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Consuming the spiritual market : an ethnography in pilgrimage sites

Jannsen Santana

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Jannsen Santana. Consuming the spiritual market : an ethnography in pilgrimage sites. Sociology. Université Panthéon-Sorbonne - Paris I, 2022. English. NNT : 2022PA01E008 . tel-03783718

HAL Id: tel-03783718

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ECOLE DOCTORALE DE MANAGEMENT PANTHÉON-SORBONNE n°559

Consuming the Spiritual Market: an ethnography in pilgrimage sites

La consommation du marché spirituel : une ethnographie dans les lieux de pèlerinage

Thèse de Doctorat présentée en vue de l'obtention
du grade de docteur en sciences de gestion et du Management par

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Soutenance publique le 21 Février 2022

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Remerciements/ Acknowledgements

Joining this doctoral program was literally a dream come true. After several attempts to study abroad since high school, I made it to Paris. It is one of the greatest accomplishments of my life. This three-year doctoral journey was plenty of positive, as well as difficult stages. I surely would not be able to realize that without the help and friendship of many beloved ones, which are kindly acknowledged below.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Prof. Olivier Badot for going beyond the role of supervisor of this doctoral dissertation. I am thankful for your outstanding guidance, understanding, and support during these last three years. Thanks for believing in my doctoral and post-doctoral projects and guiding me through it all. I know I had the best doctoral journey due to your knowledge, support, and empathy.

My gratitude goes toward the illustrious scholars that accepted to share their time, knowledge, and attention to this doctoral dissertation. Prof. Sandra Camus and Prof. Éric Rémy, thank you for accepting to be the *rapporteurs* of this work, for your thoughtful feedback, and our meaningful exchange in the *pre-soutenance*. It was essential for the further developments present in the dissertation and will be for sure fundamental to the future steps of my career. Accordingly, thank you for Prof. Dominique Desjeux, Prof. Russel W. Belk and Dr. Max Poulain for accepting to be *suffragants* of this *soutenance*. It is an honor to have such distinguished scholars for this *soutenance*.

I thank my parents, Silvia and Cícero, for their never-ending support. Even despite the many restrictions we passed through, education was the most important thing in our home. And they worked hard, sometimes setting themselves aside, for us to go beyond the horizons of our hometown in Northeastern Brazil. For that, I am endlessly thankful. Now, I can affirm that education changed my life, and a considerable percentage of that is due to them. In addition, I also thank my beloved

siblings, Nayara and Jessica, for embracing and accepting my dreams and supporting me in this journey I decided to pursue. I love you!

Two persons introduced me to ESCP Business School back in 2018 and are great supporters of this doctoral dissertation. Firstly, Flavia Cardoso, who I can call a friend and that saw my potential and posed one of the most life-changing questions of my life so far: have you ever considered doing a Ph.D. in France? Flavia, thank you for helping me with the project proposal, tips on getting along with Paris, and your great generosity. The second friend I met was Prof. Florence Pinot, who introduced me to ESCP and provided me with opportunities and genuine support during this doctoral period. Thank you, Florence, for your friendship and support.

This doctoral journey would not be as great as it was without the support from my husband, who was shelter while the world was falling apart in a pandemic, love when my own world was in chaos, and family that anchored me to what is important in life. Paulo, *meu menino*, thank you for being the best date, fiancé, and husband in these last three years of doctoral journey and in life. I love you!

I cannot forget all the friends that helped me with the crowdfunding to facilitate my initial installation in France. Without their support, things would have been way much tricky. In two days we raised the expected money, and I knew back then I had friends with whom I could count and still. Thank you all for making this dream come true. You are many but I need to mention you here: Carol Zanette, José Newton, Mário Sérgio, Joao Paulo Moura, Maribel Suarez, Joelton Barbosa, Camila Camilla Guimarães, Carla Abdalla, Leonardo Melo, Wescley Freitas, Dra. Erbênia, Rodolfo Ramalho, Domingos, Alesson, Bruno Furtado, Elany Sousa, Severino Domingos, Dennise Vieira, Jailson Santana, Thássio Alvão, Luana Aguiar, Diana Alencar, Adriana Pires, Matheus Paiva, Adriana Bastos, Vinícius Costa, Robledo, Titia Mazé, Ítalo Taumaturgo, Lorena Aguiar, João Carlos, Raquel Rodrigues, Rodrigo Assunção Rosa, Flávio Rodrigues, Pedroza, Manoela Sabaddin, Olegário Araújo, Samuel Cândido, Dona Irene, Maria de Fátima, Aline Cravo, Jonas Sousa, Emanuelle Lemos, Bruna Martiniano Gregório, Carlos Alberto Angely, Maycon Germano, Rafael Andrade, Antônia Dias, Ramon Pereira Vital, Diego Guerra, Isabelle Campestrini, Kátia, Salomão Saldanha, Inês de Freitas Barbosa, Eliasafe, Isac Correa, Maria Werônica, Paloma Israely, Diego Avancine, Renata Monteiro, Alice Oleto, Cícero

Gomes, Jozefina, Vanessa Cruz, Solange Nogueira, Alan, Julio Leandro, Caio César, and Milena Brito.

I would like to thank my colleagues from the doctoral school, with whom we shared the doctoral department room, meals in the canteen, and our personal and doctoral projects. I especially thank Sophie Gourevitch, Marianne Strauch, and Christine Rocque for our moments together. I also thank the colleagues that joined ESCP Business School with me: Christelle, Tra My, Rania, Yaëlle, Aude, Nicolas, Olivier, Thomas Blonski, Thomas Simon, and Gabriel. Special thanks to Christine Rocque for the tremendous support during the whole doctoral journey.

My special gratitude also goes towards Christelle Aubert, Tra My and Rania with whom I could nurture a supportive network. We helped each other, and it was so crucial for me to navigate the difficulties of doing a Ph.D. abroad. I am grateful for having your friendship, and I hope we can keep these ties to infinity and beyond.

Living in Paris was great, of course, but having friends around made it all a lot easier. Paris gave me the chance to encounter and make friends with amazing people such as Rafael Cavalcante, with whom I shared unforgettable moments and who I know I can count on. Thank you Rafa for being a true friend. Additionally, thanks to the kind and powerful friends Isabella Carrazza, Mariana M. Seixas, and Carolin Be. Finally, shout-out to the amazing groups of Brazilians abroad: Les Jeunes Parisiennes and BRASA Paris. Thanks to Carol Zanette, Thais Freire, Carol Leite, Jessica Sasso, Lorena Beranger, Priscila Tavares, and Stephanie Fischer from the group Les Jeunes Parisiennes. Thanks to Ana Vitoria, Gabriel Jesus, Gabriela Caceres, Giovanna Pires, Flavia Souza, Jessica Souza, and Marcelo Liu from the group BRASA Paris. Thank you all for sharing great unforgettable memories with me.

I am pretty sure is not too common to thank a landlord, but I had the chance to find two of them who cared about me and helped me in many ways. That's the reason I would like to call them friends instead. Thanks to Sophie Guiroy and François Lherm, you don't even know how amazing you were. I will be forever grateful for everything. I hope our lives cross again soon.

Benefiting from a scholarship during my doctoral studies undoubtedly helped me to have a great experience abroad and leveraged my potential to design a better dissertation. I would like to thank the ESCP Foundation, for trusting in my doctoral project and financing my scholarship. In addition, I also thank the ESCP Research Funding, who financially supported the development of our research and turned possible our ambitious fieldwork strategy to take place.

At ESCP Business School, the structure, environment, and some professors' initiatives are also excellent sources for our dissertation to thrive. I would like to thank especially the Learning by Doing workshops, brilliantly conducted by Prof. Claire Dambrin, which helped me to advance the analysis and writing of this dissertation.

The pilgrims, pilgrimage providers, and other stakeholders were deeply responsible for the development of this doctoral research. I would like to thank them all for opening the doors of their homes, providing access to fieldwork, and sharing their lives and stories with me.

Finally, I thank the ESCP staff members who kindly and generously turned the experience at the school so much better. In especial, I would like to thank Anne Sophie Lemonnier, from the République Bibliothèque, who always had some minutes to talk, suggest books, and support me beyond my school life. Thank you for it all, dear Anne.

