that there is an increasing pluralism in the religious sphere, focusing on individual beliefs and the practice of individuality, which can manifest faith in a variety of ways (Bracke, 2008; Kong, 2010; Pace & Giordan, 2012). Thus, the concept of religiosity takes on a new meaning, focusing on the faith and spiritual meaning of the individual instead of focusing on the religious canons of various beliefs and denominations.

In recent decades, the use of the term post-secularity has become more frequently observed in changes between the religious sphere and the political sphere. The development of society and its narratives also reflects the development of tourism with its promotion of religious and pilgrimage destinations (Digance, 2003; Devereux & Carnegie, 2006; Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Mikaelsson, 2012a). The post-secularity of religion primarily reflects the individual approach to pilgrimage, as well as religious movements in Europe in the context of religious tourism, in particular the Santiago pilgrimage routes and its various alternatives. In a post-secular society, a religious place is a pilgrimage experience associated with the tourism sector. The development of post-secularism and religious tourism has likely become the prime reason for the restoration of religious and cultural routes, thus connecting religion and spirituality with culture and tourism.

In their study, Blom et al. (2015) surveyed Camino pilgrims and many commented that the biggest problem was the high commercialization of the city of Santiago de Compostela. Because the city has become a centre for religious tourism, pilgrims feel as if they are part of the tourism product of Santiago de Compostela. But, as discussed earlier, the behaviour of pilgrims and tourists, in general, is very similar, and both categories of travellers use tourist services. Also, while taking Camino, many travellers go through different stages of formation from the idea of a pilgrimage to identifying themselves with religious tourism, which reflects the post-secularity of society.

Frey (1998) in her anthropological study describes some of the disappointments that pilgrims encounter along some parts of the route and at the destination of Santiago. The mass nature of the site and excessive marketing arouse hostility among pilgrims, and therefore rural areas and small towns turn out to be more valuable along the route than the main city. But at the same time, Santiago is associated with the completion of the

journey and allows one to be imbued with the spirit of European Catholic culture. The tourist character inherent in Santiago is also present on the route 100 kilometres before the city itself and throughout the entire journey from Santiago to Finisterra — a city at the end of the world, where a fairly large number of pilgrims go after arriving in Santiago de Compostela (Blom et al., 2016b). Over the past several years, there has been a tendency for the Camino pilgrimage to end in the city of Fisterra, located 100 kilometres west of Santiago. This trend is quite new and requires more research, but previous studies suggest that the content of pilgrimage and its traditions is being transformed, though the importance of the destination remains unquestioned (Frey, 1998; Coleman & Eade, 2004).

A significant number of respondents confirmed that the trip to the ends of the world had a tourist purpose for them, and it was planned as the endpoint at the beginning of the journey. Blom et al. interviewed the travellers that were deciding along the route whether to continue their journey after Santiago, the primary reason was to reach their destination on time. Some of them continued, realizing that they still had time left. However, the majority decided to go further due to disappointment with the mass tourism of Santiago de Compostela and the desire to escape it by going to the “ends of the earth” in Fisterra. The continuation of the journey upon arrival in Santiago is a desire to avoid its touristization and commercialization and to preserve the spirit of pilgrimage and spirituality.

Blom et al.’s survey also shows the post-secular characteristics of the route and the distinctive features of the route to Finisterra. The main reason for traveling outside of Santiago is individual spiritual aspirations and the desire to achieve self-realization by searching for oneself. It is also important for the modern post-sectarian pilgrim to have choice and freedom of movement, without limits of the church canons. Santiago is the final point of the journey and a stronghold of the Catholic Church, which imposes some responsibilities on pilgrims, but the decision to continue beyond Santiago frees them from Catholic canons and allows them to realize the pilgrimage in their expression.

In addition, in the Middle Ages Fisterra was considered the end of the world, and until now for many travellers, this place is a symbol of the end of the journey and the beginning of a new stage in their lives. The interviewed pilgrims expressed a personal change in their self-identification in Santiago de Compostela and Fisterra from pilgrims to “normal” tourists. After Santiago de Compostela, it seems that the “life” of the pilgrim has been left behind and travellers are now entering into the concept of a new way of life with post-secular forms of self-expression (Blom et al., 2016a).

While Santiago de Compostela's strategy aims to make the site attractive to pilgrims and tourists, there is also a risk that this dual focus could destroy the charm and sacredness the city has enjoyed throughout the history of pilgrimage. There is a danger in trying to attract more visitors to both the Camino and Santiago de Compostela, which could affect the balance between the ratio of pilgrims and non-spiritual and religious tourists. Today, pilgrims are an important element and symbol of Santiago de Compostela as a tourism product, but the attractiveness of the route for pilgrims may be lost if the route and place itself lose their essence and secular expressions become too common and pronounced. This will directly impact the overall number of visitors as pilgrims increase the attractiveness of the city. Santiago may no longer provide the same level of tranquillity and contemplation that it once did, but which persists elsewhere on the route. The interaction between the tourist and the destination is a crucial factor for the feeling of travel satisfaction (Kirillova et al., 2014), and in the case of pilgrims, interaction with the place is something sacred and spiritual. In the case of Santiago, this interaction may not seem as sacred as it was before.

Santiago de Compostela is still considered the main end point of the Camino pilgrimage, so all pilgrims strive to reach their destination, which is a basic element of every pilgrimage (Lois & Santos, 2015). The alternative routes and the change in the destination of the pilgrimage indicate a transformation of the traditional purpose of the route and separate the city of Santiago de Compostela as a tourist destination and the Camino to Santiago de Compostela as a pilgrimage route.

Undoubtedly, the tourist development of the city affects the status and self-perception of the city as a place of pilgrimage. This does not always correspond to the pilgrim's expectations with the initial vision of the route and the sacredness of the place, which leads to disappointment. There is a clear distinction between tourism and pilgrimage, and upon arrival in Santiago de Compostela, pilgrims become tourists at their core, and the city becomes a tourist destination. Thus, the sacred site of Santiago de Compostela is associated with pilgrims with a space desecrated by mass tourism.

Several studies have explored that pilgrims also become tourists after arriving in the city of Santiago de Compostela (Lois & López, 2012). The transformation of pilgrims into tourists once they reach Compostela reinforces the idea that the Camino is a vital moment to take stock and, in fact, at the same time tests the traveller for the qualities of a modern pilgrim. The goals of a modern traveller in Santiago usually consist not only of spiritual and religious motives but also of exploring new places and territories, exploring

monumental heritage, and other attributes of travel, such as gastronomy and local traditions. Pilgrims wishing to avoid this mass tourism continue to go to Fisterra, thus changing the traditional pattern of ending the Camino in the city of Santiago (Collins-Kreiner, 2010).

Modern pilgrimage is seen today as an individual action, and not a church-based action. This does not negate the sense of community or belonging to a community of pilgrims (Turner, 1991; Frey, 1998) sharing a journey and a common experience (Wang, 1999). This is why the route of the Camino becomes more important than the destination of Santiago de Compostela, even if travellers define themselves more as tourists than pilgrims. In Santiago de Compostela, the burden of pilgrimage gives way to tourism, even if tourists in their manifestations and rituals are still pilgrims. Also, symbols, rituals, and the meaning of place are the main elements of pilgrimage (Eliade, 1969; Tuan & Strawn, 2009) and define travellers as pilgrims. The change in destination from Santiago to Fisterra separates tourists and pilgrims, as Collins-Kreiner (2010) points out. The same travellers identify themselves differently upon arrival in Santiago and Fisterra. No matter how they define themselves, they contribute to the (re)sacralization of the new site and weaken the sacred significance of the city of Santiago, introducing new rituals and symbols and creating a landscape of pilgrimage (Alderman, 2002).

Also, Poria et al. (2003) note that the perception of a place is critical to understanding the purpose of visiting a place. Going beyond Santiago de Compostela does not mean opposition to Compostela and the destruction of pilgrimage traditions, but rather an expression and strengthening of individuality and a desire for authenticity (MacCannell, 1976). This example shows the connections between postmodernism and post secularism, where motives are combined and complement each other without conflict (Lois & Santos, 2011, 2015).

One might even speculate that it is dissatisfaction with the traditional destination, Santiago de Compostela, that drives pilgrims to continue their journey in search of a new destination, which represents the re-sacralization of a place with strong animistic and pagan roots. The point here is not secularization, but spirituality, which is a fundamental element of post-secularism and is associated with ancient traditions and pagan manifestations. In this case, the Cathedral of Santiago, which is an obligatory goal of religious pilgrimage, is replaced by a goal of a non-sacred nature. Outside of Santiago, in the same Fisterra, Jacobin rites are replaced by ancient rituals and traditions of nature

worship, such as taking sea baths, burning clothes, or contemplating the sunset on the ocean (Alonso, 2002).

As Cohen (1992) noted, the structural-functionalist theory states “that the spiritual centre of modern man is located within his society.” Spirituality as a concept itself should be interpreted as a component of religion. The importance of the endpoint of the Camino lies in the fact that it must correspond to the motives of the pilgrims on the route. The decision to continue the pilgrimage outside the city of Santiago is still an improvisation and a departure from the traditional route.

Moreover, the strategy of the Catholic Church is interested in maintaining Santiago as the main religious centre of Europe, without considering other alternatives that could undermine the city's status. However, the main tourist product and destination for pilgrims remains the Camino, regardless of the destination of the pilgrimage. Thus, the destination depends on the success of the Jacobin pilgrimage along the entire route and on reaching Santiago de Compostela with the central Cathedral. Fisterra in this case is rather a continuation or consequence of the phenomenon of the Camino, despite its growing visibility (Blom et al., 2016b).

Still, Holy Years continue to set the pace of change in the city of Santiago and along its various routes, characterized by different names and labels: pilgrimage route, communication channel, commercial route, cultural exchange route, and, importantly, a staple of Galician and Spanish tourism. Instead of the stories and experiences of travellers, which shaped the attractiveness and popularity of the Camino, came parties and organizations interested in territorial and regional development. The gradual emergence of new points of view and perspectives, not only of a religious nature, led to the emergence of new meanings and activities, which enriched the heritage significantly and at the same time preserved its original essence. The growing tourist use of a sacred space is associated with the acquisition of new meanings in which people adapt and modify the space following the needs of the time in which they live (López & Pazos, 2009).

Overall, Santiago remains an international and multi-religious destination where pilgrims and tourists intersect, reflecting the international and intercultural character of the city, which strives to keep pace with social and economic changes. The tourist development of the Camino increasingly contributes to acquiring an even greater magnetism and universalism in line with the post-secular trends of modernity. At the same time, the emotional, spiritual, and natural elements of the Jacobin pilgrimage mustn't be weakened but strengthened (Lois & López, 2012). Santiago must make the most of its

historical, artistic, and cultural heritage and defend its unique “identity” not only as a western Mecca but also as the administrative capital of the region, offering all the available characteristics to meet the various needs (López & Santos, 2019).

Thus, now this type of pilgrimage can be called a secular pilgrimage, as a union of different experiences and expectations. In turn, the city seeks to combine its original function as a sacred place with the function of a tourist destination, a special physical and spiritual space (Knott, 2005). Of course, the growing tourist attention may be a threat of partial loss of Camino’s original meaning and ideological values, especially with a long break between Holy Years. The symbolic element and value of the destination help maintain a balance between the intertwining interests of the Church and the government (López J., & Santos, 2019b).

In conclusion, modern pilgrimage should be perceived as a post-secular manifestation of individual religiosity and the transformation of religious tourism into mass tourism. Sacred places are fundamentally a social construct based on a process of authentication (Belhassen et al., 2008). The Camino de Santiago, while still a leading example of modern pilgrimage (Murray & Graham, 1997; Frey, 1998; Tilson, 2005a; Blom et al., 2008a), is now facing the challenge of whether its evolution and transformation can lead to overall change on pilgrimages along sacred routes developed throughout Europe and following the success of the Jacobin route.

As Collins-Kreiner (2010) has demonstrated, pilgrimage is not a static phenomenon, but is always subject to change, reflecting transformations in society. The Camino also changes its concept depending on the perception of its meaning and uniqueness by pilgrims and tourists, and the transition from religion to spirituality indicates post-secularity and postmodernism in the nature of the Camino de Santiago as a tourist phenomenon.

CHAPTER II – The economic and touristic development of the Camino de Santiago: promotion and great success of Xacobeo 1993 and 1999, its impact on local economies and communities

This chapter provides a thorough examination of the economic and tourism development of the Camino de Santiago, and how this cultural and religious destination is impacting the local and national economies. It explores the post secular significance of the Camino, analysing how it extends beyond its religious origins to attract a diverse segment of travellers.

The chapter examines the economic benefits to the national and local economies of the growing popularity of the Camino, its role in stimulating regional development, promoting the cultural heritage and economic sustainability of the communities along its routes. It also discusses the strategic promotion and development efforts during Holy Years, particularly Xacobeo 1993 and 1999, which significantly increased the attractiveness of the Camino and enhanced its importance as a tourist and cultural phenomenon.

Through this analysis, the chapter displays the diversified nature of the Camino as a cultural and spiritual destination of global significance and a powerful economic driver for local communities, the region and the country, as well as the impact of its development in sociocultural, economical, and environmental perspectives.

2.1. Brief history of Camino over the centuries and its economic and touristic development over the last century (XX-XXI)

As previously explored, pilgrimage, from its inception and throughout the centuries, has undergone a strong transformation, which has changed the structure and content of its symbolic meaning. In particular, the Camino has gained rapid tourist momentum over the course of one century and has transformed from a religious pilgrimage route into a cultural tourist destination in Western Europe.

Since the inception of the Camino and over the centuries, the importance of Santiago de Compostela as a site of Christian pilgrimage has strengthened and grown, rivalling the cities of Rome and Jerusalem. The church and state itself presented devotion to St. James and the importance of pilgrimage to the holy place associated with him. Almost 1,000 years ago, in 1119, Pope Callistus II established a "jubilee" or holy year", in the year when the feast of St. James fell on a Sunday, granting indulgences and other spiritual rewards to pilgrims who came to the tomb of St. James (Otero, 1999).

The city of Santiago de Compostela has always been a destination on the main European pilgrimage route in the Middle Ages, especially since the 12th century (Roszak & Tanco Lerga, 2022). During the 12th century, Santiago was visited by between 250,000 and 500,000 people annually (Osuna, 1998); among whom were pilgrims from various countries of Europe, as well as religious figures, nobles, and honoured guests (Coffey et al., 1996). For example, visits to Santiago by King Louis VII of France, Empress Matilda, and Saint Francis of Assisi served as a major publicity campaign for the city and the saint at the time (Starkie, 1957; Dunn & Davidson, 1996). Due to the large number of pilgrims at that time and the visits of honoured guests, the 12th and 13th centuries were clarified as the golden age of pilgrimages to Santiago (Catedral de Santiago, n.d). During the 14th and 15th centuries, there was a large exchange of goods between merchants in English, French ports, and northern Spain, which contributed to the spread of news of the pilgrimage and aroused widespread interest among pilgrims in Western Europe (Tate, 1990).

But with the advent of the Reformation in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, pilgrimage throughout Europe and to Compostela began to decline rapidly, and over a century the number of pilgrims became significantly smaller than in previous centuries. In the 20th century, this decline was heightened by the industrialization of society, as well as the First and Second World Wars. It was only in the second half of the 20th century, after the end of World War II, that the Camino began to revive again when middle-class Europeans sought opportunities for recreation and the need to rethink the process of great social transformation, which returned the popularity of Compostela as a spiritual and religious centre (Frey, 1998). This also led to the revival of other pilgrimage routes, such as Canterbury, Rome, Lourdes, Fatima, and Glastonbury, which during the first half of the twentieth century and the decades following the Second World War again began to attract significant numbers of pilgrims in Europe. Catholic pilgrimage increased and Christians of all denominations began to visit the Holy Land and other major pilgrimage sites all over the world.

As early as 1915, the first Spanish guide for pilgrims and tourists was published (López y López, 1950), which contained information on the number of pilgrims during Holy Years in Compostela, including foreign ones. It also mentions a pilgrimage organised by the Archbishop of Westminster in 1909, with approximately 140,000 visitors to the cathedral. During this period, tourism did not override the religious purpose of pilgrimage, but rather enhanced and supported it (Pack, 2010). Naturally, with the advent of commercial and tourist prospects and an organised strategy to attract pilgrims

to Holy Years, pilgrimage began to change and take on tourist characteristics. Moreover, Rocha (1998b) argues that national culture began to intersect with its international dimension and an active process of internationalisation of pilgrimage along the Camino began. This process of modernization of Santiago also acquired features of pre- and post-modernism, uniting the past and future of the destination (López L., & Santos, 2019).

The first attempts to commercialise and promote the Camino were made at the beginning of the 20th century. For example, in 1927, a private company published a poster showing the facade of the cathedral and the caption "Visit Santiago de Compostela (Spain) — the Historic Mecca of the West", emphasising the symbolic, cultural and religious significance of the site (López J., & Santos, 2019b).

According to Santos and Trillo (2017), to mainstream the pilgrimage, the National Tourist Board of Spain created two tourist posters during 1929, in which the cathedral and the city were in the background, and the significance was given primarily to the pilgrimage. The first poster depicted the beginning of the path at the French border, and the second depicted the end of the path in Santiago de Compostela, thus connecting the beginning and end of the Camino. The text also indicated the pilgrimage route with the pilgrim in the foreground.

During the Franco dictatorship, the number of pilgrims increased every Holy Year as the Camino underwent a tourist evolution.² As a proponent of Catholicism, Franco indirectly stimulated renewed interest in Catholic traditions such as the Camino and publicly extolled the traditions of Holy Years and the cult of Saint James, as well as reinstating Santiago as the patron saint of Spain in order to associate himself and the nationalists with the preservation of the Spanish identity inextricably linked with Catholicism (Frey, 1998). Franco's government influenced the development of Santiago later in the 1960s and 1970s, when the Ministry of Information and Tourism began to take an interest in the Camino, but throughout his reign the infrastructure remained poor and the number of pilgrims was small, compared to the boom of the 1980s and 90s (Kissling, 2003).

As Park (2008, 2010) describes, one aspect of the evolution was the growing importance of tourism, which was not considered threatening to religion and fell under

²Dictator Franco, who ruled Spain from 1939 to 1975, pursued a program of national Catholic consolidation with far-reaching consequences. The Catholic Church was the only church with legal status until 1966, which controlled education, culture and literature and was funded by the national government (Frey, 1998).

the economic and political interests of the regime. Measures to develop tourism on the Camino and in the city of Compostela itself were very eventful and created moments of ups and downs in the development of the Camino.

In the 1980s, the Religious Brotherhoods of Spain and France dedicated to St. James and the pilgrimage were revived and expanded throughout Europe, and European walking clubs set out on the Camino to create the European unity and solidarity that was so needed in society after the Second World War. Academic interest in the Camino also grew, and the Spanish Ministry of National Education established a program to protect and promote it as a historical resource.