Summary

Remerciements/ Acknowledgements	4
Introduction	18
Empirical background	18
The connections between European and Latin American pilgrimages	20
Addressing the empirical gap.....	24
Gaps in research on consumption as a coping mechanism under stressful situations and social clutter	24
Gaps in research on the consumption of spiritual experiences in Latin America	25
Gaps in cross-cultural research in spiritual experiences.....	25
Theoretical background.....	27
Consumer spirituality	27
Research questions	31
RQ 1 - The lived experience of pilgrims.....	31
RQ 2 - The intersection of the spiritual and the market	31
RQ 3 - The larger societal systems that influence the experience	32
Underlying onto-epistemology and beliefs.....	33
Onto-epistemological positioning and research design	33
Underlying Beliefs.....	34
Part I. Observation and Analysis	37
1.1 Research Methodology	38
1.1.1 Methodology: Ethnography.....	38
1.1.1.1 Participant Observation.....	41
1.1.1.2 Interview	42

1.1.1.2 Audiovisual Ethnography	44
1.1.2 Analysis and Interpretation	44
1.1.3 Case selection protocol	45
1.1.4 Unities of observation	47
1.1.4.1 Lourdes – Hautes-Pyrénées – France.....	47
1.1.4.2 Santiago de Compostela – Galicia – Spain.....	49
1.1.4.3 Juazeiro do Norte – Ceará - Brazil.....	51
1.1.4.4 Círio de Nazaré – Belém – Pará - Brazil.....	54
1.1.5 Summary of Selected Pilgrimage Sites	56
1.1.6 Access to the field	57
1.1.6.1 Lourdes.....	57
1.1.6.2 Santiago de Compostela	58
1.1.6.3 Juazeiro do Norte	60
1.1.6.4 Círio de Nazaré	61
1.1.7 Fieldwork.....	62
1.1.7.1 Lourdes.....	62
1.1.7.2 Santiago de Compostela	63
1.1.7.3 Juazeiro do Norte	65
1.1.7.4 Círio de Nazaré	67
1.1.8 COVID-19 and fieldwork restrictions.....	68
1.1.9 Summary of data set	70
1.2 Observations: spiritual and commercial consumption patterns in pilgrimage contexts	71
1.2.1 Lourdes.....	73
1.2.1.1 Pre-pilgrimage	73
1.2.1.1.1 Pilgrims' preparation.....	73
1.2.1.1.2 Church preparation.....	75
1.2.1.1.3 Market preparation	79

1.2.1.2 The pilgrimage.....	80
1.2.1.2.1 Arriving.....	81
1.2.1.2.2 Accommodation.....	82
1.2.1.2.3 Pilgrims' Activities.....	83
1.2.1.2.4 Other spiritual activities.....	95
1.2.1.2.5 The signs of Lourdes.....	99
1.2.1.2.6 The spiritual market.....	101
1.2.1.2.7 Profane products and services.....	108
1.2.1.2.8 Communication tools.....	109
1.2.1.2.9 Crossing Contexts.....	109
1.2.1.2.10 Community.....	110
1.2.1.2.11 Spiritual Connection with Our Lady of Lourdes.....	112
1.2.1.2.12 Volunteering.....	114
1.2.1.2.13 The Miracles of Lourdes.....	114
1.2.1.2.14 Connection with nature.....	118
1.2.2 Santiago de Compostela.....	120
1.2.2.1 Pre-pilgrimage.....	121
1.2.2.1.1 Pilgrims Preparation.....	121
1.2.2.1.2 Church Preparation.....	125
1.2.2.1.3 Market Preparation.....	127
1.2.2.2 The pilgrimage.....	131
1.2.2.2.1 Arriving.....	131
1.2.2.2.2 Motivations.....	134
1.2.2.2.3 The Way.....	135
1.2.2.3 Post Pilgrimage.....	165
1.2.3 Juazeiro do Norte.....	167
1.2.3.1 Pre-pilgrimage.....	168

1.2.3.1.1 Pilgrims' preparation.....	168
1.2.3.1.2 Church preparation.....	170
1.2.3.1.3 Market preparation	172
1.2.3.2 The pilgrimage.....	174
1.2.3.2.1 Arriving in Juazeiro do Norte.....	174
1.2.3.2.2 Accommodations	181
1.2.3.2.3 Spiritual activities in the city.....	182
1.2.3.2.4 Enacting healing rituals	202
1.2.3.2.5 Paying promises (Asking and Thanking).....	205
1.2.3.2.6 Spiritual products and services	214
1.2.3.2.7 Profane products and services.....	223
1.2.3.2.8 Community	228
1.2.3.3 Leaving the pilgrimage (post-pilgrimage syndrome).....	229
1.2.4 Círio de Nazaré.....	233
1.2.4.1 Pre-pilgrimage	234
1.2.4.1.1 Pilgrims' preparation.....	234
1.2.4.1.2 Church preparation.....	236
1.2.4.1.3 Market preparation	237
1.2.4.1.4 City preparation	240
1.2.4.2 The Pilgrimage.....	241
1.2.4.2.1 Arriving.....	241
1.2.4.2.2 Accommodation	243
1.2.4.2.3 Market (Products and services).....	243
1.2.4.2.4 Rituals	248
1.2.4.2.5 Pilgrims	249
1.2.4.2.6 Casa de Plácido	252
1.2.4.2.7 Mini-Círio	255

1.2.4.2.8 Transport of Cars	258
1.2.4.2.9 Designing Unique Experiences.....	259
1.2.4.2.10 Mantle presentation	260
1.2.4.2.11 Transfer to Ananindeua (Highway Pilgrimage).....	263
1.2.4.2.12 Círio Fluvial.....	263
1.2.4.2.13 Motorcycle pilgrimage	264
1.2.4.2.14 Profane program	268
1.2.4.2.15 Transportation/Trasladação*	271
1.2.4.2.16 Círio de Nazaré	281
1.2.4.2.17 Paying Promises	291
1.2.4.2.18 Círio's Feast.....	295
1.2.4.2.19 Communication tools.....	298
1.2.4.2.20 Community	300
1.2.4.2.21 Syncretism.....	303
1.3 Analysis.....	305
1.3.1 Intra-case analysis	305
1.3.1.1 Lourdes.....	305
1.3.1.1.1 Individual and collective aspects of the experience.....	305
1.3.1.1.2 Interchange between the spiritual and the commercial.....	306
1.3.1.1.3 Ritualized and marketized spiritual experience.....	307
1.3.1.1.4 Searching for blessings in the spiritual site	308
1.3.1.1.5 The cocreation of care systems	309
1.3.1.2 Camino de Santiago	309
1.3.1.2.1 Non-ordinary characteristics and the need to prepare for it.....	309
1.3.1.2.2 Shared knowledge to navigate the experience.....	310
1.3.1.2.3 The role of materiality to actualize the spiritual experience.....	311
1.3.1.2.4 The organization of the pilgrimage experience.....	311

1.3.1.2.5 The interchange between the spiritual and the commercial	311
1.3.1.2.6 Searching for simplicity and frugality (as a value)	312
1.3.1.2.7 The cosmopolitan profile of the pilgrim	313
1.3.1.2.8 Geographical self-orientation during the experience	313
1.3.1.2.9 Authenticity in pilgrimage practices	314
1.3.1.2.10 Escaping routines and engaging in new routines.....	314
1.3.1.2.11 Individual and collective aspects of the experience	314
1.3.1.2.12 The cocreation of care systems.....	315
1.3.1.2.13 The centrality of the embodied experience.....	315
1.3.1.2.14 Re-enacting the Camino as a ritualistic and culture experience.....	316
1.3.1.2.15 The accomplishment of the journey and the emotional apotheosis	317
1.3.1.2.16 Never-ending search for the experience	317
1.3.1.3 Juazeiro do Norte	318
1.3.1.3.1 The profile of the pilgrim and the difficulties to reach the pilgrimage site	318
1.3.1.3.2 The consumerist pilgrim.....	319
1.3.1.3.3 The interchange between the spiritual and the commercial	319
1.3.1.3.4 Spiritual and emotional attachment to the pilgrimage	321
1.3.1.3.5 Motivations and entrance in the pilgrimage site.....	322
1.3.1.3.6 The spiritual as a source of support.....	323
1.3.1.3.7 Never-ending search for the spiritual.....	323
1.3.1.3.8 The organization of the experience (church and market).....	324
1.3.1.3.9 Pilgrims' expressions in the spiritual site.....	325
1.3.1.3.10 Collective living of the experience.....	325
1.3.1.3.11 The ritualistic living of the pilgrimage.....	326
1.3.1.3.12 Spiritual leaders as main influencers of the pilgrimage culture.....	326
1.3.1.3.13 Meanings associated with the pilgrimage.....	326
1.3.1.3.14 The pilgrimage hospitality structure	327

1.3.1.3.15 The embodied experience in the pilgrimage site	327
1.3.1.3.16 The solution for life issues in the spiritual market.....	328
1.3.1.3.17 Market innovation as a driver of spiritual consumption	330
1.3.1.4 Círio de Nazaré	331
1.3.1.4.1 The meanings and powers of the experience	331
1.3.1.4.2 The pilgrim's profile.....	332
1.3.1.4.3 The design of a unique experience (local market and church).....	332
1.3.1.4.4 The role of materials in allowing pilgrimage schedule and practices..	334
1.3.1.4.5 Finding solution to life's issues in the spiritual market	335
1.3.1.4.6 Shared knowledge to navigate through the experience	336
1.3.1.4.7 The cocreation of care systems	337
1.3.1.4.8 Spiritual and commercial interchange	337
1.3.1.4.9 The embodied experience of pilgrimaging	338
1.3.1.4.10 Communal experience	338
1.3.1.4.11 The impact of the pilgrimage.....	338
1.3.1.4.12 Syncretism.....	339
1.3.2 Inter-case analysis	340
1.3.4 Inducted findings.....	354
Theme 01: Physical boundaries between the spiritual and the commercial space.	354
Theme 02: The pilgrim experience is the combination of both commercial and spiritual dimensions	354
Theme 03: The pilgrimage as a marketing strategy.....	354
Theme 04: The collective and individualized experience of pilgrims.....	355
Theme 05: Coping with life challenges by relying on the support of the spiritual	355
Theme 06: Pilgrimage as an embodied experience	355
Theme 07: The role of materiality in the pilgrimage	356

Theme 08: The interconnections between embodiment and materiality	356
Theme 09: The re-doing of the pilgrimage experience	357
Theme 10: Accessibility as a default?	357
Theme 11: Less consumption or consumerism?	357
Theme 12: Sustainability: sustainable pilgrimage practices.....	359
1.3.5 Summary of inducted findings	360
Part II. Theoretical Discussions and Marketing Insights	361
2.1 Theoretical Discussions.....	362
2.1.1 Discussion of themes 01, 02 and 03: Boundaries and Intersections between the spiritual and the commercial.	362
2.1.1.1 Spiritual and market crossing each other's barriers (logics and territories)....	363
2.1.1.2 Service providers interconnected in the spiritual market	365
2.1.1.3 Marketization of the spiritual as subject of critique (positive and negative aspects)	365
2.1.2 Discussion of theme 04: the collective and individualized experience of pilgrims.....	368
2.1.3 Discussion of theme 05: Coping with life challenges by relying on the support of the spiritual.....	371
2.1.3.1 The influence of modern life-styles in individual's search for the spiritual ...	372
2.1.3.2 The search of the spiritual as a coping mechanism	372
2.1.3.3 Spiritual coping in the spiritual market.....	374
2.1.3.4 Spiritual coping through contracts, rituals and consumption.....	376
2.1.3.5 Spiritual remedies to modern lifestyles.....	377
2.1.4 Discussion of theme 06: Pilgrimage as an embodied experience (pain, embodied interactions with the pilgrimage site, and collective aspects).....	380
2.1.5 Discussion of theme 07: The role of materiality in the pilgrimage (agency and singularization).....	382

2.1.5.1 Spiritual stamps enabling products' singularization.....	383
2.1.6 Discussion of theme 08: The interconnections between embodiment and materiality.	386
2.1.7 Discussion of theme 09: The re-doing of the pilgrimage experience.....	388
2.1.8 Discussion of theme 10: Accessibility as a default?	389
2.1.9 Discussion of theme 11: Less consumption or consumerism in pilgrimages?.	391
2.1.9.1 Frugal living of the pilgrimage experience	391
2.1.9.2 Consumerism as part of the pilgrimage experience	391
2.1.10 Discussion of theme 12: Sustainability: discussing (un)sustainable pilgrimage practices.....	393
2.2 Marketing Insights	396
2.2.1 Marketing insights to service providers in pilgrimage sites	396
2.2.1.1 Product and service innovation in spiritual market contexts.....	396
2.2.1.2 Understanding consumption rituals to provide better products and services	397
2.2.1.3 Identifying the movement of products and pilgrims to better situate products and services	397
2.2.2 Insights beyond (and including) the market: church, pilgrims, pilgrimage organizers and the market.	398
2.2.2.1 Spiritual market cooperation and interconnection as a strategy.....	398
2.2.2.2 Sustainability as a common goal in pilgrimage.....	398
2.2.2.3 Accessibility in pilgrimage sites.....	399
Conclusion	401
Synthesis of contributions	401
Research limitations.....	404
Suggested topics for further research.....	406
References	415
Appendix	429

Introduction

Empirical background

This doctoral dissertation lies in the context of religious pilgrimages. As much as a religious context may seem far away from the business realm, I will explain how both dimensions intersect in the process of making sense in this dissertation. First, for those who are not completely familiar with the divine side of this history, a good definition of what are pilgrimages seems to be fair. Pilgrimages are journeys based on religious or spiritual motivation, undertaken by individuals or groups, towards a place that is considered more sacred than the environment of everyday life, to seek transcendental encounter with a cult object or with oneself and consequently acquiring spiritual, emotional or physical healing (Hervieu-Léger, 2003; Margry, 2008; Moufahim, 2013; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). This practice of engaging in such journeys became important early in the history of religiosity, such as the first records of pilgrimages in the 4th century (Turner & Turner, 2011). These ancient and, sometimes, contemporary sacred places hold the power and myths from miraculous events in the past and continue to attract pilgrims across various religious backgrounds (e.g., Catholicism, Islamism, or Buddhism).

Every year, millions of pilgrims embark on pilgrimages to a plethora of sacred sites around the world. Consequently, pilgrimages started to witness the creation of a market for spiritual and commercial interactions, the spiritual marketplace. For instance, according to the UNWTO, in 2018, the market of visiting friends and relatives, health, and religious tourism was around 27% among other types of tourism globally, only behind the category of “leisure, recreation and holidays” (Global, 2020). It represents around 380 million travels with an expectation of growth around 4% by year (Global, 2020).

Understanding the commercial aspect that lies in religious experiences is relevant in the framing of this doctoral dissertation. Religion has passed through a process of marketization, such as what happened with key areas of social life such as education and health (McAlexander, Dufault, Martin, & Schouten, 2014). Because of such marketization, temples and sacred places can be experienced, consumed, branded, and marketed. For instance, some religious leaders can observe their congregants as consumers of religion, and churches then invest in marketing activities to bolster their image and attract other followers (McAlexander, et al., 2014).

The marketization of religion and experiences can have deep implications. Previous research has observed the economic, cultural, social, and environmental consequences that the marketization can have in paradisiacal touristic destinations, such as Shangri-La (Llamas & Belk, 2001). According to Llamas and Belk (2011), the marketization of such pure places is possible due to a normalization of the manipulation of landscapes to enhance their appeal, creating and implementing ingredients where the lines between the “authentic” and “touristified”, the sacred and the profane, the commodified and the noncommodified, became blurred and quite nebulous. Moreover, McAlexander et al. (2014) demonstrate that the marketization of religion can cause a detraditionalization of the religion and its rituals and practices, which contributes to many members’ loss of faith, and their struggle to construct new identities.

However, the marketization can have both negative and positive outcomes (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012). Consumer research has investigated that the consumption of sacred and profane products can facilitate the religious experience (Hemetsberger, Kreuzer, & Klien, 2018; Kamarulzaman, et al. 2015; Higgins & Hamilton, 2016). Hemetsberger, Keuzer, and Klien (2018) investigate how the consumption of body-transforming substances leads consumers to a mindful spiritual journey that can result in self-renewal and reunion of body and mind. In addition, Higgins and Hamilton (2016) observe the consumption of pilgrimages, such as the Lourdes – France, can have in promoting mini-miracles to its participants. Finally, even the digital can facilitate the spiritual experience of consumers, such as the findings from Kamarulzaman et al. (2015) reveals, in which Muslims use social media to facilitate their search and share of information on halal

food. The authors suggest social media serves in mediating and connecting religious communities and markets.