The Catholic Church, having designated the Camino as “an ideal way of developing the faith for European youth” (Frey, 1998), began to actively encourage pilgrimage to Compostela, emphasising the importance of this journey as a pilgrimage rather than a tourist one. Moreover, Pope John Paul II's visits to Compostela in 1982 and 1989 attracted hundreds of thousands of young people to the World Youth Day program, providing good publicity for the Camino pilgrimage among young people.

Also, to encourage and increase the number of pilgrims and pilgrimage journeys, it was decided that a priest would run the Compostela Pilgrim Office (Oficina de Acogida del Peregrino) at the cathedral and monitor the “true pilgrims” who travel on foot, by bicycle or on horseback for at least 200 kilometres and receive a certificate indicating completion of the Camino pilgrimage (Coffey et al., 1996; Frey, 1998). It provided a good motivation for travellers to undertake this type of pilgrimage, reinforced by the “reward” and interaction with people marked as pilgrims.

The proclamation of the “French Way” as the first European cultural route in 1987 changed the direction of development of the destination and gave impetus to the revival of walking tourism by the restoration of footpaths and the opening of hostels for pilgrims (Santos & Trillo, 2017), which are called Albergues. These buildings began to reappear and be built in the 1960s and 1970s, creating a strong infrastructure for pilgrimage on the Camino, especially for Xacobeo 1993 (will be described further in the chapter), which received an extremely large number of pilgrims compared to previous ones.

Although all these events began to happen in the 1980s, the turning point came when The Minister of Information and Tourism Manuel Fraga Iribarne became the President of the Government of Galicia in the 1960s. He was one of the main promoters of the recreational tourism model, and of the political use of the Camino (Pack, 2010), as the concept of pilgrimage was controlled by strict government regulations. He played a

significant role in promoting "Camino tourism", improving the necessary infrastructure and establishing the system of paradors — Spain's historic hotels.

The revival of pilgrimage along the Camino also coincided with the development of the tourism industry in Spain, when in the 1960s and 1970s the country began to focus its economy on tourism development and diversify it through tourism as well as improve income distribution and a growing middle class. This transformed Spain “into a modern industrial economy with a thriving tourism sector” (US Department of State, 2002). In comparison, the number of tourists visiting Spain was 1.3 million in 1951, about 11 million in 1963, and this figure increased to 40 million visitors in 1978 (Frey, 1998). At the beginning of the century, according to the World Tourism Organization, Spain was “the second most popular destination in the world with 49.5 million annual tourists and tourism revenues of \$32.9 billion” (Canela, 2002).

This historical significance served as the basis for the (re)construction of the medieval religious route in the second half of the 20th century and especially since 1990 during the campaigns of 1993 and 1999, which transformed it into a cultural and tourist route to suit the needs of the new modern pilgrim (Lois, 2013; Lois & López, 2012). The modern route was officially designed and created by public authorities to revive the historical and cultural value of the route, as well as to support slow mobility that is the key to the success of the Camino today.

The beginning of the 1990s became a real peak in the popularisation of the Camino, which had never happened before. The success of 1993 in the field of tourism and pilgrimage was undeniable. The concept of Xacobeo (Holy Year) was created, as well as the talisman (Pelegrín), which became the hallmark of Compostela. Although it remains a cultural and religious event, the creation of the talisman and the development of the “Holy Year” brand turned it into a significant event and into a tourism product aimed at attracting new pilgrims and travellers (Santos, 2016). The development policy led to the creation of the main product of the Galician region after the launch of an advertising campaign to promote the strategy "Xacobeo 1993". The key point was the transformation of the Camino into a brand and the promotion of it on the international market.

This tourism perspective is reinforced by the fact that the number of pilgrims continues to grow every year, regardless of the events of Holy Years. However, it is assumed that the main reason for tourism is the maintenance of the ideology and development strategy, in which politics, church and regional government are closely linked. In fact, Tilson (2005c) speaks of an incredibly cohesive cooperation between

Church and State in Xacobeo 1999, with each institution managing its own spheres of influence. Of course, some minor conflicts arose, mainly with associations, which opposed the over-tourism of the Camino and criticism of tourists who are not true pilgrims, but these conflicts did not affect the overall effectiveness and cohesion of the institutions (Dunn, 2016).

The transition and the growing number of pilgrims during Holy Years of recent decades clearly emphasises the ideological value of the Camino. Since Xacobeo 1993, the Church and the government have developed a program of activities to achieve rapid results in the tourism sector, both in terms of increasing the number of overnight accommodations and a noticeable change in the number of pilgrims, thanks to which their numbers have continued to grow to this day. All these events, accompanied by cultural and often sponsorship initiatives, had a clearly expressed religious context: in 2011, the 800th anniversary of the consecration of the cathedral; in 2013 — the 1200th anniversary of the discovery of the body of the Apostle; in 2014, the Franciscan Holy Year was celebrated in memory of the pilgrimage of St. Francis to Santiago; in 2016, the inauguration of the Holy Door took place (Santos, 2016).

The city of Santiago de Compostela played a significant role in these changes. Initially, the city had religious and undoubtedly tourist interest among travellers. Throughout its existence, it has gained international fame thanks to the pilgrimage to the tomb of the apostle, which has been transmitted through the stories, myths and legends. Today, modern marketing and advertising tools are used to popularise the route and the city, but the method of transmitting information through stories of personal experiences between pilgrims is still an active and effective method of popularising the Camino.

The renewed interest contributed to a phenomenal boom in tourism, as “the number of pilgrims has tripled every year since the early 1980s” (Tate, 1990; Tanco Lerga, 1996; Frey, 1998). According to statistics, about 4,000 pilgrims visited Compostela in 1988, then 9,764 in 1992, and 4 years later more than 23,000 in 1996. During Holy Years, more pilgrims are always expected than in ordinary years. For example, in 1993 about 100,000 people visited Compostela, and in 1999 more than 150,000 (Xunta de Galicia, 1997).

Since the early 1990s, the "Camino" has become the most popular product of Galician tourism, not only the city of Santiago de Compostela itself. Moreover, its driving force has transformed Galicia into a popular tourist region in an international context and made Santiago de Compostela an attractive and popular international destination.

Official data clearly highlights two trends affecting the city of Santiago, the whole Galicia region and the Camino: the overall growth of tourism in the destination and region and the growing number of international tourists, whose numbers are steadily increasing in percentage terms. The changes in Galician regional tourism cannot be attributed solely to the Camino, but it does occupy a key position in the region's development strategy. In fact, a major element of the regional tourism strategy for 2020 was preparation for Xacobeo 2021, indicating its central importance in industry planning.

In the planning of the 2020 strategy, about 350,000 pilgrims were expected for the year, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, only 50,000 people made the pilgrimage in that year, which greatly affected the Camino statistics and development. The quarantine and then the need to comply with safety measures forced many establishments to close or significantly reduce capacity. But to restore the pilgrimage, a program of two Holy Years was developed in 2021-2022 to restore the Jacobin pilgrimage and local economy (El Camino Con Correos, 2021).

In the 2020 Strategy, the Camino appears as one of the four distinctive characteristics of Galicia, along with the landscape, gastronomy and artistic-historical heritage of the region. Thus, the growing popularity of the Camino played a significant role in developing the attractiveness of the entire region and made tourism a key sector of the Galician economy. However, the routes from different countries to the destination of Santiago have very different characteristics and levels of infrastructure development. On the one hand, the city of Santiago is the final point where all the routes converge, on the other hand, the various routes within the region are combined into a single linear destination, crossing mainly rural spaces.

Consequently, the development of tourism was one of the main goals of the region's strategic plan. According to Frey (1998), "there was the grand plan to make Compostela the European Capital of Culture in the year 2000". In November 1995, the European Union's ministers of culture named Santiago and a network of seven other cities the European City of Culture for the New Millennium (Concello de Santiago, 2000).

Santiago has become a significant and sought-after tourist destination, as evidenced by the significant increase in hotel availability and economic growth in the local community and region. Santiago also became one of the most significant heritage sites in Europe, especially with the celebration of Holy Years, which became large-scale events and were accompanied by huge government investments to create new cultural facilities and infrastructure and develop the city (Santos, 2016).

The successful management of the Camino has made it a role model for other sacred or spiritual routes to follow (Santos & Lois, 2011). Its international recognition has been defined by Margri (2015) as “caminonization”, which means “the worldwide rise of sacred or spiritual routes, motivated primarily by the success of a Camino that cannot be equated with mere analysis and defining spiritual tourism” (Sánchez-Carretero, 2016). For example, the Kumano Kodo route in Japan was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004 as part of the “holy sites and pilgrimage routes of the Kii Mountains” and is the second route to achieve this status after the Camino de Santiago. Also in 2018, the two routes merged as part of the Dual Pilgrim initiative, which aims to celebrate and recognize the pilgrims who have walked both routes (El Camino Con Correos, 2018).

The primacy of the Camino among cultural routes can be distinguished by a few factors that can be divided into values and practices. First, the Camino is associated with a set of values and principles that local communities and organisations adhere to increase the success and increase in the number of travellers. Its fundamental value is its authenticity, since the interest in maintaining and preserving its original intent is its main attraction (Santos, 1999; Lois & Somoza, 2003). This involves commitment and dedication to the experience and explains why for many people the Jacobean pilgrimage is an inner journey and emotional retreat. On the other hand, the practical value of the route lies in the preservation of its authenticity as a walking route and the desire of travellers to complete it independently as a true pilgrim (Frey, 1998; Coleman, 2004).

Another practice that ensured success was the revival of the “spirit of hospitality” that has always been associated with the Camino. Throughout the history of it, most monasteries, churches, mills, old town buildings and rural houses were adapted to the needs of travellers, who always needed basic services, infrastructure and amenities (Lois, 2000; Santos, 2006; Lois & Santos, 2015). As a result of increased interest in the trail and the need to improve infrastructure, old roads and footpaths were repaired, bridges were rebuilt, wayfinding was installed along routes, and even water sources were cleaned up and native trees were planted.

The emergence and development of tourist infrastructure, transport, places of residence, and overnight accommodation further added interest to pilgrimage along the Camino route, creating favourable conditions and comfort for pilgrims (Wilcox et al., 2000). In addition to building tourism and urban infrastructure to promote pilgrimage, Compostela saw the construction of many basilicas and churches, monasteries, as well as boarding houses, and local businesses (Coffey et al., 1996). Not only in Santiago de

Compostela but also along the entire French and Spanish routes, chapels and places of overnight accommodation began to open (Smith, 1984).

Among the measures taken, two worth highlighting are tourism planning and management tools aimed at protecting and preserving the identity of the Camino. These tools provide guidelines for improving the cultural and natural heritage of the route. The current Caminos are the result of a coherent and structured government program of management, which has led to the resumption of voluntary pilgrimage movements and the creation of a linearly organised European cultural route. Ultimately, through such practices and activities, the Camino emerged as a major national and international tourist destination by the early 21st century (Santos, 1999; Lois, 2000).

2.2. Promotion and development of the Camino in Xacobeo 1993 and 1999

In this subsection, I will focus on examining two significant Xacobeo 1993 and 1999, which contributed to the enormous success of the Camino compared to all previous Xacobeos. I examine the 1999 Xacobeo plan in comparison with the 1993 Xacobeo plan, describing the implemented improvements and changes that led to the prominent success of Xacobeo 1999 compared to the previous Xacobeo 1993.

Xacobeo 1993 and 1999 represent critical turning points in the contemporary development and reputation of the Camino de Santiago. These years were pivotal not only because of their religious significance and the revival of the pilgrimage, but also because of the strategic efforts made by regional and national authorities, as well as cultural and tourist organizations, to transform the Camino into a brand and popular world destination and to position it as a cultural, spiritual and economic asset on a global scale. These years marked the beginning of a new era for the Camino, embedding it in contemporary global society as both a route of spiritual and religious journey and a driver of inclusive and sustainable tourism development.

Xacobeo 1993 and 1999 plans were comprehensive initiatives aimed at promoting cultural, religious, and tourism activities centred around the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Those campaigns covered various sectors of the economy and was promoted through all kinds of advertising channels and media (especially Xacobeo 1999), which

caused a boom in the influx of pilgrims and tourists from all over the world for one decade. It was a great start and a turning point for the popularisation of the Camino as a cultural, pilgrimage, and tourist destination of national and international importance (Tilson, 2005c).

The 1999 campaign aimed to continue and strengthen the position of Santiago as a European cultural mecca and Spain as a popular tourist destination in Europe, but unlike the 1993 campaign, there were attempts to better balance the commercial and spiritual components of the Camino. The 1993 celebration was a success for many reasons: about 100 miles of routes were restored, pilgrims' lodgings, cultural and urban buildings were built and renovated, and the number of overnight stays in hotels was more than 38 million that year (Xunta de Galicia, 1997). But it was also described as overly commercial. According to Frey (1998), the Galician government made a "last-minute attempt to capitalise on the renewed interest in the route, which "turned the pilgrimage into a spectacle". The 1993 campaign dropped the name Santiago from the name and symbolism, thus implying a rejection of the image of Santiago the Saint, and used the image of the pilgrim, who advertises all the goods in the area, and natively "attempts to lure pilgrims to Galicia for a weekend of relaxation".

Planning for the Xacobeo 1999 campaign began early and spanned the spectrum of many civil and religious authorities. A central organising committee, the Junta Central del Año Santo, was inaugurated in October 1996, and in 1997 the Archbishop of Madrid announced the formation of an episcopal delegation dedicated to the Camino and the spiritual needs of pilgrims (Frey, 1998). The Central Committee coordinated the actions of not only the Galician government but also the Catholic Church on various issues of the campaign from organisation to communication, delegating to each of the organisations its duties and responsibilities for their implementation. According to José Ramon Pous, dean of the University of Galicia, Faculty of Information Sciences of Santiago de Compostela, "The Archbishops of Compostela concentrated their efforts on pilgrimages and religious gatherings, while the central authorities concentrated their efforts on the promotion of tourism and culture". The church wanted to increase the number of pilgrims, while the public sector wanted to attract more tourists (Pousa, 2001). State committee officials described the cooperation between church and state as "extraordinary", with both institutions performing their tasks "excellently" and the Catholic Church receiving full credit support from the regional government (Tilson, 2005b). Of course, organising a campaign of this scale also required the participation of many other organisations of

varying levels of power and influence. In both 1993 and 1999 campaigns, the city of Santiago, the government of Spain, and the region of Galicia collaborated its promotional activities under the overall auspices of the consortium El Consorcio de la Ciudad de Santiago, headed by King Juan Carlos I. Plus, as was mentioned above, the Xacobeo 1999 campaign promoted the city of Santiago as one of the European Capitals of Culture for the year 2000 (Pousa, 2001).

In an open letter dedicated to Xacobeo 1999, the President of the Galician region, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, expressed the importance of the Camino as “the great cultural route of the West, which contributed to the spirit of creating a united Europe,” and recalled that this event is “the most popular spiritual festival associated with the Camino” (Xunta de Galicia, 1998). José Agra Adan of the Galician Ministry of Culture, Social Communication and Tourism also celebrated Xacobeo 1999 as “the greatest religious, cultural, and tourism event ever organised nationally and internationally” (Tilson, 2005c). The campaign reflected and emphasised the religious aspect of the celebration. For example, the cover of the promotional brochure declared that “in the Holy Year of Compostela, Galicia opens its doors to the spirituality of Europe and the meeting of cultures”. The campaign included an aspect of particular importance — the promotion of the whole of Galicia and the autonomous regions in northern Spain that intersect or are included in the Camino route. To highlight this aspect, the Galician government officially proclaimed the year of Xacobeo 1999 in Galicia, and advertising purposefully portrayed the image of Galicia as a modern region open to the world. There was also an exhibition called *Huellas Jacobeas*, dedicated to the influence of the Jacobeans on the pilgrimage of Spain, which also highlighted the importance and significance of Galicia's neighbours and regions intersecting with the Santiago route. This exhibition toured Europe, the USA, and South America, sponsored by the famous Spanish airline Iberia (Tilson, 2005c).

Created during Holy Years, the Jacobin Council provided a forum for the Spanish government and the autonomous regional governments represented in the Xacobeo 1999 campaign to coordinate their efforts at the interregional level (Xunta de Galicia, 1998b). The Council was composed of representatives from the Spanish Ministries of Public Works, Business, and Tourism, and was chaired by the Spanish Minister of Culture. The Council had met several years earlier to request money from the central government for beautification projects in Santiago and Galicia, anticipating Xacobeo 1999. For example, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the touring Jacobean exhibition mentioned above. Moreover, the Council of Europe, responsible for the cultural division

of the European Union, after declaring the Camino de Santiago as “Europe's First Cultural Route” continued to fund signage projects and conservation of monuments along the Camino during Holy Years.

Developed by the Central Organizing Committee, the Xacobeo 1999 plan included a full range of cultural and religious activities supported by a publicity campaign, mass media, institutional media (such as websites), and sponsored advertising. The promotional materials featured the official Xacobeo 1999 logo — four stylized white scallop shells (which is a symbol of St. James) on a red medallion — and the 1993 cartoon character Pelegrin, who was joined by Pelegrin's new girlfriend in a female version (Frey, 1998). However, the continued increase in the number of pilgrims in subsequent years gradually weakened the significance of the talisman, which was replaced by more traditional iconography (Santos, 2016).

The total advertising budget for Xacobeo 1999 Plan, including Xacobeo's annual administrative budget, was approximately US\$45 million. The advertising campaign was also sponsored by the European Professional Football League for the 1998-1999 season. The tourism organisation Tour Galicia promoted Compostela on exhibition stands at national and international tourism fairs in London, Paris, and Berlin (Tilson, 2005c).

The Xacobeo campaign attracted many media to advertise and attract public attention, such as television and radio networks, as well as reputable international national and regional press (Tilson, 2005c). The in-flight magazines of major airlines, such as the Spanish national airline Iberia, and the country's internal airlines also disseminated travel news about the upcoming event.

More than 20 million brochures were printed in Spanish, Galician, French, English, German, and Portuguese, containing instructions for cycling or walking the Camino and staying overnight at various points along the route, schedules of activities, and a guide to finding your way around Santiago de Compostela and Galicia. The brochures were distributed through tourist offices both within Spain and throughout the world, including the above-mentioned international tourism exhibitions. Even outdoor billboards near Barcelona airport and on the main road to Figueres promoted Xacobeo and Galicia.

Among the institutional means of information, the Internet and the creation of its website were also involved. The official website www.xacobeo.es was launched on July 25, 1998, providing information to cyber-tourists and implementing a virtual introduction and journey along the Camino that could be experienced by cyber-pilgrims from five continents simultaneously. At that time, the site was quite interactive and attractive. It

provided all the necessary information about the history of the Camino, the cathedral and exhibitions, and much more in Spanish, English, French, and Galician about the history of the Camino. The site also included webcam viewing of special locations in and around the cathedral, an online guest book where visitors could leave comments and an online questionnaire where visitors could share their plans. The administration and updating of the site were carried out by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, Social Communications, and Tourism.

Another website, www.archicompostela.org, provided pilgrims with information about Xacobeo 1999 and Saint James, the city, and the pilgrimage in five languages and was publicly available to travellers. In addition to websites, the Xacobeo campaign also had its information centre, which anyone interested could call for information about a pilgrimage to Compostela and the region of Galicia. The ministry also published a book about Xacobeo 1999 in Spanish and German, detailing the history of the Camino and pilgrims' accounts of their pilgrimage experiences.