Beyond the discussion of whether such marketization of the religious is positive or negative, this doctoral dissertation is rather interested in navigating through the interplay between the commercial and the religious, in which we admit the existence of the commercial phenomenon in spiritual sites, such as the pilgrimages, and scrutinize it to better understand it from a consumer research perspective.

The connections between European and Latin American pilgrimages

Pilgrimages across different religions can be completely different. Islamic pilgrimages to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, called Hajj, are obligatory religious commandments for all able-bodied Muslims who can afford its financial costs (Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019). These pilgrimages are notoriously closed to outsiders, even for Muslim researchers the access is difficult (Moufahim, 2013; Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019). Meanwhile, Buddhist pilgrimages often are followed by pilgrims that want to meet ancient sites associated with Buddha's life in Northern India or Southern Nepal, for instance. Finally, even more contemporary pilgrimage sites that are followed by New Age adherents to places like Sedona – Arizona, have a specific way in which pilgrims experience nature, spirituality, and their selves (Ivakhiv, 2003).

Once we acknowledge the complex differences among pilgrimages in distinct religions, this doctoral dissertation slice one side of this context and choose the Catholic pilgrimages as the milieu for investigation. We understand that choosing one religious circumscription can help in the process of seeking patterns and differences in comparable cases. Therefore, we have four distinct catholic pilgrimages under our interest of research. Two of them in Brazil (the pilgrimages to Juazeiro do Norte, and the Círio de Nazaré) and two of them in Europe (the Lourdes' pilgrimage in France, and the Camino de Santiago that runs towards the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral).

However, it is not my intention to affirm that Catholic pilgrimages worldwide are all the same. Instead, I believe in the similarities in their devotional practices and principles that make it easier and discerning to engage with scientific research.

When it comes to pilgrimages in Latin America and Europe, there are yet other similarities and connections worth mentioning in this dissertation. Throughout the history of their colonization, European countries and the Catholic church used their religious doctrines to invade and exterminate indigenous spiritual identities. In such a movement, the 'successful' insertion of Catholic rituals and institutions crystalized in the country even after the colonial period and transformed countries such as Brazil as the country with the highest number of individuals self-proclaimed Christians. There was a transference of traditions and devotional rituals that can be seen in different pilgrimage sites in Latin America and Europe that exemplifies the religious roots between continents.

The reason behind the choice of these specific pilgrimage sites needs further explanation. Firstly, there are personal reasons that led me to engage with this context. As I was born in Juazeiro do Norte, one of the pilgrimage sites under research in this dissertation, I witnessed throughout my whole childhood and adolescence the come and go of pilgrims during the pilgrimage moments at my hometown, and how they somehow had a certain power to change the atmosphere of the city. I remember their big trucks and buses parked on the streets of my neighborhood and my friends, together with the pilgrims' children, playing in the streets. As I grew up, I observed the social, demographic, and economic impact of the pilgrimage in the city, and all the other types of direct and indirect influences. It was only years later, that I had an insight to first engage scientifically with this context for my masters' thesis.

This insight came right after reading the research from Higgins and Hamilton (2014) about the pilgrimages to Lourdes (another choice of mine for this doctoral dissertation). The authors found that the consumption of this French pilgrimage uncovers the building of intimate family bonds and relationships, offering consumers a unique setting comprising faith, fun, and family. However, beyond their excellent findings, I tend to believe that the authors were really convincing me about the decision to come back to my hometown and investigate myself the

pilgrimages I spent a good part of my life around. Before reading their piece, I was not aware of the possibility of designing marketing research in a religious context. But, not so long after I was doing my first data collection among the pilgrims in another sunny day in the Northeast of Brazil.

After five years doing research on this context, I developed a better understanding of the intersections between the commercial and the spiritual. By the way, one of the things that most helped to create these neural connections was my decision to engage with the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) field of research. Previous research in CCT within pilgrimages and other spiritual contexts (Belk et al. 1989; McAlexander et al., 2014; Rinallo et al., 2013) were essential in my comprehension of the so-called "Consumer Spirituality", or the "interrelated practices and processes that people engage in when consuming market offerings (products, services, places) that yield 'spiritual utility' (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a, p. 393). Therefore, I circumscribe this doctoral dissertation into the CCT scope of research, which is oriented toward the "study of dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868).

When it comes to the decision to engage with the pilgrimages under study in this dissertation, I decided to investigate two main pilgrimages in Brazil: the pilgrimages to Juazeiro do Norte and the Círio de Nazaré. Both of them receive around 2,5 million pilgrims per year. As Brazil is the country with the highest number of Catholics worldwide, it made sense to choose two good examples of pilgrimages. In addition, both pilgrimages hold similar Catholic roots in their consumption rituals and proximities regarding the general characteristics of the participants, low and middle-class individuals in their adulthood and elderhood, despite the facility to find pilgrims of every age.

In Europe, I have chosen two main pilgrimage sites. The pilgrimage of Lourdes is one of the most important in France. Every year, the site receives millions of pilgrims from different nationalities in what has become a very international pilgrimage. Likewise, the pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela are millenary roots in Europe that, despite their initial Catholic origins, seem to be more and more undertaken by adventurous individuals that are willing to live life-lasting experiences. People from all over the world spend weeks and months in the tracks

towards the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. They consume individual and collective moments on the Way - the way they refer to the path towards the pilgrimage site.

What unifies these four pilgrimage contexts is (i) the reunion of Catholic individuals even that is also very common to witness people from different religious backgrounds (e.g., afro religions, new age movements, etc.), (ii) the solid Catholic roots, that is possible to observe in the shrines or rituals; and (iii) the presence of a spiritual marketplace comprised of the whole network related to religious tourism, lodgings, restaurants, and religious and profane products.

Addressing the empirical gap

This dissertation addresses multiple empirical gaps in consumer culture literature: (1) gaps in research on consumption as a coping mechanism under stressful situations and social clutter; (2) gaps in research on the consumption of spiritual experiences in Latin America; and (3) gaps in research on cross-culture spiritual experiences. The following sections are dedicated to addressing these gaps.

Gaps in research on consumption as a coping mechanism under stressful situations and social clutter

Coping mechanisms are part of human nature in our journey for accommodation to the extreme and light situations around us. Despite researchers' engagement to uncover the relationships between consumption and coping mechanisms (Duhachek, 2005; Pavia, & Mason 2004), existing literature in Consumer Culture Theory research has not yet covered the intersection of the spiritual, consumption, and coping mechanisms in detail. In other words, empirical and theoretical investigations are needed to understand why and how consumers engage in spiritual consumption to better cope with their lives.

Literature, however, explained the motivations behind the consumption of the spiritual (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a; Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019; Higgins & Hamilton, 2019). Spiritual consumers (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a) tend to overcome some extraordinary experiences as part of their traditions and as an authenticity practice (Mouhfaim & Lichrou, 2019), as a family practice that unite relatives (Higgins & Hamilton, 2014), or even as a therapeutic servicescape to compensate sociocultural dilemmas (Higgins & Hamilton, 2019).

We build on Higgins and Hamilton's (2019) idea to understand such dilemmas. However, we focus on the spiritual and commercial products and services that could facilitate coping with major life events.

Gaps in research on the consumption of spiritual experiences in Latin America

Consumer Culture Theory research on pilgrimages and spiritual experiences has focused primarily on North American and Western European contexts, albeit researchers are increasingly concentrating their work in developing economies.

By addressing a global south perspective, I hope to co-construct ideas and theories about spiritual consumption (Chelekis & Figueiredo, 2015). The experiences of spiritual consumers in countries such as Brazil can uncover relevant insights on the development of the cultural aspects of consumption of extraordinary experiences.

Consumer profiles tend to be different and can help in the process of new theorizations. For instance, while pilgrimages in Europe tend to be visited by pilgrims with relatively high economic power, pilgrimages in Brazil are experienced mostly by low- and middle-class individuals.

Gaps in cross-cultural research in spiritual experiences

I believe that there is an opportunity to find great theoretical insights from the comparison of spiritual experiences in different settings. That is the reason I decided to engage in four different pilgrimages in Europe and Latin America. Connected by their historical roots of colonization and the distinct economic, social, and demographic realities, these Catholic pilgrimages can help us have a further understanding of spiritual consumption in current times.

Some consumer culture research has investigated single spiritual experiences (Higgins & Hamilton, 2014, 2016, 2019), while others are more concentrated in multi-sited empirical evidence. For instance, Mona Moufahim (2013, 2019) engaged in various holy sites and shrines in Syria and Iraq to comprehend the practices of gift-giving in the Islamic pilgrimages, called *ziyara*. Likewise, Husemann and Eckhardt (2019b) researched the Camino de Santiago as they engaged in different paths leading to Santiago de Compostela's city in Spain. Each pilgrimage path can be a

different experience for individuals, which has enriched their understanding and findings. Finally, van Laer and Izberk-Bilgin (2019) collected evidence in online forums regarding pilgrimage sites of the world's five major faith groups.

Therefore, based on these last examples of multi-sited research, this dissertation is highly invested in observing the differences and similarities between Catholic pilgrimages in Europe and Latin America, under the premise that such contrast can move our understanding of spiritual consumption in the field of consumer culture studies.

Theoretical background

Consumer spirituality

Despite predictions that religions would fall apart with the developments of technology and globalization movements (Hammond, 1985), 'the spiritual has never fully faded but rather continuously re-emerges, just in different shapes and forms, depending on what social conditions allow' (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). Beyond the yet significant presence of traditional religions, we are constantly witnessing the rise of New Age movements (Ivakhiv, 2003) and the reformulations of centuries-old doctrines in their attempt to adapt to the contemporary world (Askegaard, & Eckhardt, 2012).

Marketing and Consumer Culture scholars demonstrate considerable interest in the phenomena related to spiritual consumption throughout the last decades (Belk et al., 1989; Muñiz & Schau, 2005; Gould, 2006; Poulain, Badot, & Camus, 2013; Ladwein, & Rémy, 2014). A seminal effort to provoke intersectional understanding between the market and the sacred was offered by Belk et al. (1989). Through a naturalistic inquiry called the Consumer Behavior Odyssey, the authors were the first to clinically describe and interpret the sacred dimensions present in consumption behavior. Particularly, Belk et al. (1989) elucidate the changes in contemporary life that turn the shifted existing boundaries between the sacred and the profane, allowing trends related to the secularization of institutional religion and the sacralization of the secular. The authors sowed the seeds that were later used by other academics in consumer research.

Consequently, consumer research on the intersection of the sacred and the market has been increasingly growing (Mittelstaedt, 2002; Arvidsson, 2014) and tends to explore the sacralization of the secular (Mathras, et al., 2016; Belk, & Tumbat, 2005; Buchanan-Olivier, & Schau, 2013; Appau, 2020) as well as the secularization of the sacred (McAlexander, Dufault, Martin & Schouten, 2014; Rinallo, Borghini, Bamossy, & Kozinets, 2013; Lhamas & Belk, 2011; Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012; Kale, 2004;

Bamossey, et al., 2011; Izberk-Bilgin, 2012, Redden, 2016; Rinallo, Maclaran, & Stevens, 2016; Einstein, 2013).

When it comes to the sacralization of the secular, consumer research shows the ways religious thinking and affiliations can impact consumption. Mathras et al. (2015) delineate four religious' dimensions - beliefs, rituals, values, and community - affecting consumer psychology and behavior. For instance, the authors hold that shared beliefs in a given religion, such as the beliefs about the afterlife, can influence believers' status-seeking, materialism, and self-brand connections (Mathras et al., 2015). Accordingly, Belk and Tumbat (2005) explain the extreme devotion consumers have toward the Macintosh. The authors demonstrate the fervent loyalty of integrants of the cult of Mac in their movements to sacralize the Apple brand and profane opposing brands in the marketplace (Belk & Tumbat, 2005).

Meanwhile, research focusing on the secularization of the sacred is interested in the market influence on sacred systems, practices, and objects. McAlexander et al. (2014) explain how the marketization of religion can affect a detraditionalization movement that can ultimately lead members to lose their identities and be unable to remain comfortable in their once cherished community. In addition, Askegaard and Eckhardt (2012) elucidate the internationalization processes and subsequently re-appropriation of cultural and spiritual practices such as yoga. They explore how globalization has profoundly changed the practices and ideas around local consumption practices in the Indian marketplace.

Moreover, consumer research is also interested in various sacred consumption dimensions, such as places, time, tangible and intangible things, persons, and experiences (Belk et al., 1989). Places such as shrines, nature, or pilgrimage sites, have been investigated as relevant consumption marketplaces (Margry, 2008; Ivakhiv, 2003; Gesler, 1996; Turley, 2013). Time is another crucial dimension in the consumers search for the sacred; for instance, deceleration moments or slow forms of consumption can have spiritual benefits to consumers in need to escape from a sped-up pace of life (Huseman & Eckhardt, 2019). Accordingly, scholars have a wide interest in the consumption of ritualistic sacred events (Ladwein & Rémy, 2014), and

extraordinary experiences, or experiences outside the ordinary realm of individuals' lives (Arnould, & Price, 1993; Scott, Cayla, & Cova, 2017).

More recently, a particular concept, and field of study, called consumer spirituality, is getting shape and is of great importance for the development of this dissertation. Consumer spirituality was first proposed by Husemann and Eckhardt (2019a) to encapsulate the "interrelated practices and processes that people engage in when consuming market offerings (products, services, places) that yield 'spiritual utility'" (Husemann and Eckhardt, 2019a, p. 393). The authors further previous efforts initiated by Mathras et al. (2016) and Rinallo, Maclaran, and Stevens (2016) of developing a systematic approach to this increasing corpus of literature in marketing and consumer research associated to the consumption of the spiritual (Higgins & Hamilton, 2016; 2018; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b; Husemann, Eckhardt, Grohs, & Saceanu, 2016; Hemetsberger, Kreuzer, and Klien, 2018; Bonsu & Belk, 2010; Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012; Kale, 2004; Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007; Turley, 2013).

Research on consumer spirituality has been focusing on the three central dimensions: (i) materiality; (ii) embodiment; and (iii) technology (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). An increasing body of literature concentrates on the role of materiality and commerce in accessing the spiritual (Kedzior, 2013; Moufahim, 2013; Santana & Botelho, 2019). Secondly, research on embodiment has raised considerable attention toward the fundamental role the body has as a way to access self-spirituality and connection with the sacred realm (Hemetsberger, Kreuzer, & Klien, 2018; Scott, Cayla, & Cova, 2017). Finally, technology has also been observed as a vehicle to spiritual connections and experiences (Kale, 2004; van Laer & Izberk-Bilgin, 2019).

Scholars have a deep and broad interest in the meanings associated with tangible or materials objects related to the consumption of the sacred (Kedzior, 2013, Gould, 2006), such as sacred food (Kamarulzaman et al., 2016), gift-giving practices in spiritual experiences (Moufahim, 2013), sacred objects and relics (Rinallo, et al. 2013; Croft, 2013), the movement of sacred and profane objects (Santana & Botelho, 2019; Scaraboto & Figueiredo, 2017).

Scholars interested in consumer spirituality have been researching pilgrimage empirical contexts with different theoretical lenses (Higgins & Hamilton, 2016, 2018; Husemann et al., 2016; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b; Kedzior, 2013; Moufahim, 2013; Santana & Botelho, 2019). For instance, Husemann et al. (2016) investigate the pilgrimages to Medjugorje and the dichotomous way pilgrims overcome marketplace tensions resulting from an over-commercialized religious marketplace to experience spirituality, while at the same time relying on some of these marketplace resources to deepen their spiritual experience. Likewise, Higgins and Hamilton (2016, 2018) research the pilgrimages to Lourdes in France, and they observe that involvement with the pilgrimage marketplace can have therapeutic, transformative, and magical qualities. Finally, Husemann & Eckhardt (2019b) uncovered slowed down temporal experiences achieved by reducing technology use, physical movements, and consumption levels during the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage.

This doctoral dissertation aligns with the consumer spirituality's concept and field of research. By addressing such a concept in the research of pilgrimage contexts, this dissertation is interested in the practices and motivations behind pilgrims' activities when consuming the pilgrimage experience. Moreover, this dissertation devotes special attention to some spiritual coping mechanisms behind pilgrims' practices.

Research questions

Following the call for further research from Husemann & Eckhardt (2019a) on Consumer Spirituality, as well as joining current marketing and consumer research literature in the intersection of the spiritual and the market (McAlexander, Dufault, Martin, & Schouten, 2014; Poulain, 2021) this doctoral dissertation questions the empirical field of pilgrimages in three ways: (i) the lived experience of pilgrims; (ii) the intersection of the spiritual and the market; and (iii) the larger societal systems that influence the experience.