The turning point of the campaign was the development of a new destination, Portugal, since one of the oldest traditional Camino roads led from Portugal to Compostela. The tourism ministries of both countries have opened joint advertising sections in the publishing houses of reputable tourism magazines, advertising their attractions; Spain invited travellers to take the Camino through Portugal to inaugurate the “Pilgrimage Trail” and the “spiritual capital of Spain, Santiago de Compostela”. Public media and advertising — television, radio, print and billboards — also promoted Xacobeo 99 in Portuguese territory (Tilson, 2005c). To attract the attention of Portuguese visitors, the Administration of Galicia organised an exhibition on “Spirituality and the Jacobin Pilgrimage” in the museums of Coimbra and Porto (Xunta de Galicia, 1998b) and published Camino tourist brochures in Portuguese, including telephone numbers of information centres for Portuguese travellers.

Corporate sponsors contributed to the promotion through their advertising and Xacobeo 1999's US\$14.5 million budget, 14 independent companies contributed funding, and another 46 provided various advertising services to promote Xacobeo (Pousa, 2001). Among the companies that promoted and advertised Xacobeo were Coca-Cola, Iberia, Citroën, El Corte Inglés, and Telefónica (Pousa, 2001). The Xacobeo campaign brochures heavily featured the logos of corporate sponsors and featured advertisements thanking and patronising the listed sponsors. Companies also promoted it through their corporate advertising and media, which extended to Europe and America. A notable example is the

placement of the Xacobeo logo on the tail of the aircraft of the Spanish airline Iberia, and the travel agency Halcon massively used the Pelegrín logo representing the Xacobeo campaign in print advertising sources.

In turn, the Catholic Church focused its propaganda efforts on the religious component of Xacobeo 1999. Attracting pilgrims and meeting their spiritual needs upon arrival in Santiago was of paramount importance. The church's plans also included a pan-European gathering of young pilgrims, which would represent the culmination of the Holy Year celebrations. To encourage pilgrims to make the pilgrimage to Compostela, Pope John Paul II issued a Vatican document in 1999 on the benefits of pilgrimage to the shrines, and special prayer cards were created for visitors to the shrine with the Pope's message on the Camino (Tilson, 2005c).

Moreover, according to Sister Encarnacion Senande, a member of the Benedictine community of the monastery of St. Pelayo, adjacent to the cathedral, the Galician administration provided funds for the reconstruction of the Museum of Sacred Art at the monastery, which contained the top of the altar, found along with the relics of St. James. It was the clergy of this monastery who were entrusted with the care of the relics of St. James from the moment of their discovery (Otero, 1974).

Summarising information above, the Xacobeo 1999 vampaign represented a significant attempt to promote Santiago de Compostela as a European cultural and religious centre and to stimulate tourism in the region. The project aimed to achieve a balance between the commercial and spiritual aspects of the pilgrimage, emphasising the cultural significance of Santiago and the Camino route. The campaign was carefully planned and executed with the participation of various stakeholders, including government agencies, the Catholic Church, and corporate sponsors. A wide range of media channels including television, radio, print, and the Internet were used to reach a global audience. It also included international cooperation, especially with Portugal, to promote the Camino route from there to Compostela. Corporate sponsors, along with government and religious institutions, played a significant role in financing and advertising the campaign.

Overall, this campaign marked a turning point in the promotion of the Camino as a cultural, pilgrimage and tourist destination of national and international importance, reflecting the integration of historical traditions, modern marketing and tourism strategies, and religious revival, which is the original value and significance of this destination.

Given the visitor numbers and economic boom that year, the Xacobeo campaign was a resounding success. Nearly 11 million travellers came to Santiago de Compostela, making it the busiest year to date, and more than half of them stayed overnight in Santiago (Pousa, 2001; Tilson, 2005c). Moreover, in the first six months of 1999, 1.6 million visitors came from Portugal, which was 26% more than in the first half of 1998, proving the effectiveness of advertising in neighbouring countries along the Santiago route (Xunta de Galicia, 1999a).

Visitors spent approximately US\$280 million, which was almost 10% more per person than in 1998, and this amount accounted for 10% of Galicia's gross domestic product by early 2000 (Pousa, 2001). Hotel occupancy rates throughout the Galician region showed a dramatic increase in three months compared to 1998 (82% in 1999 compared to 66.1% in 1998 for June) (Xunta de Galicia, 1999). This indicates the effectiveness of advertising in attracting tourists and the mass popularisation of other cities in the region outside of Santiago.

Expecting a record influx of tourists and preparing for a tourism boom, 39 new hotels with 2,500 rooms were built in the year before Xacobeo 1999, which also created about 1,000 jobs in the local hotel industry. Moreover, according to the Galician administration, some 9,000 additional jobs were created in the service sector because of Xacobeo 1999 and the city's designation as a European City of Culture in 2000 (Xunta de Galicia, 1999). The number of pilgrims that year was also a record and significantly higher than in 1993. Over 650,000 overnight stays have been recorded for pilgrims along the Camino route, more than double the number of overnight stays in Xacobeo 1993 (Tilson, 2005c). In addition, approximately 155,000 pilgrims at the end of their pilgrimage indicated a desire to obtain a Compostela certificate from the Pilgrim Office (Pousa, 2001).

During Xacobeo 1999, more than 5,602 organised pilgrimage groups participated in the pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago, more than twice as many as in 1993, and 14% of them came from abroad and had international participants (Pousa, 2001). The most impressive and widespread event of that year was the holding of the European Youth Rally, in which more than 50,000 young pilgrims took part, which also showed the interest of young people in religious pilgrimage (Tilson, 2005c).

Overall, that year there were many different religious programs organised by various religious groups, which also attracted significant international attention and increased interest to the Camino and Santiago de Compostela. Almost 2,000 different

cultural, educational, and sporting programs fill the calendar of events in Galician cities throughout the year, including theatrical performances, art exhibitions, scientific conferences, and sporting events, as well as the participation of international celebrities to attract even more attention to the events. For example, King Juan Carlos I attended the Feast of James ceremony in the cathedral on July 25 and, according to the customary ritual among pilgrims, embraced the statue of the saint behind the main altar. In the summer of the same year, world-famous stars and famous musicians such as Sting and the Rolling Stones, Celia Cruz, BB King, and Elton John toured the cities of Galicia. Before the concert, the Rolling Stones also visited the cathedral to hug the statue of St. James, which showed their participation in the event (Sotelino, 1999).

Requests to the tourism office of the Galician administration for tourist information almost doubled in the first eight months of 1999: 214,880 requests in 1999 compared to 121,236 compared to the same period in 1998; the largest number of requests came from local Spanish tourists (144,015), followed by French, German and Portuguese tourists. Increased interest from Portugal again demonstrates the success and effectiveness of the promotion of Xacobeo in this country (Xunta de Galicia, 1999). The official website of Xacobeo 1999 recorded over 22 million visitors from 119 different countries during one Holy Year, which was a huge milestone for the Internet network at the start of the new millennium.

The media campaign was organised by major national and international television, radio, and print media. The media tracking service estimates that Spanish television broadcast more than 1,500 news stories about Xacobeo in Santiago and the Camino route, adding up to about 60 hours in total. Spain's national radio networks broadcast more than 2,000 stories with a total duration of 150 hours (Tilson, 2005c). Major national and local Galician newspapers and magazines published weekly special editions on Xacobeo 1999, as well as specialised tourism magazines such as *Geo* and *The Tourist Galicia*, a guide publication to Galicia, where Santiago was featured in the premiere episode in May 2000.

The light magazines of the major international carriers also covered Xacobeo extensively. For example, the Iberia airline published a 12-page feature on Santiago de Compostela in its March 1999 *Ronda Iberia* magazine and ran an entire article on the journey through northern Spain to Santiago in the June issue of 1999; and, importantly, both articles preserved the cultural and religious significance of the destination. At American airports and in the magazines of international American airlines, Xacobeo 99 was also mentioned, although not as widespread as within Western Europe. However,

Santiago appeared in the background store American Way, specialising in tourism and organising pilgrimage trips to northern Spain in March 1999 (Tilson, 2005c). They also followed the strategy of Xacobeo 1999 campaign and highlighted both the cultural aspects of visiting Compostela and the traditional religious roots of the Holy Year celebrations.

Ultimately, the organisers of the Xacobeo 1999 campaign succeeded in realising their idea and reviving the religious and spiritual significance of Santiago de Compostela, while also maintaining a balance with its cultural and historical component, which also attracted a significant number of travellers. In essence, ideas and programs aimed at both ordinary tourists and religious pilgrims served as attractive marketing “hooks” to attract visitors from across the civic and spiritual spectrum. Moreover, the use of all possible advertising tactics and tools created in the languages of key audiences, from advertising to news, websites, and related materials Xacobeo 1999, provided a massive barrage of advertising that eventually attracted the attention and interest of travellers from all over the world.

Most importantly, from initial planning to implementation, this campaign not only brought together local church, community, and business leaders around a common goal but also attracted partners from Portugal and the surrounding northern regions of Spain, thereby expanding the scope, funding, and promotional activities of Xacobeo 1999 outside the region and even the country. Its campaign not only revived the importance of Santiago de Compostela as a cultural and religious centre, but also truly revived and popularised the Camino as a cultural pilgrimage route.

Despite the globalisation of the tourism market, there is also a religious and spiritual awakening, and as a result, the growth of religious and spiritual tourism. The case of the Xacobeo campaign and popularisation of the Camino as a route is a successful model of “revival” and popularisation of a religious site for tourism purposes and is also an example of the successful and effective implementation of the intended program. The region's administration and the church have rediscovered and re-evaluated the importance of "sacred sites" and their cultural significance and have taken concerted action to restore and promote the ancient cultural and religious site and all its attendant traditions.

In the case of Spain, the phenomenon of Xacobeo 1999 “marked the beginning of the revival of the former splendour of the Camino de Santiago, and the transformation of pilgrimage into a cultural phenomenon on a par with the religious” (Pousa, 2001). Such “disclosure” of the identity of a community, region, or country and their further promotion became successful thanks to the united efforts of various sectors of society — both

religious, state, and civil leaders. It was the collective and coordinated approach to realising the goal that made Xacobeo celebration a colossal success and brought the attention of travellers to the forgotten route of the Camino.

This approach not only creates a sense of community ownership of a national project but also provides the necessary manpower, stakeholders, and funding to carry out major campaigns. Partnerships between community organisations, businesses, and government representatives build respect and trust among citizens by leveraging the volunteers, sponsorship investments, advertising agencies, and other institutional resources without which the campaign's success would not be possible.

Also, the implementation and promotion of the campaign were carried out in parallel with the renovation and expansion of tourism infrastructure to accommodate the expected flow of tourists. The development of tourism infrastructure — from accommodation to transport — has played an important role in the development and scaling of pilgrimages in Spain and throughout Europe for decades. As noted above, new hotels were built especially for Xacobeo 1999, and pilgrimage facilities were renovated and expanded, which added new jobs in the hotel sector and increased employment growth in the related services sector. In this case, the costs invested in the implementation and needs of a specific activity or event served in the future as long-term investments in the development of the destination and the economy of society, region, and country.

In the context of cultural and spiritual discovery, the revival of the Camino is important in that such religious and spiritual journeys are accessible and open to various travellers, be they pilgrims or tourists, and provide an opportunity to connect and conduct intercultural and interethnic dialogue in this spiritual and friendly space, which is urgently needed in a modern fragmented and conflict society (Tilson, 2005c). In this regard, the Camino became not only a spiritual and cultural road, but also a communicative free space, uniting people of all nations, classes, and walks of life to visit the Church of St. James. As in the Middle Ages, when it was “a way of communication between people and a carrier of information – pilgrims compared notes, made friends and shared information” (Crombie, 2003).

In Xacobeo 1999 and today this place brings together all visitors to Compostela to see and pay tribute to a holy place and sacred treasure valuable to all humanity, and to share the experience with other travellers. In essence, the Camino is a connecting bridge of times and generations, it is the custodian of human values and traditions passed on from century to century, from one generation of travellers to the next generation of

travellers. By fostering a sense of unity, promoting cultural exchange, and embracing diversity along the Camino pilgrimage, this tradition can continue to serve as a powerful tool for connecting people and creating a space for spiritual growth, cultural exploration, and mutual respect.

Societies seeking to create integrity and collectively among citizens can use the celebration of religious and cultural traditions to unite all sectors of society, as the communities and state of Spain did in Xacobeo 1999. That year not only influenced the development and popularity of the city of Santiago and its surroundings but also strengthened the values of the community and contributed to the long-term development of social relations within the region, the country, and with neighbouring countries connected by the Camino routes. As communities look for ways to stimulate the economy, build local pride, and improve the quality of life, cities such as Compostela, Rome, and Ephesus provide examples of successful development of religious-spiritual tourism and the creation of a strong church.

Cities like Santiago de Compostela set an example for other societies seeking to leverage their cultural and religious heritage for social, economic, and spiritual growth. By sharing best practices and lessons learned, these cities can inspire others to embrace their traditions and history for the betterment of their communities. It shows the direction to other societies and cities, where they can move, and how they can develop while being a cultural European city and preserving their sacred sites. By following this way, society can rise economically, politically, and, above all, spiritually, as in the example of the Camino.

All in all, the Xacobeo campaigns serve as a model for effectively blending religious, cultural, and tourism elements to create a successful and globally recognized event that benefitted not just Santiago de Compostela but the entire region and its communities. The celebration of religious and cultural traditions can indeed be a powerful tool for promoting unity, social development, and economic prosperity while preserving valuable heritage and fostering spiritual well-being. The success of places like Santiago de Compostela can serve as a guiding light for other communities looking to embark on a similar journey of growth and enrichment.

2.3. Impact of the Camino development on the local economies and communities

The first French and then the Spanish Galician routes were protected by ecclesiastical and civil authorities, the cities and towns along the route began to be revived and developed, road construction work was carried out, monuments and historical sites were reconstructed, which increased the value of the route significantly. Today, thanks to reconstruction, along the Camino one can find well-preserved historical centres, Romanesque churches, Gothic cathedrals and unique buildings, Baroque monasteries and large civil buildings. But there is also academic debate that the route's popularity has been reinvented in modern times (Lois, 2013; Lois & López, 2012).

The first important period of the revival of the Camino was the rule of the Franco regime, during which the myth of the Apostle James was used as a military image against the communists and freemasons. The government also regularly invested significant amounts of public money in its historical (re)monumentalization, carried out over many years by the architect F. Pons Sorolla (Castro, 2010, 2013). After the end of the totalitarian regime and the inclusion of the route in European institutions, the idea of allocating large sums for the reconstruction of the pilgrimage route only became stronger, but more attention was still paid to the material aspects of the secular route. Regional governments and partly the national government began to beautify the routes, build shelters for pilgrims and mark the route with navigation, expecting that thousands of modern pilgrims, united by similar ideas and interests, would walk this route and increase its popularity (Bermejo López, 2001; Pichel, 2004).

The reconstruction program, supported by a boom in Jacobean research in the historical and philological fields, gave rise to the movement of the first modern pilgrims. These included those who studied the history and heritage of the Camino, and religious people, or both. Therefore, between the late 1950s and 1960s there was an intensive restoration of the walking route in Santiago, as well as the emergence of the first associations of Friends of the Camino (Lois, 2013; Lois & Santos 2015).³

³ Friends of the Camino are communities of travellers and pilgrims who have walked the Camino and are interested in its culture, history, as well as its development, created to unite Camino travellers within a city or country. The first community of Friends of the Camino was founded in Paris, France in 1950 by four travellers. (Xunta de Galicia, n.d., caminodesantiago.gal)

The number of pedestrians going to Santiago began to increase, and at the same time there was a process of monumentalization of the route. This gave the pilgrimage a more tolerant and secular character, ultimately giving the route its modern significance as a cultural and tourist route. The subsequent democratic government used the Camino de Santiago as a historical and cultural centre to develop the route in the international market and integrate the Iberian Peninsula into Europe. Although Xacobeo 1976 and 1982 were not remarkable, they provided the impetus for the recognition of the historic city of Santiago as a World Heritage Site in 1985 and the Camino as Europe's first cultural route in 1987 (Marti, 1995; Valle, 1985). Between these two years Spain joined the European Community, and the Camino was chosen as the main theme for a major exhibition in Brussels dedicated to this historical event. Consequently, in the 1980s, the municipal government of Santiago, the municipality of the Autonomous Region of Galicia and the national government began to collaborate and create a strategy to improve and promote the Camino.

Great changes occurred in Xacobeo 1993, and its celebrations were used by the regional government of Galicia to launch a huge campaign to promote tourism and popularise the Camino. Most of the funds were aimed at restoring the route: adapting paving, restoring historical structures (fountains, bridges, etc.), churches, creating a network of hostels for pilgrims, developing a system of signs, etc. It was prepared as an excellent platform for pedestrians and cycling, which was accompanied by an impressive advertising campaign. It presented the region of Galicia as an established regional and historical entity and stimulated green tourism in the region and popularised religious tourism to attract and increase the number of pilgrims, which reached 100,000 people (Lois et al., 2018).

The success of Xacobeo 1993 was so great in Spain and Portugal that suddenly the Camino de Santiago became one of the country's main new tourism products, which was government administrations' aim for reducing dependence on sunny and beach destinations when planning tourism strategies at that time (UNWTO, 2005). The overwhelming impact of the campaign's success justified that Xacobeo 1999 and 2004 were perceived as a continuation of Xacobeo 1993. The cultural presentation of the route in an international context and less exposure to large-scale advertising campaigns complemented the popularisation of it in Spain and Portugal.

Pilgrimage along the Camino has been encouraged in a variety of ways, from pluralistic discourse to the decentralised and structured operation of new media (Xunta

de Galicia 1993, 1994). In the subsequent Xacobeo 2010, the number of pure pilgrims reached its maximum, exceeding the number of recent Holy Years (Oficina del Peregrino, 1990–2019). For this reason, over the last decade there has been an increase in the number of new routes that also have a historical pilgrimage tradition, such as the Northern Camino, the Primitive from Oviedo, as well as the Finisterre Way and the Portuguese Coastal Way, both of which are incredibly popular. Moreover, in the region of Galicia itself there are about 10 different walking and cycling routes that cross about 40% of the municipalities of the region, and this figure will continue to increase with the growth of pilgrims and the development of the Camino.

The emergence and development of various types of accommodation and tourism services have been aimed at meeting the needs of pilgrims and tourists of the 21st century by improving the hospitality and accommodation conditions so that pilgrims can make the Camino pilgrimage more comfortable and safer. This also affects the development of the local economy and infrastructure, as well as creating employment opportunities for the local community that serves these different needs of travellers.

Except for Santiago, all points along the routes are overnight stops for pilgrims, usually for one night, barring unforeseen circumstances such as illness. Moreover, after a long day of walking or pedalling, the rest of the day is spent relaxing or socialising inside the pilgrims' hostel, which is an important place for the exchange of experiences among pilgrims (Frey, 1998). The research conducted on the daily expenses of one pilgrim indicates a maximum amount of 30 euros on average, which is mainly spent on accommodation and food. Naturally, there are big differences depending on the nature and purpose of the trip. However, almost 50% of pilgrims sleep in hostels every night, and 75% use them occasionally. A distinctive feature of this type of establishment is the low overnight rate, which can be as low as 6 euros per night. Another important element of relatively limited economic expenditure is to minimise purchases during the pilgrimage. This is due to two reasons: physical, since the traveller has only one backpack with him, and psychological, since the main message is that for life, we do not need a lot of things, but only the necessary things that are in one backpack.

According to Tresserras (2007a), significant public and private investment has created the conditions for an expansion of accommodation options along the Camino de Santiago routes. Nowadays, offerings range widely from traditional lodges to hotels and even luxury spa resorts along the routes. A distinctive feature of the Camino is the network of shelters and hospices for pilgrims, which are provided by religious

institutions, public and private organisations and are often supported by donations from visitors and the volunteer work of non-profit organisations. Such premises are intended exclusively for those travelling on foot, by bicycle or on horseback. To gain access to the pilgrimage premises, you must have a pilgrim's passport (Credential). Since 2008, a one-night rule has been introduced in public shelters, except for Monte de Gozo and San Lazaro in Santiago de Compostela, where pilgrims can stay up to three nights. In addition to traditional shelters, the number of quality hotels along the Camino has increased in recent decades. These establishments range from chains of rural guest houses to hotels on sites of historical monuments and buildings. Pilgrims also have access to numerous restaurants and bars along the route. Information about these establishments can be found in pilgrim guides, hostels, pilgrim websites and apps, Camino information points, and signs along the route itself. Meals are often offered as set menus at prices affordable to pilgrims. Pilgrims also can buy food from small village shops and cook their own meals in the hostels.

Other additional services available on the Camino de Santiago routes include luggage transportation by taxi, which is especially convenient for older pilgrims or people with health problems. For pilgrims travelling by bicycle, there are services for the delivery of bicycles from place to place, as well as bicycle repair services along the route.

Tourist offices along the Camino provide information on destinations, accommodations, restaurants, and other related services. Moreover, establishments along the route are increasingly offering free Wi-Fi, allowing pilgrims to access online resources through smartphone apps instead of traditional guidebooks or maps, as well as share their experiences and content on their social networks, communicate with other pilgrims and connect with the outside world.

Naturally, unlike the ordinary “true” pilgrim who walks the Camino on his own, there are pilgrim-tourists who stop at rural tourism institutions, buy organised tours and routes from private companies, and even use the service of transporting backpacks by transfer from one point to another, thereby bringing an important economic boost to the local community. There is no reliable data on the number of such tourists but considering the available data and statistics of pilgrims spending the night in hostels, not a large percentage of tourists use the services of travel agencies to organise their trips. Most travellers organise their trip themselves.

At each point along the route, pilgrims typically encounter churches, monasteries or shrines for prayer or contemplation, as well as historical monuments along the routes.

Navigating the Camino is made easier by yellow arrows marking the route on trees, buildings and the ground. In some places, the directional markers are scallop shells, a symbol of the Camino, indicating the direction and sometimes the distance to Santiago. A network of buses and trains connects various sections of the route, and budget airlines offer low-cost flights to cities close to the route.

When exploring the city of Santiago, there are several important and powerful impacts on the city (López J., & Santos, 2019a). For places to stay in Santiago itself, Booking.com offers over 400 hotels, including the luxurious \$400-per-night Parador de Santiago, built in four 15th-century monasteries. In 2019, nearly three million passengers on more than 22,000 flights passed through the city's airport. And in 2018, about 2.6 million travellers used the train station. One analysis of the Camino's economic impact found that overall, it has increased the income and employment of villages and small towns along the route by about a fifth, and the city of Santiago itself has become one of the most popular destinations in Europe, with an ever-growing number of travellers (Yarrow, 2022).

Experts say that "slow tourism" such as the Camino pilgrimage brings enormous benefits to the local economy and the development of small communities, and the smaller the village, the more important the Camino is to its economy. This saved entire regions of Spain from rural depopulation and economic decline that lasted for decades. Thanks to the tourism development on the Camino, there are cafes for tourists and pilgrims, souvenir shops with Camino symbolism, hostels for pilgrims and expensive boarding houses for wealthier tourists in every tiny village and provincial town. The big cities have hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, tourist shops, and services of transporting luggage.

Overall, attractive places have appeared or been restored along the Santiago route, ordinary rural areas or small historical towns have turned into local tourist centres attracting pilgrims and tourists. All places close to or crossing the routes have acquired symbolic, historical and economic value for the region. Areas that were in decline just a few decades ago have been transformed into linearly structured and landscaped areas that bring economic benefits to the region and local municipalities. The route has become a fundamental catalyst for the dynamism of abandoned places transformed into attractive places, once again reinforcing the historical and economic value of the Santiago route.

Tourism on the Camino has a global impact on both the economy and society throughout Galicia, since the popularisation of the pilgrimage route as a tourist attraction has led to an increase in international and national tourist arrivals (Pereiro, 2019). The

campaign to promote the Camino and attract tourists since the 1990s has led to a constant increase in the number of visitors, and most of them are pilgrims. But the increase in the number of visitors was not always viewed in a positive light. For example, the Strategic Tourism Plan for Santiago for 2017–2022 pointed to the possible loss of the city's identity caused by the development of tourist infrastructure in such a way as the massive appearance of fast-food establishments and souvenir shops at every turn. In addition, some problems arose because of the interaction between tourist businesses and the local population, such as unstable low-quality population employment, progressive abandonment of the old town due to the lack of basic services for potential residents, overcrowding in the main tourist areas and real estate speculation. This is a consequence of gentrification, which can be observed in other Spanish and European cities, where depressed areas are rebuilt and reconstructed to attract wealthy residents and investors, eventually displacing residents. On the other hand, this displacement occurs when the local population moves, and the city centre turns into a tourist stronghold. Outside the buildings have been preserved, inside there are short-term apartment rental points, souvenir shops, and restaurants for tourists. Although Santiago de Compostela is still far from being overpopulated by tourists, this discussion is already becoming a reason for concern and a subject of social, political and academic debate (Soares et al., 2021).

Despite the challenges and possible negative impacts of tourism on the local community, if the benefits of tourism are harnessed correctly and effectively, these can be overcome and used to the benefit of residents. In other words, tourism can have an impact on solving urban and social problems, diversifying the economy and promoting social equality in a region (Anton-Clavé & Calabuig, 2005) when its development and management are well planned and implemented at the local and regional policy level. Therefore, the development and implementation of innovative approaches in the formation of local and regional tourism policy is necessary for the economic growth of the area and to ensure and meet the needs of all stakeholders — both visitors and residents.

Mowforth and Munt (2005) described the importance of developing sustainable tourism through the involvement of the local community, suggesting that they have some control over tourism events in their community. Meanwhile, according to Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017), involving local people in the tourism development process can improve their awareness of its benefits and costs and will encourage them to support tourism development. In addition to involving residents in tourism processes, it is important to recognize and support their attitudes towards tourism development policies, including

them in tourism projects, and identifying problems that need to be assessed and addressed (Prayag et al., 2013; Styliadis et al., 2014). Therefore, cultivating positive attitudes towards tourism among locals can promote its development, which can be an important tool for developing sustainable tourism strategies in an area or region (which will be discovered in the next chapter).

Telfer and Sharpley (2008) and Sharpley (2014) argue that residents' behaviour may change depending on the perceptions of the positive or negative impacts of tourism on their lives. In the first case, residents will be inclined to support the development of tourism activities if tourism is expected to bring more benefits than costs to the territory. Otherwise, they will not take part if tourism activities seem negative to their habitat. However, residents may react differently to circumstances. One part of the local community focuses on the positive effects of tourism, such as economic opportunity, social inclusion, improved quality of life, increased attractions, infrastructure and services, while another part of the same society may focus on its side effects, such as overpopulation, pollution or social and cultural disturbances (Soares et al., 2021).

Since the 1990s, the Galician landscape has become more urbanised than it had ever been before (Polín, 2011). This gradual recognition of the Camino heritage has attracted more tourists to the region and increased its status as a tourist destination (Figuerola, 2011). Positive impacts on the environment include improving the condition of national parks, reconstructing and improving old buildings, preserving authentic local style and traditions, protecting wildlife, supporting environmental agencies, and managing tourism flows and water resources. Among the negative impacts on the environment, it is important to highlight the accumulation of waste, the impact on natural and rural landscapes, noise and congestion of the area, as well as the construction of new structures and buildings.

Environmental impacts relate to how tourism development affects natural resources. According to UNWTO (2004), management strategies may include restricting entry, introducing permit systems, and waiting lists to control tourist numbers and protect heritage values. Changing and adapting routes is another approach to increasing capacity without harming the environment. Assessing the environmental impact of tourism also plays a critical role in planning development strategies.

The economic impact of cultural routes such as the Camino de Santiago can span large geographic areas and provide income to communities located along the route. The Camino has significantly accelerated the economic growth of the hospitality sector, which

indicates the rapid development of tourism, while the development of local production has not been affected. Already by the beginning of the 2000s, the contribution of tourism to the regional GDP of Galicia was more than 10%, which is a significant figure for the northern region and underlines the importance and potential for tourism development in it. Also, due to Spain's membership of the European Union, trade restrictions are minimal, and the flow of European tourists is regular.

The tourist development of the Camino has a positive impact on the economy of both the region and the entire country, such as an additional source of income for the local population, employment and the opening of new businesses in the tourism sector, expansion of services and their quality, development of local infrastructure, as well as restoration and preservation of heritage resources. However, its economic development has also led to increasing prices for goods and services for residents, increasing government spending for municipalities, and endangering traditional activities and crafts that do not develop. An important factor in the tourism sector is the dependence on seasonality and tourist flow at different times of the year.

Social impacts are critical to tourism, affecting both locals and visitors. Tourists need to respect the existing local culture and environment at the destination without disturbing or harming local traditions and ways of life. Moreover, tourism doesn't only affect residents; the locals are an integral part of the tourist experience, and they affect tourists and pilgrims as well (Panyik et al., 2011).

Undoubtedly, the Camino provides employment opportunities in the tourism and hospitality sector, guided tours and travel services, infrastructure maintenance, and heritage preservation, promotes the restoration of heritage sites, community unity and offers a multifaceted cultural, social, educational and spiritual experience. However, these positive impacts must be balanced against negative impacts such as dependence on tourism, commercialization of cultural practices, commodification of pilgrimage, changes in cultural landscapes, and potential archaeological damage to the site. Preserving the integrity and authenticity of the Camino experience while managing its socio-cultural impact is critical to the sustainable development of tourism along its routes.

The Camino has managed to create a linear axis of development in rural areas and small towns, intersecting the routes of the Camino. Of course, it is difficult to quantify this phenomenon, since the benefits and effects of an increase in the number of tourists can only be seen at the municipal and state levels, in the figures of economic profits, the increase in jobs created along the routes, the improvement of the local quality of life, the

impact on the environment etc. Nevertheless, the Camino can also become an example of modelling and designing an architectural landscape with the creation of green and sustainable infrastructure along the route, which opens new opportunities for urban spatial planners, engineers, and landscape designers to transform the Camino into an environmentally friendly and sustainable tourist route.

Cultural routes such as the Caminos de Santiago should represent a healthy, sustainable, environmentally responsible, socially inclusive form of tourism and promote territorial cohesion within a region and even a country. This type of tourism may increase its socio-economic impact in the coming years due to the possible shift to digital technology. The strategic allocation of public investments to improve digitalization is a positive attempt to transform the modern tourism model following current sustainable trends and the vector of development of the tourism business.

The digitalization and mediatization process of the Camino over the past years, as well as its sustainable development and the implementation of sustainability initiatives following sustainable trends will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III – The digitalization and mediatization, risk of commercialization, modern and sustainable management of the Camino de Santiago

This chapter presents an analysis of a digital evolution and mediatization of the Camino de Santiago and how these processes have transformed the pilgrimage experience in the modern Internet age. Attention is paid to the digital renewal of the Camino in recent years, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which has accelerated the process of introducing digital tools into the pilgrims' experience.

The chapter examines the modern management plans, such as Xacobeo 2021-2022, and sustainable development initiatives implementation, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aim to ensure the future sustainability of the Camino. It also discovers the development of the Camino into an inclusive and sustainable destination to make the pilgrimage more accessible for travellers and to preserve the environment and culture.

The research presented in this chapter demonstrates the continued relevance of the Camino as a tourist and cultural destination and its adaptation to contemporary challenges and changes in the sustainable tourism and cultural heritage management sectors.

3.1. Digitalization of the Camino de Santiago during the last years

Currently, the implementation of the Camino de Santiago is a walking passage of the route, which requires preliminary preparation and necessary information. After completion, the pilgrims distribute the accumulated material on social networks along with their impressions of the pilgrimage. Much of the preparatory stages and acquisition of important information is carried out with the help of the Internet and social networks. Consequently, public administrations and private organisations also use the network to inform and communicate with potential travellers, and to sell and provide any services along the Camino, which in the age of technology is an integral part of reality. And this reality has become especially relevant in the past few years for several reasons: 1) most information and data are now digitised and available on the Internet, which helps travellers be more flexible and knowledgeable when travelling; 2) the 2020 COVID pandemic greatly influenced the development of social networks and various blogs, forums, and online meetings, which also influenced the popularisation of the Camino among Internet users. The Internet has become an active virtual space where you can share your impression, find various recommendations, and communicate with those who

have already experienced the pilgrimage. Travellers can also directly book plane tickets, hotels, or hostels, even on the same day (depending on availability), and use various online services. A tourist can be completely self-organised and plan a trip according to individual needs.

In the case of cultural routes, information technology is used in constant, well-presented advertising, attracting tourists to visit and thus developing the tourism sector. Monuments, landscapes, and other cultural elements are especially advertised. Digital advertising focuses on specific attributes and symbolism of a place or destination and actively uses them to promote information (Lois-González & López, 2020). However, the subsequent experience of travellers allows them to reconstruct the original advertisement with new elements and attributes after gaining their own cultural experience, which enriches the generally accepted tourist attractive picture and adds additional significance and context. That is why tourists also contribute to and influence the creation and perception of the image of a place, city, country, and in the case of the Camino, an entire cultural and religious route.

The entire process of promoting routes emphasises the importance of the landscape, which always includes the human figure and the perception of this landscape. Whether it is the traditional natural vision of the landscape with fields, forests, and waterways, or historic towns and villages with local architecture, or urbanism and modern cityscapes, landscapes and heritage routes are reinterpreted in a new way in each era of human development and tourism. For tourism, especially one that puts slow mobility at the centre of attention, the landscape is one of the main attractions and the reason for the visit. The view and impression of a tourist travelling along a historical route full of monuments and beautiful landscapes is the central axis of the experience. Even more tangible and tactile experiences, such as gastronomy or the purchase of handicrafts, only complement memories of natural or agricultural landscapes and images of people around (both local and other travellers). The landscape envelops the traveller from all sides, creating a general perception of the trip and influencing his further impressions and memories of it. In this way, digital elements and sources of reproducing this experience disseminate information about the journey and the subjective impressions of travellers, while creating an attractive image of this journey for those who are interested in visiting similar routes.

As examined in the second chapter, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Camino experienced a process of regular growth every year. Since the successful Xacobeo 1993 and with each subsequent Xacobeo (1999, 2004, and 2010), expectations

of an increase in the number of pilgrims have been met through the implementation of territorial and strategic planning for the Camino as a product of cultural and religious tourism (Somoza Medina & Lois-González, 2018). It was between 2011 and 2019 that there was a constant year-on-year increase of approximately 8%, given that 2016 was the Holy Year. These statistics confirmed the status of the Camino as a modern tourist and cultural route, going beyond its original strictly religious meaning (López et al., 2017).

Oficina del Peregrino (2021) stated that 2019 was a record year for the number of pilgrims on the Camino with more than 347,000 people from more than 180 countries. Mroz (2021) also predicted an excess number of pilgrims in the coming year 2020, given that this year preceded Xacobeo in 2021. Religious tourism experienced times of prosperity, and purely tourists from all continents grew.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in 2020, leading to global travel bans, border closures, stay-at-home policies and quarantine periods. Consequently, these factors devastated tourism worldwide, including the cessation of the Camino pilgrimage for several months. Since 2020 was a year of pandemic crisis, in the middle and end of this year, with the subsequent easing of quarantine measures, only 54,144 people made the pilgrimage to Santiago, compared to 347,578 in 2019. Consequently, the pandemic caused a significant reduction in the number of pilgrims in 2020, despite all expectations and forecasts. According to data provided by Oficina del Peregrino (2021), attendance figures have fallen sharply compared to the pre-pandemic period, excluding the first two months of 2020. One year later, in the spring of 2021, a slow but regular increase in the number of tourists began, although the numbers were significantly lower than at the same time in 2019 before the pandemic. The first two summer months of 2021 showed a strong jump in the figure, but still 30% below the level recorded in 2019 at the same time (Ambrósio & Fernandes, 2021).

At the end of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on pilgrimage, a decree was issued to extend Xacobeo until 2022, which meant it would last a full 24 months. Proposals for the resumption of the Camino came from various structures and organisations, especially from the Christian Church, which was involved in the resumption of the Camino and proposed to extend Xacobeo 2021. The Spanish government, in turn, implemented the initiative to make the National Tourism Plan of Xacobeo 2021-2022. Announced in June 2021, its budget was €121 million, financed by Europe's Next Generation EU funds. Among the many implementation points, the Plan included such items as the Xacobeo Product Development Program, the Smart Tourism

Destination Program, and the Xacobeo International Promotion Program 2021–2022 (Gobierno de España, 2021).

For example, smart destination programs have made it possible to finance projects organised within the Spanish Network of Smart Tourist Destinations (DTI), with the development of digital solutions in the form of applications and tourist guides, technology platforms that provide real-time information, data analysis, and visualisation tools, etc. Public financing instruments were also being developed for digitalization projects and new technologies within the framework of the Recovery, Transformation, and Resilience Plan (RRTP), which has always been based on 4 principles: green transition, digital transition, energy efficiency, and increased competitiveness.

The Spanish DTI network was created in 2013 and over the past ten years many cities, towns, and regions have joined the initiative of this project, which proposes a future strategy of management, sustainability, accessibility, innovation, and technology as the basis for local development. This structure includes programs both at the regional level, which are proposed as a Cohesion Plan in Destination to strengthen the destination and improve the level of service in tourist destinations, and at the local level, aimed at implementing the Sustainability Plan in Destination, in which each individual municipality thinks through the main goals of planning and implementation these goals within its structure.

At the state level, two digital projects stand out. The first is the "Cno. de Santiago" app, created by the National Geographic Institute (IGN) in collaboration with the Spanish Federation of Associations of Friends of the Camino, with its initial version released in 2015. This app leverages IGN's extensive map database, enabling users to download various road and trail sections for both online and offline use. It also provides updated weather information, details on artistic heritage, and services available at each location along the trail. The second digital offering was introduced by the Santiago Cathedral relatively recently, in January 2021, and this application is called "Pilgrim Digital Credential". This tool enhances the traditional identity document, which holds pilgrimage stamps, by incorporating QR stamps, which are being progressively distributed to hostels, parishes, and local associations to enhance the digital experience.