RQ 1 - The lived experience of pilgrims

The first interest of inquiry concentrates on the ways pilgrims experience the pilgrimage, at the individual and collective levels, also considering their behaviors, meanings, and resources used during the living of the experience. The research question is:

How and why do pilgrims (individually and collectively) engage (through behaviors, meanings, and resources) in the pilgrimage experience?

RQ 2 - The intersection of the spiritual and the market

Despite relevant previous research on the marketization of the spiritual (McAlexander, Dufault, Martin, & Schouten, 2014) and in the intersection of the spiritual and the commercial (Poulain, 2021), there is yet empirical-theoretical questions to address on the consumption of pilgrimage experiences, especially considering the contrasts between European and Latin American pilgrimages. This dissertation asks:

How do the commercial and the spiritual (in the different pilgrimages studied) come together to offer (if they do) pilgrims an experience?

RQ 3 - The larger societal systems that influence the experience

This doctoral dissertation is finally interested in the macro-social influences in spiritual consumers and markets dynamics. In other words, what are the social and economic phenomena that impact the lives of pilgrims beyond the pilgrimage, maybe influencing their decisions to engage in such sites? This dissertation is interested in understanding the ways spiritual consumers negotiate such macro-social influences and potential tensions in the spiritual market. This doctoral research asks:

How do current societal lifestyles impact (or not) consumers in their search for the spiritual?

Underlying onto-epistemology and beliefs

Onto-epistemological positioning and research design

Philosophically, I understand reality as socially constructed by human beings, in which social entities are perceived in a subjective way (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). This research then relies on an interpretive/constructivist ontological paradigm. In other words, as a researcher, I interpret the world around me through observation and interpretation (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). By observation I mean the collection of information about events, while by interpretation I mean the meaning making of such information and the drawing of inferences and abstract patterns. Under the interpretive/constructivist paradigm, I understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them and from their subjective experiences as individuals and collectives. Instead of predefining dependent and independent variables, my focus is on the complexity of human sense making and on the subjective reasons and meaning that lie behind their social action. There is no objective knowledge out there waiting to be discovered.

Accordingly, this leads me to explain the nature of the relationship between me, as the researcher, and what is known? I frame my epistemological view under the interpretivism perspective as I see the world as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and with wider social systems (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Guba and Lincoln, 1985). My empirical and theoretical interests are then in the social connections and relationships between the multiple agents in a given context, namely people, objects, geographical settings, texts, and others. Under the interpretive paradigm, the nature of inquiry does not seek to generalize results to a population, but rather to understand a particular phenomenon. Finally, the interpretive approach tends to be naturalistic since it applies real-world situations and are non-manipulative, unobtrusive, and non-controlling.

The ontological and epistemological positions conducted this research to have a methodological approach that is meaning oriented (instead of measurement

oriented) (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). To understand the meaning associated to consumption of spiritual experiences, interpretive researchers often rely on inductive methodologies that facilitate personal contact over some period of time between the researcher and the group under research (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Understand the world through firsthand experience, truthful reporting and quotations and actual conversations. They employ data gathering methods that are sensitive to context, and which enable rich and detailed, or thick description of social phenomena by encouraging participants to speak freely and understand the investigator's quest for insight into a phenomenon that the participant has experience. (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) the fundamental criterion for qualitative reports is trustworthiness, instead of validity and reliability as happens in positivist research. Qualitative research aims to explore, discover, and understand a certain phenomenon. (Antwi & Hamza, 2015)

Underlying Beliefs

Beyond the discussion of the underlying philosophies and paradigms that led to my research and methodological choices, I also present herein the underlying beliefs that permeates my consciousness and attitudes, and that can also impact on my research style. It seems to be highly relevant to raise this kind of issues, especially when researching a religious context. I position myself as a non-religious person, or someone in the process of deconstruction of strong religious roots yet present in my way of thinking. Due to a childhood embedded in religious dogmas and practices, I was surrounded by images, activities, and family practices that a Catholic individual normally takes part (e.g., going to church every Sunday, engaging in adoration groups once in a week, taking communion, confessing sins in confession sessions, and so on). That religious lifestyle is quite normal, especially when you are born in the most Catholic country in the world, and even more when you are born in the countryside in one huge catholic pilgrimage site.

The current me contrasts a lot with this old version of mine. I would declare myself as more interested in a self-spirituality at the moment, as someone that is highly sensitive and open to different spiritual movements but tends to oppose to restricting dogmas. Religious practices are not present in my current live anymore,

except for research reasons, but a religious way of thinking is yet present in my way of thinking, maybe because of the persisting dogmas that I could not completely detach from yet.

There are also some ambiguities that lies under my choices with this context. As a cis gay man, engaging in a conservative context of research was quite difficult. I came out to myself and close ones around five years ago, when I was 22 years old, and I do believe that the religious ideologies present in my raising process were the most responsible for blocking me for so long. So, at this level, the reader must be empathetically supposing the emotions that I have felt throughout this research process. A mix of guilt, shame, anger, and also happiness and gratitude were present in my coming out process, as well as during my research journey. On the one hand, I was hesitating to engage in a religious context after all I came through, but on the other hand I was grateful to find a research context that spoke to me the way these pilgrimages did.

A lot of questions were posed by people about my decision to engage in such religious context while being gay and, obviously, some of those questions also came from myself. One of those questions were: Why am I researching a context that is embedded with dogmas that historically slaughtered people that looks like me? However, after reflections I realized it could be also important to have someone like me researching such contexts. I came to realize I could have both advantages and disadvantages on my side. As an individual that has grown alongside with such religious dogmas and amidst such pilgrimage contexts, it makes me understand better the phenomena related to the context under study. At the same time, I see the benefits of having a more detached relationship with religiosity as a researcher in this context, making it possible to further explore alternative explanations and an outsider perspective on it. So, I decided to overcome and make up with the bad emotions I was feeling and engage with a mature research view on this dissertation.

Additionally, this dissertation was not the first time I was doing research on Catholic pilgrimages. I first engaged in this context during my master's thesis and while I was doing an ethnography-inspired methodology in pilgrimages I realized how

much I appreciated doing research and that was the moment I decided to follow the academic path. The results from this master's thesis further got published and that also gave me strength to continue researching related contexts as I realized positive outcomes coming through.

Part I. Observation and Analysis

1.1 Research Methodology

This doctoral research is guided by a qualitative approach. More specifically, an ethnographic strategy (Fetterman, 2010) or ethnomarketing (Badot et al., 2009; Desjeux, 1990), enabled the thick description of consumption culture and practices among pilgrims in pilgrimage sites. The decision to engage in such settings, as well as their unique characteristics, are explained in the following sections. Details on the methodological steps undertaken in this research, the adoption of data collection techniques, and the subsequent analysis and interpretation are given hereafter. Finally, field barriers and opportunities for each pilgrimage site are explained.

1.1.1 Methodology: Ethnography

Based on the interpretive onto-epistemological positioning in which this doctoral research lies, an ethnography approach appears to be a suitable research methodology to address the context of pilgrimages (Fetterman, 2010). Ethnography (*ethno* - folk, *graphy* - description), basically entails any full or partial description of a group, as a means of identifying common threads, whether these be religion, social relationships or management style (Goulding, 2005). It "attempts to explicate structured patterns of action that are cultural and/or social rather than merely cognitive, behavioral or affective" (Arnould, 1998, p. 86). Therefore, through the lens of an ethnographic methodology, I could provide a detailed description of the pilgrimage marketplace, as well as the consumers' patterns across the different pilgrimages studied.

This degree of description of course happens, due to the level of immersion that this research methodology implies. As interpretive researchers are interested in the lived experience of individuals in a given context, ethnography is a valuable methodology since it offers the possibility of deep immersion in *locco* to observe and explain the ways culture constructs and is constructed through the behaviors and experiences of its members (Arnould, 1998). In the context of pilgrimages, ethnography enables the researcher to navigate through the commercial and

spiritual consumption experience of pilgrims and understand the ways they make meaning of the world around them.

In ethnography lies a reflexive nature which implies that the researcher is a constituent part of the world that is under study, being consequently affected by it and affecting it at some level (Goulding, 2005). Therefore, the presence of the ethnographer in fieldwork is constantly being shaped by the environment and, of course, shaping the environment itself. In the development of this research, I was able to observe how the presence of me as a researcher could have impact on the way participants were relating to me and the ways I behaved to be better integrated by their culture. For instance, whenever I disclosed my research identity and affiliation to participants, some of them clearly felt less comfortable with my presence, especially with low-literate individuals. They tended to feel less able to respond to my questions and interactions, maybe because they could feel they were less important or they just did not have relevant information to share with me. So, I could feel my presence were having a clear impact on what they were sharing about their experience. On the other hand, I also tried to reduce that discrepancy by integrating some postures, tone of voice, way of dressing, and way of speaking to be close to their natural styles (please see the upcoming fieldwork session for more information on this topic).