When the government of Madrid circulated the further described draft of National Tourist Plan Xacobeo 2021-2022 (which will be described further in this chapter) to various organisations and institutions, the government of the Autonomous Administration of Galicia expressed the greatest number of objections due to political differences since

the central government and the administration of Galicia belong to different political parties. The Galician government considered that the central government had ignored the vision and strategy of the region, which resulted in Galicia being an underrepresented region.

Various regions of northern Spain have included the Camino de Santiago in their tourism promotion strategies. Despite the existence of several inter-administrative bodies tasked with regulating Camino policies, coordination in defining specific objectives, strategies, or programs between the different regions is often lacking. An example of this problem is the various apps developed by different autonomous communities and regions to promote the Camino routes. Often these applications only include information specific to their respective territories, requiring pilgrims to change applications when entering each new administrative region governed by a different administration.

In 2015, Xunta de Galicia approved the Master and Strategic Plan of the Camino of Santiago, which identified eight strategic directions and a total of 27 associated action plans, with an estimated budget of 56.1 million euros. When creating this plan, the impulse to Smart Camino's digital strategy was one of the last priorities on the list. But later, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, it became a top priority in the regional policy of Galicia in the development of the Camino. As a result, 10 million euros were invested in the Smart Camiño plan. As part of this initiative, the Galician region has developed a platform, caminodesantiago.gal, with all the latest news and various information about the Camino. It allows potential pilgrims to prepare for a 360° journey, plan each day of their route, communicate with other pilgrims, and share their experiences after completing the route. In addition, the Smart Camiño plan included the provision of Wi-Fi in public hostels within the Galician network, the installation of totems for charging phones and tablets, and the creation of the Camino de Santiago in Galicia app.

The Camino de Santiago in Galicia app, part of the Smart Camino project, is a complete pocket guide and companion with all the necessary information throughout the journey. It provides information on all the routes of the Camino de Santiago from its entrance to Galicia, including the Portuguese Way starting in a neighbouring country, and gives access to personalised routes on the portal. The application contains information on the official network of hostels with their characteristics, opening hours, location, phone number and photos, as well as tourist resources and attractions. The app offers real-time information about events, services, and incidents along the route. Here you can check updated alerts on published offers of tourist establishments and current information on

weather conditions provided by MeteoGalicia. Also extremely important is the information and addresses of health centres on the routes and emergency care. Additional and very convenient functions of the application are augmented reality, which allows you to see the virtual route in real-time and view all the attractions located nearby through the camera of a mobile phone. The personal diary function also allows you to save notes, photos, and other personal information that can be used to create your digital book on the My Experience portal. The advantage is that the main functions and information are available without an Internet connection. The application is available for international pilgrims in Galician, Spanish, and English.

Meanwhile, the Camino Assist app, developed for the Camino Santiago in Asturias, an autonomous community in Spain, has taken its development even further. Not only does it offer similar features, but it also includes an agreement with Europe Assistance to provide insurance options for pilgrims.

Similarly, in another autonomous community of Spain, Aragon, the Aragonese Tourism Strategy Plan 2021–2024 promotes the digitization of the tourism sector to enhance communication before, during, and after trips. This plan aims for intensive and intelligent use of a digital technology ecosystem, incorporating additional and virtual reality, artificial intelligence and robotics, geolocation and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), as well as big, small, and open data (Gobierno de Aragón, 2021).

The Euskadi region, or Basque Country, has also developed a digitalization strategy for promoting and organising the Caminos de Santiago in its territory. This includes introducing QR codes into all printed materials and promoting the GeoEuskadi app, which offers more detailed tracks and increased cyber security compared to other apps. In addition, regions such as Asturias, Castile and Leon, Navarre, and Cantabria are also promoting the digitalization of tourism in their territories through specific projects focused on the Caminos de Santiago.

At the level of local administration, many municipalities through which the Camino passes in recent years have taken initiatives to digitise the tourism sector and introduce new technologies. These include both cities and small tourist towns that have decided to join the Spanish Network of Smart Tourist Destinations, created in 2013. Examples of such municipalities are Jaca, Logrono, Burgos, Leon, Ponferrada, Aviles, Vitoria, and many others.

The Recovery, Transformation, and Resilience Plan (RTRP) is a collective Spanish project designed to mitigate the effects of the health crisis and adapt to a post-pandemic

reality characterised by changes in tourism demand. The digital transition is one of the four axes, which is a bridge between innovation, productivity, and sustainability, and promotes territorial and social cohesion along the route. The previously mentioned Sustainable Tourism Destination Strategy, presented by the Ministry of Tourism in July 2021, had an estimated budget of €1.904 billion for the period 2021–2023 (Gobierno de España, 2021).

This strategy identifies projects and initiatives to finance the transition to a digital tourism model, which are divided into five categories:

- connectivity and access to resources and services for tourists.
- managing tourism impacts on destinations.
- development of tourism information platforms and systems.
- support for travel companies and destination providers.
- improving public administration and their access to technology.

The territorial plan for sustainable tourism development in destinations is a tool for management and cooperation between the national, regional, local, and private sectors. In the coming years, numerous territorial plans will increasingly be approved for the gradual and successful digitalization of the Spanish tourism sector. During the first regular competition in December 2020, 25 plans were approved, followed by another 23 plans during the second competition in July 2021. Moreover, during the first extraordinary call using EU Next Generation Funds in December 2021, more than 300 proposals were submitted for consideration, indicating the relevance and priority of projects for the digitalization of the tourism (Somoza Medina & Lois-González, 2018).

The digitalization of the Camino is a process that began about ten years ago thanks to innovative projects and the introduction of new technologies into everyday life. This digitalization has been significantly accelerated by the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has required the maintenance of safe distances, the availability of real-time information, and the increased use of digital technologies for various procedures and activities.

The return to pre-pandemic growth patterns took time, but just two years after it in 2023 there was the highest number of pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago in the route's modern history. Pilgrim's reception office announced the record of 446,035 pilgrims visiting the Camino de Santiago in 2023, which was 2% more than the year before in 2022 (Oficina del Peregrino). The Camino had to go through an "existential" crisis and find ways to adapt to new and non-standard conditions of reality. Public administrations

and organisations involved in its promotion and strategy have decided to take advantage of modern technologies and digitalization to develop the Camino in the post-COVID era.

However, the pandemic has affected tourists' behaviour and precautions, feelings of travel comfort and safety, and changes in consumption because of pandemic restrictions (Li & Chen, 2020). Thus, innovation in tourism systems needs to be introduced and developed as completely new requirements have arisen, especially in the areas of accommodation, food, and transport. Improvements from the business side are necessary to remain competitive and responsive to the needs of pilgrims. The implementation of digital innovations and infrastructure improvements are a must to make the entire area of the Camino more prepared and adapted in terms of services and infrastructure to meet the needs of pilgrims and travellers, according to the new requirements of modern tourism (Ambrósio & Fernandes, 2021).

3.2. Mediatization of the Camino and its influence on the pilgrimage experience

The concept of mediatization is consistently associated with change or transformation. Despite different theoretical perspectives and research contexts, there is a general understanding that mediatization is a concept used to critically analyse the long-term relationships between mass media, communication changes, and the transformation of culture and society (Hepp, 2014). Gomez (2016) states that mediatization describes the expansion of various technical tools, explores the relationship between communicative changes in media and sociocultural changes, and how media tools are integrated into social processes, giving them new meaning. The media are not just tools for transmitting messages through their use in various sociocultural contexts, processes are created that involve different groups of society in a specific media context. These media processes should be viewed through their relationships, connections, and interrelations since their diversity comes from these contextual interactions.

Storytelling is the practice of communicating stories to engage an audience, often incorporating emotional and sensory elements to create meaning in the story (Bruner, 2002). It is a powerful tool for sharing culture, history, and personal experiences and is displayed in various media formats such as oral traditions, literature, digital platforms,

and social media (Lambert, 2013). Storytelling facilitates connections between the storyteller and the audience, influencing the perception of the story and its interpretation, making it a key tool for both educational and entertainment purposes (Gottschall, 2012).

On social media, pilgrims share their experiences, seek help, and give advice on the way to Santiago de Compostela. This behaviour indicates two significant changes in the pilgrimage experience: the isolation that was once an integral part of the pilgrimage has been eliminated; and the mode of storytelling has changed, with pilgrims able to share their stories in real time online. These transformations in the contemporary world are related to the historical development of the Camino de Santiago and pilgrimage over the last century, as described in the previous chapter, and to the concept of mediatization in the contemporary digital world, as described in this chapter.

It is possible to identify three key narrative transformations over time of mass medialization of the Camino:

- a narrative about the experience of a wider audience.
- a significant reduction in the interval between experiencing and sharing experiences.
- reduced dependence on direct technological resources, as pilgrims now carry the necessary media technologies (smartphones).

This media narrativization can blur the boundaries between the time of experience, the formation of a narrative, and its interpretation. The mediatization of modern pilgrimage has fundamentally changed the interaction between experience and narrative. The pilgrimage report is no longer simply a retrospective result; it now includes and modifies the experience itself. This historical process involves major transformations directly related to the pilgrims' appropriation of technological innovations, which significantly reduces the gap between experience, narrative configuration, and interaction (De Sousa & Da Rosa, 2020a).

One of the major transformations concerns the emergence of motorised transport, which effectively halves the duration of the pilgrimage. This shift redefines pilgrimage, now focusing on the period from departure to arrival in Santiago de Compostela, rather than on mirror journeys to and from the destination. The introduction of landlines along the pilgrimage route marks another great transformation. This innovation broke the complete isolation of the pilgrim, ensuring regular contact with the outside world and the continuity of the stories of the pilgrimage. This mediatization destroys the traditional logic of pilgrimage as a marginal act (Van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1991), which was

performed by the pilgrim in private and isolated from the external environment. Currently, landline phones have been replaced by the presence of a personal smartphone for every traveller. Pilgrimage, punctuated by external realities, incorporates smartphones into the daily lives of pilgrims, creating a tension between the motivation for pilgrimage and the need for constant connectivity. This connection blurs the boundaries between the private world of the individual pilgrim and the entire surrounding world.

A digital transformation involves the transformation of the pilgrim's experience into a media product, which is facilitated by the digital environment. The ability to share experiences on blogs and social media means that storytelling is no longer a by-product of the pilgrimage, but rather an integral part of it, designed to be disseminated through the media. As a media product, pilgrimage storytelling takes on characteristics like entertainment products, requiring pilgrims to consistently publish their stories to attract audiences, including regular reporting at different times and the use of different storytelling techniques. Moreover, media culture values such as publishing images and visual content of both the experience and the traveller expose the highly personal aspects of travel (De Sousa & Da Rosa, 2020a).

Analysing the relationship between media and religious tourism through the lens of mediatization requires consideration of the use of media by religious institutions and public administrations, the portrayal of religion and pilgrimage in the information and artistic products of media companies, as well as the interpretation and display of the product in the media by the pilgrims. Bratosin (2016) argues that in current conditions, this involves recognizing the growing prevalence of media communications in society, the significant role of the media in the dissemination of religious ideas, and the adaptation of religious communication to media-oriented formats.

Now the circulation of information in the media is perceived as a continuous flow, including many actions of communication companies, individual subjects, and social institutions. Circulation as a value relation involves a dynamic interaction in which actors and institutions assign value to texts, images, and objects (Rosa, 2016). For example, the Camino de Santiago is variously valued as a tourist destination, a religious path, or a cultural experience, demonstrating how media movements and social actors shape its meaning. Conversion also involves exceptions, since some cultural and religious elements may be replaced by others. Increasingly, multidirectional vectors determine mediatized practices, which also affect the perception of the context of religious pilgrimage and tourism (De Sousa & Da Rosa, 2017).

Narratives play a fundamental role in human life, shaping our understanding of the world through storytelling. In religious communities, narratives have a special meaning, linking the very act of retelling with the opportunity to encounter the sacred within a symbolic framework. These narratives form the basis of religious doctrines and rituals, facilitating the transmission of religious experience. Through storytelling, pilgrims express their feelings and inspire others, thereby spreading the religious experience itself. This perspective is especially relevant in the modern context of mediatization and digitalization of any tourism experience.

There is an intrinsic relationship between experience and narrative, although this relationship is extremely complex. Taking the narrative theory of Ricoeur (1984, 1985, 1988), several layers can be distinguished: the narrative experience that results from the interpretation of the lived experience, the act of telling a story about this experience, and the interpretation of the experience of others. It is important to consider the entire narrative structure to fully understand the narrative experience without isolating it from its context.

Given the inseparability of the narrative and the experience that is retold, especially in religious contexts, the process of mediatization of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage has transformed both the narrative and the experience of pilgrimage. These experiences increasingly resemble products created for mass media, in which both private and public spheres of life are integrated.

The advent of the Internet has caused profound changes in the media. Within the framework of mediatized practices, a new economy has emerged in which the mutual experience of pilgrimage is directly related to new forms of dissemination of travel information, supported by the traditional one-to-one and one-to-all models of media communications, coexist and integrate with the new all-to-all model (Levy, 1998), where information and experience are distributed not from one user to another or several, but among all Internet users around the world. This relatively new model allows for information to be broadcast to a wide audience, both large organisations and ordinary individuals, who simultaneously act as both recipients and senders of content. In the era of digitalization in the context of the Camino, pilgrims' use of digital media and social networks has a significant impact on the creation of narratives about the pilgrimage itself, as well as on the development of the Camino as a brand and tourist product in the tourism market.

This transformation of pilgrimage narratives into media products creates an engaged audience that influences both the form and context of the narrative and the perception and experience of the pilgrimage. Audiences demand that pilgrims be encouraged to share and relive their experiences through storytelling and sharing on social media, capturing these moments with the video and photo content they use.

In digital mediatization, the experience of personal pilgrimage is valued not only for its intrinsic content but also as a media product that attracts audiences with its aesthetic and narrative qualities, facilitated by the availability of various software and Internet platforms. Contemporary pilgrimage becomes an object of dissemination in the media, as any other topic and experience that users share in the media. Reactions to blog posts and social media updates feed into living and reporting experiences. The narrative that once emerged as the product of the experience is now intertwined with the pilgrimage itself, shaped by the need to fit into a media format and influenced by audience feedback (De Sousa & Da Rosa, 2020b). Consequently, the conditions of story dissemination influence production and narratives are constructed from the online communication of pilgrims.

Changes in narrative forms are causally related to access to communication technologies and using smartphones. Kasara (2013) often mentions access to computer terminals at internet cafes in villages and hostels in 2010. Less than a decade later, in 2018 internet cafes had disappeared and Wi-Fi had become a deciding criterion for pilgrims when choosing accommodation. Smartphones have become an integral part of the daily life of pilgrims, they are used not only to talk about their experiences but also to access Camino applications, geolocation, weather, and other services, as well as communicate with other pilgrims. Previously, fellow travellers crossed paths directly on the Camino during the pilgrimage, today they can maintain sacredness among themselves using social networks and instant messengers and find each other on different parts of the route. Unidirectional communication has given way to multidirectional communication, covering those who are physically present on the route and those who follow the pilgrimage digitally.

Pilgrims' use of smartphones and apps has led to so-called “enhanced communication” (De Sousa & Da Rosa, 2017), forming a new kind of mediatized *communitas* (Turner, 1991), in which communication and friendship extend beyond physical co-presence. Moreover, this method of communication is used not only by pilgrims but also by the owners of pilgrims' hostels, who can constantly communicate with each other, exchange important information, and support each other's work.

However, mediatized *communitas* are also influenced by the limitations of “media logic” (Hjarvard, 2008), leading to a sense of “packaged pilgrimage” (De Sousa & Da Rosa, 2017). The widespread use of smartphones also reduces interaction with the local environment and people nearby. On the one hand, the use of smartphones for navigation and booking makes travel safer and more predictable, but on the other hand, it leads to less communication with locals and a controlled, technology-mediated experience.

When examining the interactions and content of some pilgrims’ online groups, it becomes apparent that the contemporary pilgrimage experience is deeply intertwined with digital media. The Camino of Santiago Facebook groups serve as a microcosm of broader social dynamics, reflecting the evolving nature of faith, community, and personal expression in the digital age. The narrative of the pilgrimage is central to the experience. The digital presence of pilgrimage allows for an ongoing, real-time narrative that is shared and shaped by a community of “amateur pilgrims.” This shifts the traditional experience of a solitary pilgrimage to a communal, participatory event where personal stories become a collective experience. Online groups function as learning communities where members act as “amateurs” to share knowledge, experience, and support. This collaborative spirit is a hallmark of the online pilgrim community, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual aid. Online platforms allow pilgrims to document and share their journeys in real-time, blending sacred and secular time and turning pilgrimage into a continuous narrative that is both personal and collective.

While the groups generally encourage support, tensions can arise around the commercialization of the pilgrimage and the intrusion of inappropriate content. These tensions highlight the challenges of maintaining the spiritual integrity of the pilgrimage in a digital, often commercialised world. In addition, commercial advertisements and offers from the group members sometimes appear in the spaces of such groups. Messages linked to commercial interests often provoke a mixed reaction, favouring content true to the spiritual essence of the pilgrimage over commercial exploitation.

Online groups dedicated to the Camino illustrate the complex interplay between faith, entertainment, and commercialization in the digital age. Online communities offer a space where modern pilgrims can share travel experiences, find support, and navigate the tensions between the sacred and the commercial in pilgrimage. As digital technology advances, the way these communities participate and experience pilgrimage will change, reflecting broader trends in pilgrim communication, information sharing, and the search for personal meaning of pilgrimage in an interconnected digital world.

To summarise all described above, all the global processes of transformation turn the pilgrimage into a media product, experienced by the narrator and consumed by distant consumers. It offers the opportunity to experience mediatized *communitas* through extended connections with others encountered along the route or far beyond. However, it also creates tensions due to external influences that pilgrims perceive as distorting the experience. This leads to a sense of the limitations of the pilgrimage or the development of media isolation, which can also compromise the pilgrimage experience.

The Camino has undergone significant changes in recent years of mass medialization, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. The acceleration of historical time has changed the ritual, experience, and narrative of pilgrimage (Veron, 2014). It is not simply a matter of media presence changing the experience; rather, as the Camino becomes a mass medium, participants increasingly share their journeys in media spaces such as social media, allowing others to participate in the experience from a distance. This means that the Camino de Santiago goes beyond its spatial and territorial dimensions, acquiring a new dimension of media circulation. Consequently, pilgrims do more than simply report their experiences; they become active participants in shaping and disseminating an understanding of the pilgrimage and influence the reputation, image, and brand of the Camino by sharing their experiences in the media space.

3.3. Modern management and sustainable development of the Camino

Tourism has long been a major economic activity in Spain and the country's main source of income. The tourism sector in Spain grew significantly after the Second World War, mainly due to mass tourism targeting coastal sea areas with holiday package offers. This model has led to the erosion of cultural heritage in these regions. Initially, Spain's tourism strategy was aimed at rapid economic development and profit. In addition, competition from new exotic international destinations posed a threat. These challenges have emerged in the need for quality tourism development to improve and green the sector beyond the coast, promoting sustainable green tourism as a viable alternative (Morpeh, 2007; Sanagustin-Fons et al., 2011).

An important turning point in the development of tourism in Spain was the territorial reorganisation in 1978, through which power was decentralised and

responsibility for tourism was redirected to the autonomous communities. This change entailed the introduction of several institutional reforms and the creation of regional tourism policies. The evolution of tourism policy in Spain has been directly related to political and administrative changes such as democratisation, decentralisation, accession to the European Community in 1986, and adaptation to global market trends. At this time, mass tourism was also on the rise in Europe, political stability was restored and the quality of transport improved. Spain's favourable climate, natural resources, proximity to major tourist markets, and relatively low prices have been the country's key advantages for tourism promotion (Kunaeva, 2012).

However, some internal and external factors like loss of competitiveness, the introduction of the euro, and the discrepancy between price and quality hampered the development of Spain in the international market and required the development of real competitive advantages, such as improving the quality of services, introducing innovations and ensuring the sustainability of destinations. Thus, government policies were designed to expand tourism offerings in the segments of natural, urban, rural, and cultural tourism (Baidal, 2004).

The main goal of tourism policy for heritage sites was to create a strategy for the conservation of cultural heritage through its commercialization and to minimise the risks of degradation of heritage sites and the environment (Troitiño & Troitiño, 2010; Baydal, 2004). Changes in tourism policy in the early 1990s led to the development of new strategies that went beyond simply promoting a destination (Kunaeva, 2012).

The Integral Quality Plan for Spanish Tourism 2000–2006 focused development on cultural tourism, recognizing its real importance and growing demand. Thanks to comprehensive destination restoration and development strategies and modern management models, cities such as Santiago de Compostela have become attractive tourist destinations with developed tourism infrastructure. Ateljevic and Page (2009) noted the emergence of more diverse tourism products and offerings as national tourism organisations and regional businesses sought to extend the traditional tourist season dependent on coastal recreation.

Murray and Graham (1997) argue that the economic commercialization of the Camino de Santiago should be seen in the broader context of promoting modern Spanish tourism to distribute tourism supply and demand evenly throughout the country. After Xacobeo in 1993 and 1999 and the massive flow of pilgrims, Galicia faced the problem of mass tourism, which initially seemed to be an excellent economic activity (Estevez,

2001). The formerly sacred Camino is becoming an increasingly visible form of secular tourism (Morpeh, 2007).

The promotion of the anniversary of the Camino de Santiago led to a sharp increase in the number of pilgrims, tourists, and visitors, which disrupted the way of life and traditions of the local population. Following the economic crisis, the Camino has transformed from a spiritual and historical heritage to an economic asset at risk of overpopulation and commercialization. Many local people, especially rural residents, lack an understanding of tourism sustainability. Both the local community and the government are focused on the immediate economic goals of developing the Camino, without paying enough attention to the development of sustainable tourism (Polín, 2011). Due to the short political time frame, leadership changes frequently, leading to slow progress on the issue, especially in the Galicia region. Santiago's routes must be adequately valued and protected by legislation. New bills should also be introduced to protect the landscape and territory, as well as the sustainability of tourism in the regions.

As a cultural route, the Camino is important for pilgrims seeking spiritual fulfilment and connection with history and local culture. Digance (2003) highlights the conflicting motivations among Camino participants, who include religious and secular pilgrims as well as ordinary tourists pursuing their interests in the Camino. UNWTO (2004) notes that the pilgrim experience varies significantly between peak and off-peak periods, with travellers becoming increasingly aware of sustainability issues and expecting a responsible tourism experience from every participant (Allen et al., 2011).

However, the commercialization of the Camino inevitably increases along with the growing number of followers, which opens opportunities for additional income. The abundance of signs and vending machines along the routes is criticised, as they disrupt the original landscape of the Path and disharmonise its appearance. The organisations such as Xestión Xacobeo are investing in tourism infrastructure, leading to the construction of modern hostels and new commercial enterprises. This commercialization influences the pilgrimage experience and turns it into a more commodified and tourist, commercial one, which replaces the spiritual and cultural component of the route. For example, traditional shops near the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela have been replaced by souvenir and jewellery shops. One significant example of cultural loss was the theft of the first pilgrim's guide Codex Salichinus in 2011, which had been kept in the cathedral for centuries (The Guardian, 2011).

Key policy priorities should include preserving both tangible and intangible heritage along the Camino, creating conditions to satisfy pilgrims' motives, and promoting other autonomous communities in Spain (Choi & Shirakaya, 2005; Tresserras, 2007a). The overall policy must consider the impact of large numbers of visitors on small towns and villages, which requires strong coordination and cooperation between all stakeholders to maintain consistency and quality of output (Kunaeva, 2012). The success of the Camino can lead to its downfall if it is mismanaged. There is a need for government planning that considers economic, sociocultural, and environmental resources. Local communities are not always prepared for the influx of tourists, pointing to the need for sustainable tourism management. Authorities traditionally view mass tourism to obtain economic benefits from which the maximum can be taken. This problem is exacerbated by corruption and a lack of aesthetic and environmental education, especially in rural areas where the construction of new buildings and businesses is often a higher priority than green space and landscape areas (Figuerola, 2011). Although some regions of Galicia have established programs to raise awareness of sustainability, practical implementation and impact at the local and national levels are not enough. To improve sustainable management, it is necessary to reorganise municipal structures.

The Camino was created and organised by the pilgrims themselves, rather than by government efforts or local communities. Today, this destination attracts the attention of various stakeholders, including government agencies (Allen et al., 2011). To ensure effective and sustainable management of the Camino, all stakeholders and the factors influencing their responses must come together and make a common effort to develop the destination. Issues of coordinating institutions, increasing citizen participation, strengthening public-private cooperation, and promoting tourism with new sustainability criteria are relevant issues in its development.

The development and management of the Camino routes involve coordination at various administrative levels, all of which contribute to the development and promotion of tourism. Spain's international development policy is significantly influenced by European Union programs aimed at rural development. The LEADER program has been supporting rural regions since 1991 by diversifying and strengthening their economies. The development of rural tourism helps mitigate population decline and dependence on agriculture. The program supports sustainable development through innovative approaches and technological advances, thereby increasing the competitiveness of local products and access to markets.

At the national level, Spain has its rural development program PRODER. Co-financed by EU structural funds and the Spanish government, it focuses on sustainable development of rural areas, aiming to prevent depopulation and increase their economic activity. Also, the tourism agency Turespaña promotes Spain internationally and nationally, showcasing the country's diverse tourism offerings, including offers to visit the Camino routes and the city of Santiago.

The Municipality of Santiago collaborates with regional and central governments, local administrations, and the Church to effectively manage urban conservation and spatial planning. Community projects supported by EU initiatives promote rural tourism through initiatives to promote holiday homes and rural accommodation (Murray & Graham, 1997).

Galicia, as a region, integrates the Camino into its regional development strategy, especially during Holy Years. This strategy makes it possible to manage and forecast tourist flows and provide support for pilgrims with infrastructure and services while preserving cultural and natural heritage. The region carefully maintains the Camino with clear signage and efficient management, which enhances the quality of the pilgrims' experience.

The region of Galicia is rich in landscapes and cultural heritage. The Department of Environment, Land, and Infrastructure of the Galician Government plays an active role in promoting sustainable development. The sustainable management of the Camino is vital to maintaining the accessibility and dynamism of the various sectors and heritage resources (Tresserras, 2007b). This approach reflects the general awareness and cohesion of local communities, Associations of Friends of the Camino, government agencies, and private enterprises to act within the framework of a sustainable development initiative. The initiative encourages both the public and private sectors, as well as citizens and other stakeholders, to prioritize environmental protection and promote collective consciousness. Recognizing that individual actions affect nature and social connections promotes a focus on achieving a sustainable future and underscores the need for sustainable development policies. The key elements of this policy are education, awareness, communication, and promotion of the initiative (Xunta de Galicia, 2011).

The Camino de Santiago stands as the central axis of all tourism strategies in Galicia. The recent Galician Integral Tourism 2014–2016, Master Strategic Plan of the Camino de Santiago (2015-2021), and the Xacobeo National Tourism Plan (2021-2022) were collectively aimed to enhance its significance in Galician tourism planning.

3.3.1. Galician Integral Tourism 2014–2016 Plan

The Galician Integral Tourism 2014–2016 plan was created for the medium term for organising general cooperation between the main public institutions associated with the Camino. The Galician Integral Tourism Plan aimed to consolidate a tourism product based on heritage and endogenous resources, adapt to seasonal demand, and promote Galicia as a sustainable destination. It was intended to strengthen social and territorial cohesion and strengthen the construction of a universal identity for the Galician region and Europe. The plan emphasised the importance of new technologies and innovations for product and directional development, which should lead to increased efficiency and encourage collaboration between public administrations and private organisations. The plan described the region's competitive strengths as a sustainable destination: its nature, gastronomy, historical significance, and represented by the Camino, as well as its artistic and cultural heritage, which includes four UNESCO World Heritage Sites. This plan continued and expanded in the tourism strategy for 2020, in which the Camino still occupies a significant place, and will undoubtedly occupy it in subsequent strategies for decades to come (Xunta de Galicia, 2014).

3.3.2. Master and Strategic Plan of the Camino de Santiago in Galicia 2015-2021

The plan aimed to protect and preserve the Camino, ensure the preservation of its identity, and enhance its cultural and natural heritage, to meet the needs of 21st-century pilgrims by offering superior hospitality, promoting high-quality experiences, and promoting social cohesion and territorial balance. In addition, it aimed to strengthen the universal identity of Galicia and Europe (Xunta de Galicia, 2015).

The Plan received 56.1 million euros from the Xunta de Galicia and the European Regional Development Fund. This plan served as a comprehensive roadmap for promoting, protecting, and expanding the Camino in Galicia and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all public and private groups involved in the development of it.

Key actions of the plan included cooperation among regional governments, their cooperation with church authorities, participation in international relations with other Camino countries, and work with the Associations of Friends of the Camino (Gasparini et al., 2022). It also included items such as preserving and protecting the ecological and

historical integrity of the Camino and its surrounding areas; ensuring its accessibility for pilgrims and visitors while minimising the impact on the environment; involvement of local communities in decision-making on development and preservation of heritage; educating stakeholders in sustainable practices and cultivating a sense of awareness and responsibility for its preserving; collaboration between government agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organisations to achieve sustainable management goals. These principles guided efforts to balance tourism development with environmental and cultural conservation, ensuring that the Camino de Santiago remains a sustainable pilgrimage route for current and future generations (Master and Strategic Plan of the Camino de Santiago in Galicia 2015-2021).

3.3.3. Xacobeo National Tourism Plan 2021–2022

It was developed as a comprehensive strategy to promote the Camino of Santiago internationally and was led by the tour agency Turespaña. The focus was on preserving historical authenticity while decentralising tourism through the distribution of recognized routes. A budget of €8 million was allocated for the summer 2021 campaign alone, targeting international markets. Key initiatives were coordinated by the collaboration of the global network of Turespaña tourist offices and central administrative services. The plan also included 38 international press tours and 21 agency trips to different parts of the world. To promote the destination on the world stage, various exhibitions and presentations of the Camino were held in major cities around the world, as well as training for travel agents in international markets distant from the Camino (Xacobeo National Tourism Plan 2021-2022).

The project aimed to promote the trail as a cultural tourism product in line with post-pandemic trends and realities. The Xacobeo National Tourism Plan 2021–2022 stated that the Xacobeo 2021 has been extended to 2022 due to the epidemic in the hopes of a recovery in tourism and pilgrim movements. The EU Next Generation Funds provided €121 million for the strategy, of which €45 million was designated for the creation of new travel goods (Gasparini et al., 2022)

The central achievement of this campaign was the renovation of the Spanish Tourist Office in Rome into an Interactive Multimedia Centre dedicated to Xacobeo 2021. It hosted promotional events and showcased innovative digital content with interactive maps and informative videos about the Camino routes. Digital innovation has been

integral in creating tailored online content and campaigns designed for various international markets. These included online webinars, virtual events, and targeted social media campaigns around Xacobeo 2021 themes and attractions. To attract a global audience, travel websites were updated with travel resources and multimedia information. The plan successfully achieved significant results in the first months of its implementation, leading to extensive activity on social networks, including among Associations of Friends of the Camino, and widespread media coverage around the world.

Overall, the Xacobeo Plan 2021-2022 has become an example of effective collaboration between private and public organisations and the use of digital tools and online networks to promote the Camino destination and cultural tourism, as well as improve the global tourism image of Spain. The success of this strategy has highlighted Spain as a country with sustainable tourism and digital innovation in the tourism sector, strengthening its position as a leading destination for international travellers.

The regional policy is in line with the Xacobeo National Tourism Plan 2021–2022 and the Plan for the Reactivation of the Cultural and Tourism Sectors Affected by COVID-19 (Xunta de Galicia, 2020). These plans included measures to restore the Camino's upward trend, which had been impacted by the pandemic. Steps taken included expanding Camino's cultural program and adapting the public hotel chain to new health regulations.

Although the Camino itself can be considered a tourism product, it includes many by-products. It offers a wide range of experiences that combine different tourism practices, making it a fundamental element of Spain's tourism architecture. Authorities promoting this direction should consider factors related to the quality and satisfaction of services and resources. They should also strengthen social capital, which underlies organic communication and community interaction. These actions may encourage visitors to share positive messages and narratives in the media and will encourage others to visit the Camino (Peppers & Rogers, 2011). In today's highly competitive tourism environment, the perception and projection of a destination's image play a critical role in its differentiation. The perceived image reflects tourists' beliefs and impressions of a place, and the projected image is vital for the effective promotion and marketing of a destination (Andrade Suárez & Caamaño Franco, 2016).

Central to this development is ensuring universal accessibility and creating a travel experience that meets the needs of all people along the Camino routes. This approach

brings together the various elements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), making tourism offerings more inclusive and economically beneficial for the regions through which they pass. Tourism directly or indirectly contributes to the achievement of many SDGs, in particular the goal of “Inclusive, safe, sustainable and resilient cities” (UNWTO, 2018).

In addition, inclusivity has played a decisive role in the new stage of the destination's development. New tourism programmes should offer significant benefits such as non-seasonality and the removal of limiting factors, making it attractive all year round. Also, non-profit organisations such as PREDIF have conducted accessibility audits of the Camino de Santiago routes, providing detailed reports on sections suitable for people with reduced mobility. As a result of these efforts, in 2015, with the support of the ONCE Fundación and the Vodafone Spain Foundation, the “Santiago Way for Everyone” initiative was created, including for people with disabilities. It includes a website and mobile applications to assist people with visual, physical, or cognitive impairments in completing the pilgrimage. In addition, the ONCE Fundación recently conducted an accessibility assessment of the French Way, identifying key facilities such as hostels to facilitate the planning and travel of pilgrims with disabilities (ONCE Fundación, 2021).

Projects such as the National Geographic Institute app and accessibility-focused apps such as Blind Explorer and Microsoft Soundscape are being promoted to improve mobility and orientation for people with disabilities along the Camino de Santiago. They provide accessible tourist information such as terrain characteristics, potential obstacles, signposts, and points of interest such as fountains, transport stops, accommodation, restaurants, and health facilities, designed for pilgrims with visual or mobility impairments, the elderly, and other people with disabilities. Additionally, the ONCE Fundación has developed an app called Beepcon, which uses Bluetooth to connect to a mobile phone, providing location information and sounds for orientation.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are critical to Santiago's 21th-century journey, promoting destinations and creating user-friendly virtual environments accessible to all citizens, especially those with disabilities. As the Observatory on Accessibility and Independent Living emphasises, accessibility is not only important for 10% of the population (people with disabilities) but is also necessary for 40% to improve the quality of life of every citizen (Next Tourism Generation, n.d.) In turn, the Camino strives to ensure maximum accessibility and the ability to meet the needs of all travellers.

As a tourism offering today, the Camino offers a wide range of experiences and amenities, updated through collaboration with various government agencies at the local, regional, and national levels. The main goal of the government authorities overseeing the Camino de Santiago is to create a cohesive, inclusive brand that integrates universal accessibility and design for all people in the physical, virtual, and social environment in the short to medium term. This requires the adjustment of various digital offerings, including platforms such as Turgalicia, Xacobeo, and Santiago Turismo, as well as the use of technology for hotel management, which has proven decisive during the pandemic.

3.3.4. Sustainable development initiatives and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

According to the implementation of sustainable development initiatives at local and regional levels, the region of Galicia has become a leader in sustainable tourism development in Spain, following modern sustainability trends.

The Galician administration reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development and published comprehensive plans and initiatives to implement the strategy of sustainability. It brought together the priorities and values that ensure the preservation and development of the Camino as a cultural and natural asset as well as a sustainable tourism destination.

Spain aspires to be a leader in fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations General Assembly. Since the formation of the current coalition government, numerous milestones have accelerated this effort, demonstrating Spain's commitment to this roadmap and accountability. A significant step was the approval of the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy in June 2021. This document deepens Spain's dedication to achieving the 2030 Agenda by translating the SDGs into eight major challenges for the country. It outlines the public policies needed to address these challenges, guiding the structural transformations necessary to reach the desired state by 2030 (Executive Summary of the Progress Report 2022 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy, 2022).

The 2022 Progress Report is the first to be issued following the approval of the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy. The report continues the ongoing evaluation and improvement efforts initiated in 2019, informing both the United Nations and the Spanish

public of recent achievements. It describes the importance and need for a participatory governance structure to create and implement more sustainable and democratic models for the development of society and the tourism sector. It also proposes actions to overcome identified challenges, introducing new commitments to accelerate pending transformations and contribute to achieving the SDGs.

As we approach the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, Spain has become a benchmark in the implementation of the SDGs, and to achieve them, efforts must be made to ensure the coherence and cohesion of all social and political actors. Addressing current challenges in the field of sustainable development will help to achieve successful results in achieving the objectives of the Strategy and contribute to a positive change for the future of society.

Implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy requires the coordination of actions at different territorial levels of government and the participation of multiple actors in public policy. Effective policy interaction between sectors requires the implementation of effective and inclusive institutional governance mechanisms and models to achieve the objectives of the Strategy.

In implementing the 2030 Agenda in Spain, the Autonomous Communities and municipal administrations play a key role. Many competencies for achieving the objectives of the Agenda have been transferred to regional and local authorities. The political commitment of the Autonomous Communities to the 2030 Agenda is a key and necessary factor for achieving the objectives of the Sustainable Development Strategy.

At the national level, the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism integrates sustainable tourism into its policies, paying particular attention to preserving the cultural heritage of the Camino while promoting responsible tourism. This strategy supports Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by ensuring that infrastructure development preserves the historical integrity of the Camino and the city of Santiago. Spain also prioritises the development of inclusive tourism, making the Camino accessible to people with disabilities, in line with Goal 10 (Reducing Inequalities).