According to Goulding (2005), ethnographies entail three main characteristics: (i) cross sectional; (ii) ethnohistorical; and (iii) spatial or geographical dimensions. First, ethnographies do not necessarily need to analyze a whole institution, they are normally "cross sectional", or look at a cross section of the total institution (Goulding, 2005). For the purpose of this research, I analyzed one section of the pilgrimage marketplace, the consumption of spiritual market offers with the intention of relieving individuals' turmoil. Second, ethnographies are ethnohistorical, as they tend to describe the cultural reality of our current times as the result of events in the past (Goulding, 2005). In this research, I observed the contemporary field of spiritual experiences as the result of hundreds of years of formation of such experiences, with some of these pilgrimages being millenary roots with religious ideologies incorporated into their structure and practices. Moreover, I observed how the evolution of our modern society is leading us to a stressful and hard-to-deal-with state of mind that triggers our coping mechanisms

to find solutions. Finally, ethnographies are classified on the basis of spatial or geographical dimensions, by language, theory, or in various number of diverse ways (Goulding, 2005). For this research I conducted this methodology in different geographical settings in two distinct continents, yet they have similar characteristics such as religious codes, traditions and rituals, as well as homogenous consumer behaviors.

Ethnographies were already considered as fieldwork in Consumer Culture Theory literature (Arnould & Price, 1993; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; Arnould, 1998; Hill, 1991; Stebbins, 1997; Shouten & McAlexander, 1995). Hill (1991) investigated homeless women and the meaning of their possessions. Accordingly, Arnould and Price (1993) discussed the dramatic making of an extraordinary experience, the "River Magic". Finally, Shouten and McAlexander (1995) developed a longitudinal study of the "biker" culture. Ethnography has then been proved to be a reliable methodological strategy to understand and guide detailed interpretations about organizations and consumer culture (Arnould, 1988; Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994).

Accordingly, the use of the ethnographic approach is quite often used in pilgrimage contexts (Cova & Cova, 2018; Higgins & Hamilton, 2014, 2016, 2018; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2016, 2019; Moufahim, 2013). Higgins and Hamilton (2018) explain the ethnographic approach enables their close involvement with participants, for instance by following a specific Scottish pilgrimage group. Husemann and Eckhardt (2018) share their pre- (e.g., reading touristic guides, watching movies and documentaries), during (e.g., by using different data collection techniques), and post- (e.g., by analyzing their data hermeneutically) strategies to conduct ethnographic research in the Camino de Santiago. Finally, Cova and Cova (2018) present their auto-ethnography experience of pain and suffering while walking the Québec Compostela, in Canada. This doctoral research falls into this same history of ethnography adoption to scrutinize the pilgrimages under study here.

According to Arnould (1998), who offers a summary of ethnography and its role in consumer research, ethnography tends to be particularistic rather than generalizable, as similar qualitative approaches. In this research, the adoption of an ethnographic methodology also advocates for a less generalizable reproduction of

its findings for instance. However, the interpretation process focuses in patterns of consumption that possibly can be seen in different contexts of spiritual consumption.

Applying multiple data collection methods to understand an empirical phenomenon can leverage the potential of ethnography (Arnould, 1998; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). "Rather than use multiple data sources to achieve convergence in interpretations, however, ethnography uses them to generate varying perspectives on the behaviors and context of interest" (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994, p. 485). Data sources may range from surveys to observational data, video tapes, photographs and recordings of speech in action (Goulding, 2005). Non-structured interviews, participant observations and the collection of audiovisual data are prevalent in my data set and are the result of the subjective relationships between me, as a researcher, and the participants of spiritual experiences. More information regarding each methodological technique used in this research follows in the next section.

1.1.1.1 Participant Observation

Observations of everyday events, settings, interactions, conversations, and uses of objects over time and across specific cases are recorded in field notes and other media and thus become a data set. Ethnographers assume a variety of roles, ranging from full participation to nonparticipation in response to theoretically driven purposes and the dictates of natural events (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994).

Participant observation is central to data collection in market-oriented ethnography because of the access it provides to the complex behavioral details of consumption (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). It provides details concerning group decision-making heuristics and disagreements, financial negotiations, patterns of product use and substitution, consumers spontaneously expressed evaluative judgments (both positive and pejorative), active socialization and indirect learning, and enactments of culturally patterned consumption norms and values (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). This doctoral dissertation, then, relies on participant observation as tool to provide detailed following of participants in the pilgrimage studied. It also

showed to be a relevant technique to respond to people's inability to report fully on the complex culturally significant behaviors they are into.

Non-participant observation, also used throughout the data collection, the researcher observes and records naturalistic behavior but does not become a part of unfolding events. It is especially useful in recording small group behaviors, person-object interactions scripted by taken-for-granted patterns (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Participant and non-participant observations were used whenever needed due to fieldwork access facilities or restrictions.

In-site observations were registered on my smartphone through texts and audio format as a faster and practical technique. Later on, notes were then translated into a more consistent and detailed structure, such as demonstrated in the following Figure 1. Each day of observation was then translated into a single document with the story of the chronological occurrence of events framed by my own lenses and capacity to observe certain phenomena instead of others.

Figure 1 - Field note example



1.1.1.2 Interview

Verbal reports of data are complementary to observational ones and can strengthen the richness of the data set. Ethnographic interviews constitute selective memories and projections, based on informants' emotions, experiences and expectations. In ethnography, verbal reports or transcriptions from interviews are relied on to

provide emic *perspectives of action*, people's value-laden stories and accounts of their own and others' behaviors. It is more than using people's words about their behaviors as accurate accounts of behavior. Through their stories and accounts of their behavior, participants recall, Interpret, script, and give meaning to consumption events (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994)

This doctoral dissertation uses unstructured ethnographic interviews, with individual informants (and also some group interviews), guided by general rather than highly specific a priori topic structure, controlled in greater measure by the researcher than is naturalistic observation (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). The ethnographic interviews were basically co-constructed by both the researcher and informants, in which the interviewer elicits detailed emic accounts. In addition, interviews also aroused spontaneously out of informal conversations between participants and researchers' questions about participants' behavior during observation (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994).

Not all interviews were recorded as they happened in scenarios of walking moments or noisy places. Yet, other interviews were undertaken in better scenarios and were then recorded in my smartphone and later transcribed. Figure 2 shows the transcription of an interview. Accordingly, at the end of this dissertation, Appendix 1 presents the whole set of interviews collected.

Figure 2 - Interview transcription example



1.1.1.2 Audiovisual Ethnography

As a way to complement the observational data, this dissertation also includes photographs, audio, and videos of action during consumption events (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Photograph and videos were taken in the pilgrimage settings, to increase ethnographer ability to interpret temporal flow of consumption, culturally significant moment, backstage of ceremonies beyond what was described by pilgrims, and human-object interactions (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994).

1.1.2 Analysis and Interpretation

Analyzing ethnographic data involves the search for patterns and incongruencies, taking into consideration emic and etic interpretations (Goulding, 2005). In this doctoral dissertation, in order to find such patterns and differences, it was identified categories and instances within the data by desegregating the text (observation notes or verbal reports) into a series of fragments, which were then regrouped under a set of thematic headings.

Each pilgrimage is presented herein as an isolated case. Through "thick description", each case contains informants' stories as well as the reconstruction of rituals, events and other important activities that take place in the pilgrimage site at a regular basis (Goulding, 2005). Furthermore, the analysis of the data went through a long routine over data interpretation, in which emic (pure observations from participants) and etic (researchers' abstractions or scientific explanations) perspectives interactions produce deeper insights and produce a third view in ethnographic research. The result of this process led to the theoretical explanation and discussions of the phenomena under research (Goulding, 2005).

More precisely, the analysis followed the Spiggle (1994) protocol that predicts three levels: (i) intra-case analysis; (ii) inter-case analysis; and (iii) theoretical discussions. Spiggle (1994) states that analysis breaks down some complex whole into its constituent parts. The first level of analysis, then, was breaking down the whole date set of four different pilgrimages and analyze each pilgrimage as a case. Spiggle

(1994) also states that the researchers organize data, extract meaning, arrive at conclusions, and generate or confirm conceptual schemes and theories that describe the data. Data was organized and analyzed separately (one type of data at a time) in order to analyze and compared different point of views from participants and observer.