In the Galicia region, a key priority of the 2030 Agenda strategy is sustainability in the development of the Camino de Santiago. The Galicia Tourism Agency has implemented ecotourism initiatives to reduce the environmental impact and promote low-carbon travel, in line with Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). The region also pays special attention to preserving biodiversity along the route and ensuring the protection of natural landscapes, in line with Goal 15 (Life on Land). In addition, local

communities benefit economically from pilgrimage tourism, supporting Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through the creation of jobs and opportunities to start and develop local businesses.

These regional and national strategies demonstrate the commitment of Spain and Galicia to the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promoting a balance between tourism, heritage conservation and economic development of the Camino de Santiago routes and the regions they pass through.

Some autonomous communities throughout Spain have also adopted plans or strategies that set out action priorities and specific targets for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Regions, such as the Basque Country, Castilla y León, and aforementioned Galicia, have adopted additional plans to achieve these goals and better develop sustainable tourism in the region. Political coordination and governance mechanisms within the autonomous governments at the territorial level with local administrations, civil society, the private sector, and academia contribute to a more effective and successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The communities create channels for dialogue and coordination, and many of them have forums for the management of the Agenda and the localization of the SDGs with the participation of private organisations and civil society representatives. The autonomous governments also formulate their budgets in line with the 2030 Agenda to achieve the SDGs. They create and promote initiatives aimed at developing sustainable tourism in the region.

In 2022, the Galicia Tourism Cluster launched the Galicia Destino Sostenible Club, an initiative to promote sustainable tourism involving around fifty companies and thirty products. This initiative was created to reorganise the tourism sector towards a sustainable management model that will be in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy. This model should ensure the sustainability and future viability of the tourism sector.

The club's objective is to promote sustainable tourism strategies at the community level and position Galicia as a pioneer region in this field at national and international levels. The Xunta de Galicia supported the project and financed more than 300,000 euros to support the development of new products and models for sustainable tourism. In the first three months since the launch of the initiative, around fifty companies in the tourism sector have joined it, including hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and providers of additional tourism services (Clúster Turismo de Galicia Oficial, 2022).

The Galicia Destino Sostenible Club aims to be a hub for the promotion of sustainable tourism in the region. The club's website connects tourists with companies

that ensure the sustainability and quality of their tourism services. Galician companies in the accommodation, restaurant, travel agency, and other complementary tourism services sectors can join the club if they meet the necessary criteria. Companies with current sustainability certificates such as S ICTE, BiSphere, Green Key, etc. or environmental certificates such as ISO 14000, EMAS, etc. can directly join the initiative.⁴ Companies without certificates can join the club by fulfilling 100% of the mandatory requirements and meeting at least 33% of the club's assessed criteria (Official Tourism Cluster of Galicia, 2022). The benefits of membership are the promotion and training of sustainable tourism, networking, and access to funding for the development of new sustainable tourism products in Galicia.

The Galicia Sustainable Destination initiative also aims to move the Galician tourism sector towards a new development model in line with the objectives of the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy. The initiative aims to support the social and economic development of the region and the preservation of local culture, traditions, and the environment. The initiative also promotes good management and training in practices that ensure inclusiveness, transparency, and competitiveness. The profile of tourism is changing due to changes in the tourism sector: more and more travellers are concerned about climate change and the impact of their actions on the environment. In turn, the tourism sector must adapt to current realities and help meet the demands of environmentally conscious and responsible travellers. The transition to sustainable tourism is key to the future development of tourism and the preservation of this sector.

Regarding the contribution of all stakeholders to tourism development, several important actors are actively involved in the development of sustainable tourism and support the Sustainable Development Strategy. Local authorities play an important role in achieving the 2030 Agenda, providing essential public services and promoting socio-economic development. For the Strategy to be successful, about 70% of the SDGs must be achieved at the local level. The Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) promotes the participation of local authorities in the Sustainable Development Strategy. The Local Authorities Network, created in October 2020, has 478 member organisations representing more than 26 million inhabitants. Organised civil society acts

⁴Sustainable and environmental certificates are endorsements that verify products or organisations meet specific environmental and sustainability criteria. These certifications help consumers and businesses identify options that support eco-friendly practices and responsible resource use (UN Environment Programme, 2020).

as a catalyst for social movement and innovative solutions in the development of sustainability. The State Secretariat for the 2030 Agenda contributed to the strengthening of the Sustainable Development Council and the space for civil society cooperation. The Secretariat also financed projects of civil society organisations supporting the SDGs.

The business sector is also involved in the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy. Spanish companies are increasingly integrating the 2030 Agenda into their activities, recognizing the competitive advantages of sustainability. The State Secretariat supports initiatives that help companies integrate the SDGs into their practices, creating projects to strengthen entrepreneurship in the social economy.

Although culture is not a specific sustainable development goal, it plays a cross-cutting role in achieving urban sustainability, food security, environmental protection, and inclusive societies. Agreements with the Spanish Network for Sustainable Development (REDS) and initiatives such as the “Culture and Sustainable Development Community Day” highlight the role of culture in the sustainable development of the region.

In general, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Spain involves a coordinated effort at all levels of government, the active participation of civil society, cultural integration, and the involvement of the business sector, aimed at achieving sustainable and efficient development of the economy in general and the tourism sector.

Overall, in recent years, Spain has become a benchmark for the alignment and development of policies in line with the 2030 Agenda, which should lead to successful results in achieving the objectives of the Strategy and contribute to positive changes for the future of society. This development trajectory must continue, with the understanding that only through the development of sustainability, planned management and the cohesion of stakeholders it will be possible to ensure a dignified and sustainable future of the destinations for future generations. And the Camino de Santiago will then be able to maintain its identity and uniqueness, remaining an outstanding and advanced cultural tourism route in the world.

CONCLUSION

Today, the Camino de Santiago has become a significant cultural, religious and tourist phenomenon, reflecting its historical significance and contemporary relevance. As a pilgrimage route with a medieval history, the Camino has combined its ancient spiritual traditions with modern tourism trends, making it a multifaceted destination that appeals to different visitors. Once recognised as a cultural route by the Council of Europe, the development of the Camino de Santiago underlines its adaptability to change and its enduring appeal in the European cultural landscape. Initiatives such as Holy Years and the Master Plan show the intention to preserve the cultural and spiritual heritage of the route and to adapt it to the steadily increasing flow of tourists and pilgrims. The integration of digital tools and mediatisation, as well as sustainability programmes, improve the accessibility of the Camino and the visitor experience, help to address its contemporary challenges and strengthen the route's status as a leading destination for pilgrimage and tourism.

The increase in the number of pilgrims and tourists on the Santiago de Compostela routes in recent years reflects the growing interest in this pilgrimage route. Certainly, some forms of pilgrimage are questioned due to their commercialization or excessive association with tourism. Often pilgrims criticise or disapprove of the excessive commercialization of the ritual, while tourists are concerned about the association of pilgrimage with hardship and sacrifice promoted in religious culture, and both approaches are valid. Despite the increasing tourist popularity, the Camino still preserves its religious significance and the pilgrimage itself continues to be a challenge to the pilgrim in an individual way.

However, with the rapid development of tourism and the increase in visitors, the Camino de Santiago faces several challenges. The environmental and cultural impacts of increased visitation raise the risks to the natural landscapes and historical sites of the route. It shows the need for effective conservation strategies and sustainable tourism practices, which are currently being implemented at the regional and national levels.

In addition, increasing commercialization poses the risk of eroding the spiritual and cultural components of the Camino, showing the need to create conditions that meet the needs of pilgrims and tourists to preserve the authenticity of the route. The future growth of the Camino de Santiago will depend on its ability to overcome these challenges while innovating and adapting to changing trends in tourism and heritage management. Strategic investments in infrastructure development, promoting sustainable practices, and

protecting the cultural heritage of the route are crucial in shaping the route's future and how it will continue to exist.

While the Camino de Santiago undoubtedly retains its religious and historical significance, it has also become a global cultural phenomenon and is identified with a post-secular contemporary spirituality. Of course, the route's connection with Saint James and medieval Christian Europe is an integral part of the image of the Camino and is an important part to pilgrims who undertake the spiritual journey as an expression of faith. However, the Camino de Santiago has also become a supra-religious organisation that serves the diverse needs of a wide range of visitors. This transformation reflects a shift in pilgrimage, where the concept of the sacred is not shaped by religious institutions and the church, but by the individual interests of pilgrims.

The Camino no longer relies exclusively on religious images or discourses but seeks to meet the personal needs of each pilgrim and to unite different faiths, religions and cultures. The image of the Camino created represents the collective experience of different travellers and pilgrims, regardless of national and religious affiliation, presenting the Camino de Santiago as an object of admiration and unification for pilgrims from different cultural, religious and personal backgrounds.

The success of the Camino de Santiago as a cultural, religious and tourist phenomenon is due to its rich historical heritage and its ability to adapt to new modern conditions. It remains a religious and historical pilgrimage route, preserving its deeply rooted Christian symbolism and practice, while welcoming other modern spiritual practices and beliefs, reflecting the evolution of spirituality in the modern world.

The Camino de Santiago as a historical pilgrimage route is a shining example of managing cultural heritage while preserving its integrity and exploiting its economic resources. This study includes strategies for managing the route in the context of globalisation and mass tourism, which is a topical issue for contemporary cultural and business research. The focus on sustainable tourism indicated in the study reflects the global trend of managing cultural sites with an environmentally and culturally responsible approach.

The sustainable growth and relevance of the Camino require a careful balance between heritage conservation and innovation, as well as proactive route management. The Spanish strategy for the development of sustainable tourism in destinations is a comprehensive, structured and ambitious initiative. The creation and promotion of various tools at each administrative level aims to correct the mistakes of previous

planning and improve new planning strategies, which will contribute to the unification of each region for the benefit of national and international tourism, uniting many communities in Spain and neighbouring countries.

Current management and promotion efforts for the Camino aim to integrate historical and cultural values with modern tourism practices, which will ultimately lead to its sustainable and successful development. If all the above-mentioned projects and strategies are aimed at implementing and achieving the goals in the coming years, the restoration and promotion of the Camino de Santiago as an improved and even more accessible modern tourist destination and cultural heritage will be achieved, ensuring that this cultural route will remain a significant pilgrimage site for future generations.

Regional and local authorities can ensure the long-term development of the Camino by focusing their actions on sustainable management, responsible tourism, and community participation in the development of the place and the economy. The issue of sustainable development is especially relevant for regions and countries seeking to develop their cultural assets without damaging their heritage or the environment.

The work demonstrated the practical application of the guiding principles of sustainable development in the field of cultural tourism, which must be followed in the modern management of cultural heritage sites to maintain economic growth, preserve cultural heritage, and care for the environment. It examined the challenges and opportunities associated with promoting the Camino as a tourist destination with targeted efforts to minimise the impact of tourism on the environment and on the development of local and regional economies.

From an economic perspective, the Camino de Santiago has a major impact on both regional and local economies, as well as national economic policies. Understanding and examining the economic benefits of the Camino is of great benefit to policymakers, business leaders and cultural managers. The thesis contributed to the debate on the use of cultural heritage sites for economic benefits of local societies within the concept of sustainable development.

The work represented an example of the management of cultural heritage sites in such a way as to preserve their historical and cultural significance and promote economic and social development. In practice, the results of this study provided valuable information for cultural managers, policymakers and tourism professionals. The strategies and approaches discussed in this study could serve as examples for the management of similar cultural sites with similar problems and development methods.

In addition, the study provided information on the changing motivations of pilgrims and tourists and reflects trends in global tourism with demand for spiritual journeys and the transition of pilgrimage to a post-secular stage of development. By considering the changing role of the Camino as a pilgrimage site and the motivations of visitors, the study reflected the contemporary dynamics of pilgrimage and cultural tourism. It examined the coexistence of traditional religious practices and modern tourism trends, which prompted reflection on the influence of cultural and spiritual motives of travellers on the demand for pilgrimage travel. This aspect of the study could be informative for both scholars and practitioners in this field.

To summarise, the relevance of this thesis lies in its contemporary study of the management of the pilgrimage route as a cultural and economic asset in the modern world. It described the transformation of the Camino from a historic pilgrimage route into a global cultural phenomenon and explored the economic and socio-political factors, including policy implementation and culture heritage management, that have led to these transformations and contributed to the global development of the Camino.

Overall, this work contributed to the current debate on the development of cultural and historic routes, sustainable tourism trends and the changing nature of pilgrimage by offering theoretical and practical strategies and ideas that can be applied to the development of such cultural heritage sites, as well as in the field of cultural heritage, tourism and sustainable development.

By examining the evolution of the Camino de Santiago, this study could serve as an integrated resource for research on the themes of pilgrimage, cultural tourism and the relationship between spiritual tourism and the economy. It helped to understand how historical and religious sites could be adapted to the needs of the modern tourism market without losing their intrinsic value.

For cultural heritage managers and planners, this dissertation would provide insights into ways to preserve spiritual and cultural heritage under the influence of tourism development and the economy. The analysis of Xacobeo plans and their impact on the Camino provided practical ideas for the successful management of pilgrimage routes, which could be used in the management of other heritage sites.

Tourism professionals and authorities could also benefit from an economic study of the development of the Camino. Its impact on the regional economy and the use of strategies to support economic development could thus help in developing sustainable tourism strategies in other regions with similar sites. This study highlighted the

importance of the interplay between culture and economy, and this successful working approach could be applied to future tourism initiatives.

The study presented a comprehensive analysis of the transformation of the Camino de Santiago from a traditional religious pilgrimage to a contemporary cultural and tourist route. It focused on several key aspects, including the motivations and experiences of contemporary pilgrims, the impact of tourism on the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Camino, and the management strategies implemented to balance tourism development with the preservation of its historical significance. By examining the evolution of the Camino, this study contributed to the understanding of how the route has adapted to the demands of a post-secular society, where spirituality is increasingly individualized and detached from institutional religious canons.

However, several areas of the study remain underexplored and represent valuable opportunities for further research. One limitation of this study is its geographical focus on the Camino route in Spain, which may not fully capture the diversity of pilgrimage experiences across the Camino route network, especially in other European countries. Future research could focus on less studied regions, offering a full understanding of the evolution of the Camino in a transnational context. Moreover, while this study provides insight into the motivations of pilgrims, a larger and more diverse sample, including a wider range of nationalities, age groups and cultural backgrounds, would provide a deeper understanding of how these factors shape the pilgrimage experience and contribute to the route's transformation into a contemporary tourist destination.

Also, the dynamic nature of the Camino's development means that new management methods and strategies are constantly emerging. Future research could examine recent innovations in tourism management, particularly in relation to cultural preservation and the pressures of mass tourism. A comparative analysis of management approaches across different segments of the Camino could reveal which strategies are most effective in maintaining the spiritual and cultural integrity of the route while catering to growing numbers of tourists.

Another promising area for future research is the role of digital technologies in shaping contemporary pilgrimage experiences. As digital tools such as mobile apps, social media platforms and virtual reality increasingly influence pilgrimage experiences, research into their impact could provide valuable insights into the changing nature of spiritual tourism. Furthermore, exploring the potential of virtual pilgrimages to

complement or challenge traditional physical pilgrimages may open up new avenues for understanding the future of the Camino.

From a sustainability perspective, further research is needed to assess the environmental and social impacts of increased tourism on the Camino. This includes examining the long-term impacts of tourism demand on the physical infrastructure of the route, as well as local communities and ecosystems along the Camino. Exploring the implementation of sustainable tourism models that encourage eco-friendly practices may contribute to the preservation of the Camino as a cultural and natural heritage site.

Finally, the commercialization of the Camino and its impact on the spiritual and cultural aspects of the pilgrimage require further exploration. Future research could examine how commercialization intersects with spirituality by collecting the perspectives of pilgrims, local communities, and religious leaders. This research would provide insights into attempts to preserve the religious character of the route and to adapt to the economic and touristic forces shaping its contemporary identity.

In conclusion, while this dissertation has contributed to the understanding of the transformation and development of the Camino, further research in these areas will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the route continues to evolve as a cultural and spiritual destination in the contemporary world. It will enrich the academic discourse on pilgrimage and tourism, as well as provide information on the sustainable development and management of the Camino as a significant heritage site.

This dissertation used research methods based on literature review and statistical data analysis to examine research questions regarding the transformation of the Camino de Santiago into a cultural and tourist phenomenon over the last decades of the route's development. The literature review provided a framework for examining the historical and cultural context of the Camino de Santiago. By examining historical and public texts, academic research, and articles, the review illuminated the route's significant evolution from a pilgrimage route to a global cultural and tourist destination. This in-depth examination of the Camino's historical and cultural chronology provided insights into the causes and consequences of its transformation and how this has impacted contemporary pilgrimage practices and perceptions for visitors. Through an analysis of existing research on religious and secular motivations, the literature revealed notable shifts in pilgrimage trends and changes in traveller motivations, providing the necessary research context for understanding the causes and consequences of the Camino's transformation.

In addition to the theoretical insights derived from the literature, the data analysis helped to examine the practical economic impact and contribution of the Camino to economic development. In addition, statistical data on the number of visits to the Camino in a historical perspective showed the dynamics and scale of the rapid development of the Camino, which is also an indicator of its phenomenality and value as a cultural and spiritual destination.

Moreover, the data analysis extended to the assessment of current management strategies and sustainability of development. By examining management and development strategy reports (such as Xacobeo plans), the study assessed the affection of these actions on economic development, the preservation of cultural heritage and the sustainability of the Camino. This study identified both effective practices and current challenges in the management of the route.

A combination of literature review and data analysis provided answers to the research questions by integrating theoretical ideas with practical data. This research approach contributed to an in-depth and comprehensive study of the transformation of the Camino de Santiago, focusing on the historical, economic, social and governance factors that collectively influence the evolution of the route.

Summarizing all the findings, the work contains a comprehensive understanding of the factors of the phenomenal transformation and development of the Camino in the conditions of the modern tourism, as well as its significance and influence on the development of trends in cultural and spiritual tourism and management.

Ultimately, the Camino de Santiago remains a unique and evolving economic, cultural and spiritual phenomenon. Its future depends on ongoing, targeted management efforts that support the economic growth of communities and regions along the Camino and preserve its cultural and spiritual value. For the successful development of the Camino, it is important to continue to adapt it to the needs and expectations of a global and diverse audience, as well as to the realities of tourism trends, while maintaining its authenticity and uniqueness as one of the most popular and significant cultural pilgrimage routes in the world.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I – Stakeholders and their role in the development of the Camino de Santiago

Stakeholders in the development of plans and strategies include local, regional, and national governments, the public and local communities, all service sectors, non-governmental organisations, the European Union, residents, and tourists. Identifying key stakeholders has direct implications for understanding and developing the operating environment. These include entire organisations and individuals whose activities are in one way or another connected with the Camino and influence its further development (Allen et al., 2011). It involves many stakeholders, each of whom plays a critical role in the conservation, promotion, and management of the destination.

The central government acts in a coordination and cooperation role with other structures through the Council of Saint James (Consejo Jacobeo), a territorial cooperation body under the Ministry of Culture. The purpose of the council is to facilitate communication between the central government and the autonomous communities through which the pilgrimage route passes (Gasparini et al., 2022). Jacobin Council coordinates efforts to preserve, restore, and promote the French and Northern pilgrimage routes, organising programs and events mostly during the Holy Years celebration (Council of Saint James, 2011).

Autonomous communities along the Camino de Santiago play a key role in the protection and conservation of cultural heritage and the development of tourism in a destination. These regions invest in the maintenance of the route, improve safety measures, and protect historical sites. They contribute to the local economy by supporting tourism and encouraging cultural events, such as festivals related to the religious and cultural significance of the Camino. Environmental sustainability is also becoming a priority in regional policies that mitigate the environmental impact of increased pilgrimage (García & Muñoz, 2022; Martínez, 2020).

Many of the regions along the various Camino routes (Galicia, Navarre, La Rioja, Castile y León, Extremadura, Andalusia) have adopted certain policies regarding the Camino, but of all of them, Galicia has been actively involved in its development since the 1990s years. The region has taken an initiative to promote the Camino to attract foreign visitors. Xacobeo 1993 and 1999 played a decisive role in developing the strategies and actions that have made it a major European pilgrimage route to this day. It

remains a major international tourism destination in the region and a central product of tourism development and cultural policies.

This integration of cultural and tourism policies is evident in policy documents such as “O teu Xacobeo”, a special program of assistance to socio-cultural sectors of the population for the revitalization of the Camino and promotion of Xacobeo 2021. Therefore, Galician government legislation on pilgrimage is the most advanced in Europe. Since 2001, all regional legislation related to it has been harmonised by the law concerning conservation and promotion, the functioning of a regional network of hostels, and the creation of an International Committee of Experts on the Camino.

The regional government of the Xunta de Galicia is the main political force influencing the pilgrimage route. An interdepartmental commission was created to coordinate the actions of the Galician Tourism Agency, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and the SA de Xestión do Plan Xacobeo, which is under the functional tutelage of the Galician Tourism Agency. This body has a very important role and is responsible for the cultural and tourist development of the Camino, its popularisation, especially during Holy Years, maintaining routes, managing a network of hostels, and other actions for the benefit of the development (Gasparini et al., 2022). The Xunta de Galicia, as the executive body of the Galician region, controls various ministries such as culture and tourism, agriculture, as well as the environment, territory, and infrastructure. It is in Santiago de Compostela and collaborates with other government bodies to regulate and coordinate activities related to the Camino (Xunta, 2011).

Other regional governments also have special rules, although not as detailed and developed as those in Galicia. For example, the region of La Rioja has the largest number of protected heritage sites directly related to the Camino and has also introduced special legislation to protect the areas through which it passes. Regions such as Navarre and Andalusia have legislation protecting the use of public roads to facilitate the transit of pilgrims through private lands. Municipalities along the route manage land use and carry out physical activities (maintenance, signage, etc.) in coordination with the regional government. They also take part in the conservation and promotion of heritage along their section of the Camino, thereby contributing to its conservation and development.

The Catholic Church, in turn, has full control over access to the Santiago Cathedral in the city and issues an official certificate of completion of the Camino for pilgrims who have walked at least 100 km (or 200 km by bicycle or horseback). The Compostela

Certificate serves as the official indicator for the statistics of the annual number of pilgrims, which is tracked by the Reception of Pilgrims.

The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela preserves the relics of St. James and plays a key role in the spiritual journeys of pilgrims, being the spiritual centre and goal of the entire route. The Cathedral Chapter conducts liturgical ceremonies, pastoral care, preserving the historical heritage, and ensuring the cultural and religious significance of the Camino (Official Cathedral Site, 2011).

Internationally, the above-mentioned Associations of Friends of the Camino are crucial to the promotion of the route. The first Association was founded in Paris in 1950, and as of 2022, there are 324 Associations in 24 countries on all continents, engaged in cultural and educational activities related to the Camino (Official page of the Federation of Associations of Friends of the Camino, 2011). The Spanish Association of Friends of the Camino was founded in 1987, but to this day it unites 28 associations throughout Spain dedicated to the promotion and preservation of pilgrimage routes. Their activities include providing information to pilgrims, organising volunteer seminars, and collaborating with local authorities on the maintenance and development of routes and heritage conservation. In addition, they ensure that dormitories and other facilities used by pilgrims are maintained in working order. By helping to maintain the infrastructure of the Camino, they thus help preserve its historical and cultural heritage for current and future generations.

The Associations provide logistical support, cultural enrichment, and historical knowledge, ensuring routes are accessible and attractive. Their activities range from maintaining trails and signage to hosting events and workshops to educate pilgrims and the public about the cultural and historical significance of the Camino. In turn, the Xunta of Galicia, in cooperation with the Associations, rewards people and organisations that contribute to the preservation of the Camino with the title of Honorary Ambassador. This partnership reflects the important role of associations in the regional and global promotion of the Camino.

Ultimately, Associations of Friends of the Camino are vital to keeping the Camino relevant and accessible. They connect pilgrims from all over the world into a single global network, provide support at all levels, and enrich the pilgrimage experience through cultural, logistical, and educational initiatives.

Turgalicia is a destination management organisation responsible for promoting tourism in Galicia. Since its founding in 1992, it has played an important role in the

marketing of Galicia's tourism resources and the coordination of tourism activities throughout the region (Turgalicia, 2010).

The institution SA de Xestión do Plan Xacobeo, founded in 1991 under the Government of Galicia, specialises in the promotion of culture and tourism along the Camino. It deals with the issue of public hostels, heritage restoration, and international promotion at national and international exhibitions and conferences (Xacobeo, 2010).

The Association for the Defense of the Environment of Galicia (ADEGA) advocates environmentally sustainable development and also the preservation of Galician culture and traditions. ADEGA collaborates with regional and European environmental organisations, focusing on environmentally friendly pilgrimage practices, and promoting the conservation of socio-cultural and natural resources (Adega, 2011).

The participation of the corporate sector also contributes to the promotion and development of the Camino route. Various corporate organisations sponsor and collaborate in Camino de Santiago events and socio-cultural projects, such as El Corte Inglés, Movistar, and Estrella Galicia companies (Allen et al., 2011).

The Centre for Tourism Studies and Research (CETUR) (2011), based at the University of Santiago de Compostela, conducts research, provides education, and offers technical advice on tourism in Galicia. It collaborates with local municipalities, chambers of commerce, and hospitality associations to enhance knowledge and practices related to tourism.

Ultimately, the host community, that is, the local people themselves, businesses, and public authorities, contribute significantly to the success of the Camino through hospitality, infrastructure support, and cultural participation, benefiting the community itself and influencing the pilgrim experience.

Appendix II – Map of the network of the Camino de Santiago's routes

Figure 1. The Camino de Santiago's routes along with Via Francigena route



<https://caminoways.com/camino-map>

Appendix III – Images of Xacobeo logos from 1993 to 2021 (mentioned in the thesis)

Figure 1. *Official logo of Xacobeo 1993*



<https://miguelangelsanz.blogia.com/2018/072504-la-imagen-corporativa-del-xacobeo-1993-2021.php>

Figure 2. *The Pilgrim, official mascot of Xacobeo 1993*



<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/pelegr%C3%ADn-official-mascot-of-xacobeo-93/HgHAc6LQ3Ct0DA?hl=en>

Figure 3. *Official logo of Xacobeo 1999*



<https://miguelangelsanz.blogia.com/2018/072504-la-imagen-corporativa-del-xacobeo-1993-2021.php>

Figure 5. *Official logo of Xacobeo 2010*



<https://www.cultura.gob.es/consejo-jacobeo/anos-santos-jacobeos/2010.html>

Figure 6. *Official logo of Xacobeo 2021*



<https://www.caminoenbici.com/xacobeo-2021/>

Appendix IV – Comparison table of Xacobeo 1993 and 1999 with statistic and data from the thesis

Table 1. A comparing table of Xacobeo 1993 and 1999 with statistic and data from the thesis

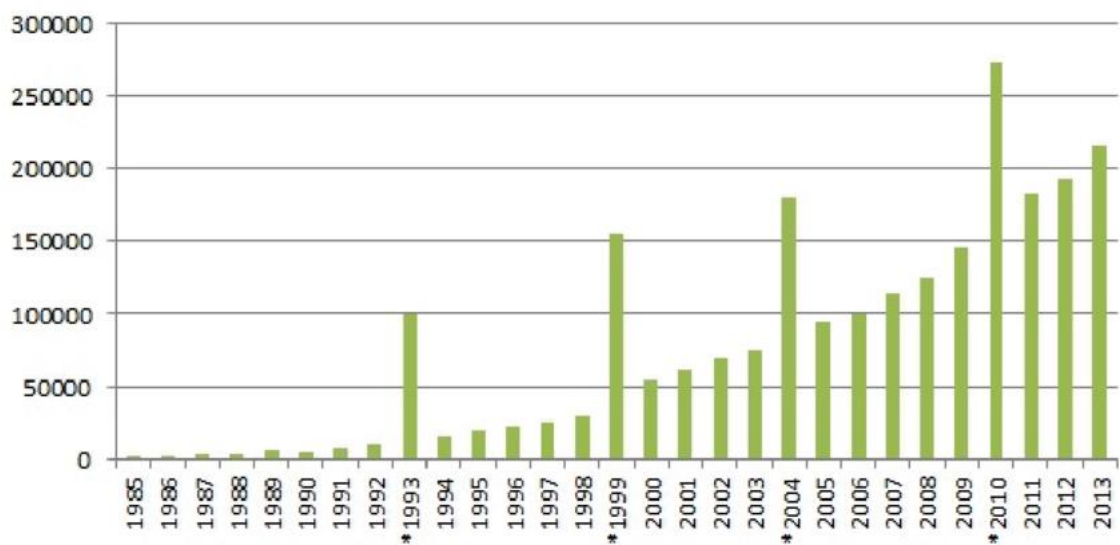
Statistic	Xacobeo 1993	Xacobeo 1999
Number of pilgrims	100,000 pilgrims	155,000 pilgrims
Pilgrim growth	50% increase from previous years	More than 50% comparing with 1993
Economic impact in Galicia	€120 million, mostly from infrastructure and cultural projects	€150 million, boosted by increased tourism and spending
Tourism revenue	€100 million	€150 million
Hotel occupancy rate in Santiago de Compostela	70-80% occupancy rate	Near full occupancy, with average stays of 3-4 days
Overnight stays along the Camino	Around 300,000 overnight stays	650,000 overnight stays
Hotel infrastructure	Development of 70 hostels	100+ hostels and improved facilities
Created jobs in Galicia	1,500 direct and 6,000 indirect jobs	2,000 direct and 9,000 indirect jobs
Local business growth	Increased business in local restaurants,	Significant growth in new hotels and retail

	hotels, and services for pilgrims	outlets, cultural enterprises
Public investments	€120 million (infrastructure and cultural initiatives)	€150 million
Transportation improvements	Enhanced rail and bus connections to Santiago	Expansion of air travel options , including international flights
Media and marketing campaigns	Campaigns targeting Spain and Europe	Global campaigns , targeting non-European audiences
Increase of international visitors	A noticeable influx from European countries, especially France and Germany	Larger international influx, with significant numbers from North America, Asia, and South America

Created by the author based on the data synthesis from the Spanish Ministry of Tourism, Santiago de Compostela Tourism Office, academic studies from the University of Santiago de Compostela, and the literature review of the thesis

Appendix V – Statistics of pilgrim arrivals to Santiago de Compostela, numbers of pilgrims and their motives in Holy Years (including pre-pandemic and pandemic years) in the statistics charts

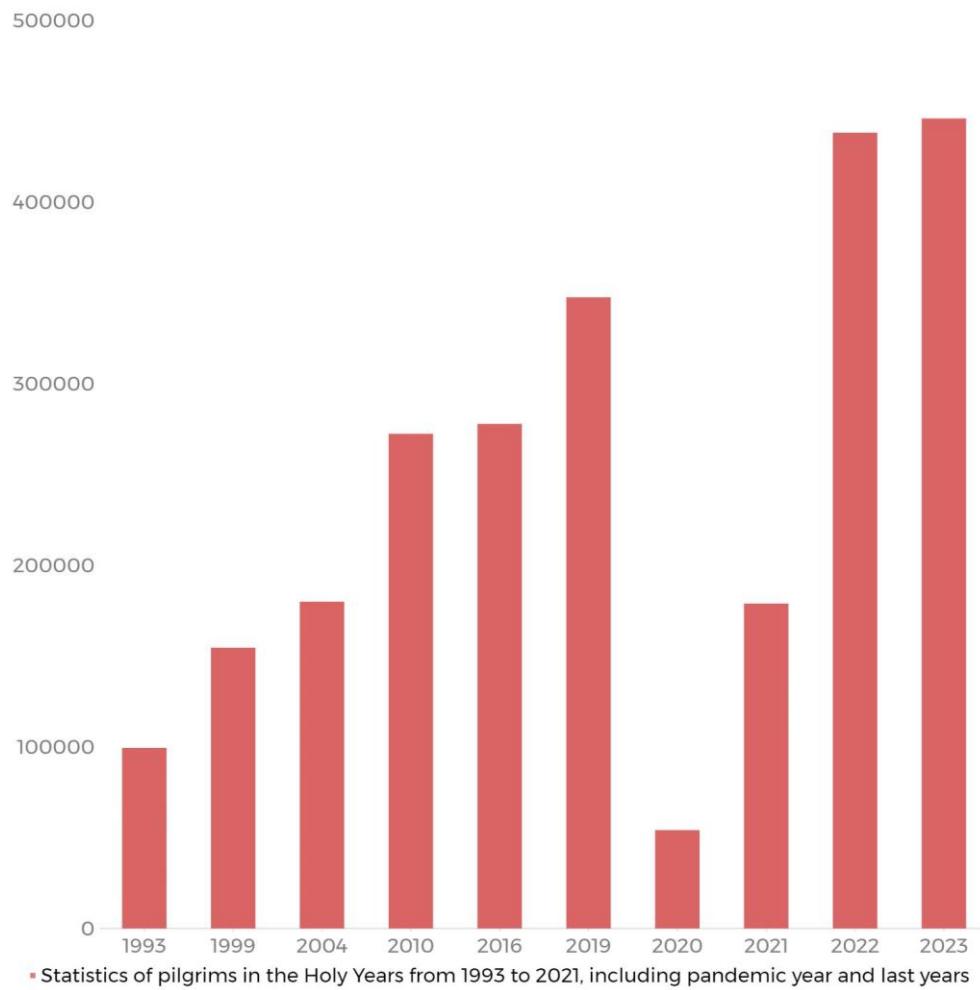
Figure 1. *Pilgrim arrivals to Santiago de Compostela 1985-2013 (*Holy Years)*



Created by Mats Nilsson for his thesis “Post-Secular Tourism - a study of pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela” (2016).

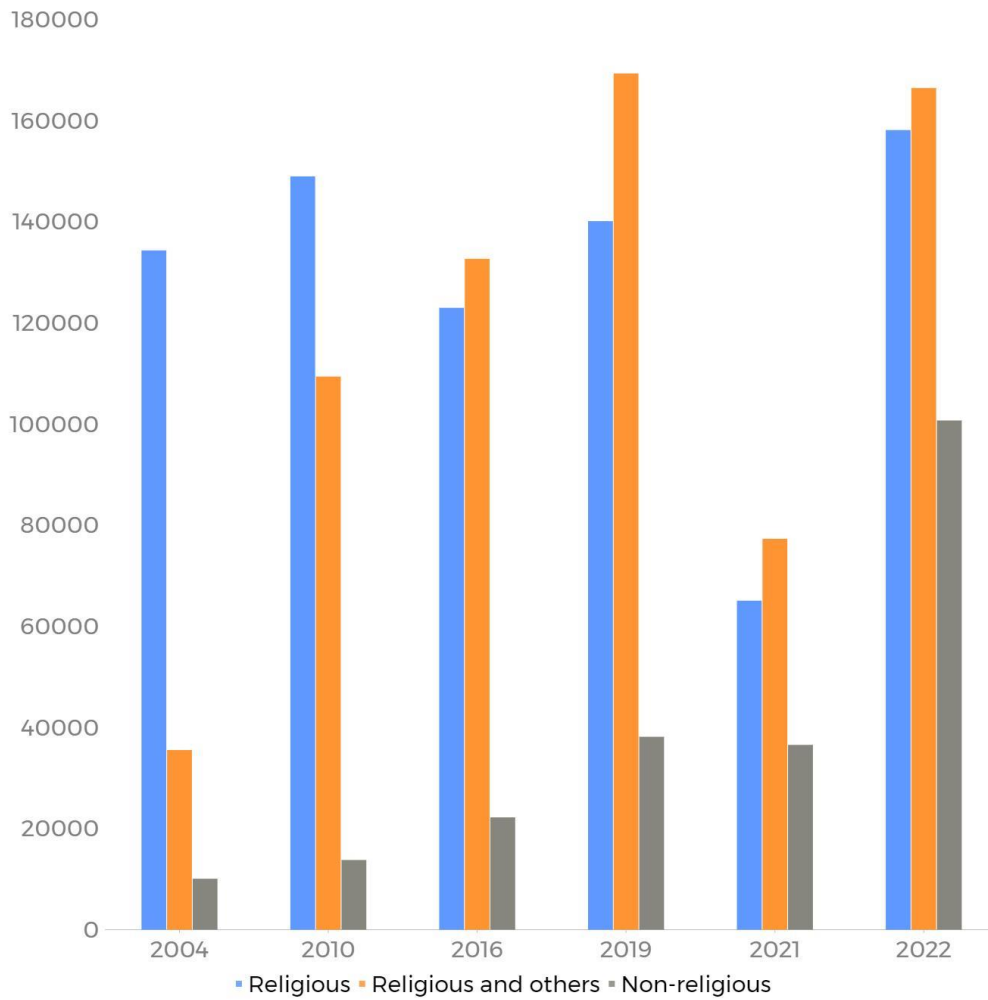
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299337075_Post-Secular_Tourism_-_a_study_of_pilgrimages_to_Santiago_de_Compostela

Figure 2. *Statistics of pilgrims in Holy Years from 1993 to 2021, including pandemic year and last years*



Created by the author based on statistics from the Pilgrim Office website of Santiago de Compostela. <https://oficinadelperegrino.com/en/statistics-2/>

Figure 3. *Statistics of motives of pilgrims in Holy Years, including pre-pandemic year*



Statistics of motives of pilgrims in the Holy Years, including pre-pandemic year

Created by the author based on statistics from the Pilgrim Office website of Santiago de Compostela. <https://oficinadelperegrino.com/en/statistics-2/>

Appendix VI – Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Development Strategy of the Camino de Santiago

Figure 1. *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*



<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

The strategy for developing the Camino as a sustainable destination consists of the following objectives: sustainable tourism and support for local culture, products and economy (Goal 8), inclusive tourism and accessibility to people with disabilities (Goal 10), protection and conservation of cultural and natural heritage and cities (Goal 11), achieving sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources (Goal 12) and maintaining the life of terrestrial ecosystems (Goal 15).