After intra-case analysis, Spiggle (1994) invites the researchers to make the inter-case analysis process and emerging findings. It entails cross-case analysis and theme development. It is time to search for patterns and incongruencies across cases. In this doctoral dissertation, themes were constructed emerging from the findings and were then further developed by contrasting findings with the literature.

Thirdly, theoretical discussion is the final process dedicated to confronting the findings with the literature, although there is no clear limit between phases. According to Spiggle (1994, p. 492) "inferences result from the process of analysis and interpretation that the investigator uses to generate conclusion, insights, meanings, patterns, themes, connections, conceptual frameworks, and theories - their representation of the reality described by the data". In order to achieve this final level, analysis and interpretation were employed in a circular way between theories and empirical data.

1.1.3 Case selection protocol

A protocol for the selection of pilgrimage as a context, as well as the specific decisions regarding the choice of each pilgrimage site under study in this doctoral dissertation is crucial for a better understanding of this research. First, the decision to scrutinize Catholic pilgrimage contexts in general came before the start of this doctoral research. I first engage in Catholic pilgrimages during my master's thesis project, especially the pilgrimage to Juazeiro do Norte (Santana & Botelho, 2018; 2019). It was during this previous research that I remember how good I felt while during fieldwork, especially by the interactions with respondents and the unstoppable intellectual iterative processes that lead to the final thesis. This first

experience helped me on the decision to engage in the same context of pilgrimage, yet having a wider approach by engaging in other Catholic pilgrimage sites.

The case selection strategy for each pilgrimage lies in two different criteria, one that is more personal and the other that is based on the relevance of each pilgrimage site. I will discuss both processes of decision of these contexts of research. I believe that any selection of research contexts is not solely rational or emotional, but rather the sum of personal (emotional) and rigorous (rational and academic) points of view.

The selection of pilgrimage sites such as Juazeiro do Norte and Círio de Nazaré were done firstly by emotional and personal reasons. As my husband and I are both born in cities that embrace pilgrimages, the decision of engaging in these sites were quite obvious to me. He was born in Belém, the city in which the centenary Círio de Nazaré festivities happen. I was born in Juazeiro do Norte, which holds the almost-never ending flow of pilgrims year after year. Therefore, I thought that decision would offer me an affective research environment to engage in, one that is close to my heart and everyday reality. In addition, I thought that by researching these pilgrimages it would help me to ease the potential obstacles that a researcher can normally encounter doing research, such as access to the field or language. Finally, the fieldwork research development accompanied the development of our marital relationship. In other words, when I first engaged in fieldwork, we were only lovely boyfriends, and our relationship grew to engagement and finally marriage as the same time as this doctoral research is reaching its final steps. These are the emotional reasons behind the choice of these contexts of research.

However, the decision to engage in these pilgrimages had also clear criteria afterwards. The most important ones are based on the relevance of the pilgrimage at a national level, as well as their geographical position. Both pilgrimages are well-known sites of Catholic religious travels in Brazil, attracting millions of pilgrims annually (please see next section containing more information about each pilgrimage site) (Oliviera, 2008). Beyond their clear relevance, they are geographically positioned in less-privileged regions in Brazil, which is closely related to my interest to prioritize disadvantaged communities and contexts in my pipeline of research. Finally, as Brazil is the country with the highest Catholic self-

considered population in the world (Gortázar, 2019), with the practice of pilgrimaging being quite present across the country, it was relevant to prioritize pilgrimage sites in this country.

The selection criteria for the other two pilgrimages, namely Lourdes and Santiago de Compostela, happens in similar circumstances to the previous ones. On one hand, emotionally, the pilgrimage to Lourdes, despite never being there before, was the first marketing paper I read about a pilgrimage context (Higgins & Hamilton, 2014) and the one that encouraged me to start the investigation of such contexts in the first place. On the other hand, the fact that previous studies have been done in Lourdes (Higgins & Hamilton, 2014; 2016; 2019) and Santiago de Compostela (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019), was a key criterion to engage academically in these sites. By having previous findings and relatable methodological strategies to inspire from, I believed I could be able to corroborate and expand understandings on spiritual consumption in these kinds of experiences.

1.1.4 Unities of observation

As each pilgrimage site contains intrinsic unique characteristics some religious, geographical and socioeconomic information are needed and can facilitate the understandings of the research findings. In the following subsection it is presented some information on each pilgrimage site under study.

1.1.4.1 Lourdes – Hautes-Pyrénées – France

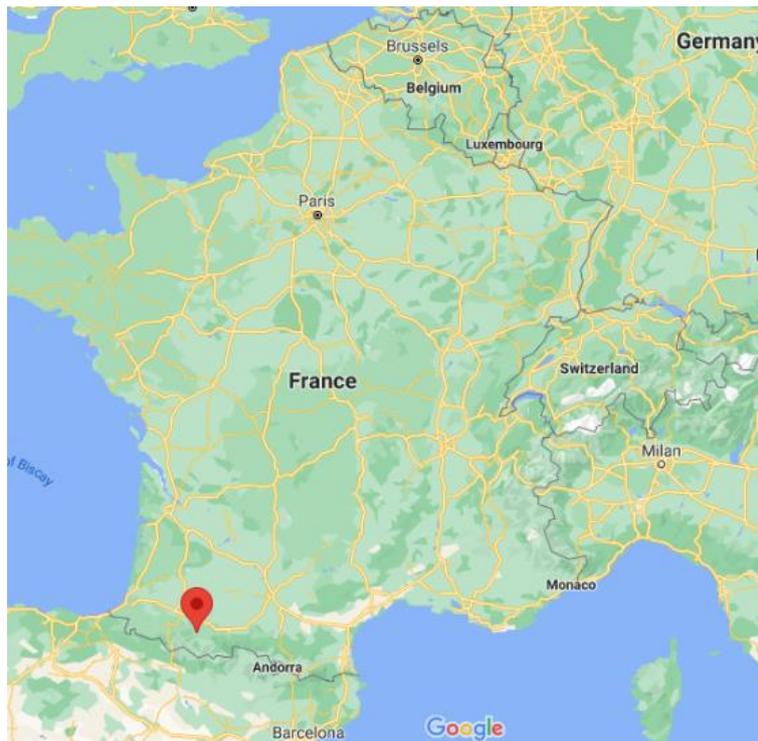
The history of Lourdes is closely connected to the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes to the young Bernadette from the 11th February 1858, the first apparition, and the other 18 subsequently encounters she had with Our Lady. In each apparition, Mary communicated some messages to Bernadette that were then translated from her to the rest of the local citizens. Those messages were transformed in the most important messages of Lourdes to all the pilgrims that visit the city, and therefore proposing rituals such as going to the grotto, lighting up a candle, drinking water and bathing from the fountain, and others.

Figure 3 - Lourdes' pilgrimage site



Lourdes is a French city located (see Figure 2) close to the Pyrenees Mountains regions, called Hautes-Pyrénées, in the south of France. The city is the second site of touristic destinations in France, only behind Paris. According to the local Chamber of Commerce, in terms of hotels, Lourdes has 157 hotels and 12 camping areas. The city receives 6 million people per year, 37% of whom are French and 63% foreigners, mainly from Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. There are around 325 million euros circulating in the local economy on account of pilgrims. One estimate says that 154 euros is the average daily ticket for a tourist in Lourdes who comes on his own and 104 euros for the tourist who comes with an excursion. In addition to religious tourism, the Lourdes region also has several places with thermal pools that attract many tourists, including religious ones.

Figure 4 - Lourde's geographical location



Source: Google Maps

1.1.4.2 Santiago de Compostela – Galicia – Spain

About the year 820, the tomb of Santiago the Elder was found by the hermit Paio. For several nights, the hermit Paio observed enigmatic lights over the Wood of Libredón and informed Bishop Teodomiro of Iria about the thing. It was exactly there where they later found the tombs of the apostle Santiago (Saint James) and his disciples Teodoro and Atansaio. Immediately, King Alfonso II visited the place and ordered a modest church to be built, which was the germ of the present Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

Since then, the place started to be visited first by kings, abbots and monks in the IX and X centuries. Austrian monarchs, abbots and French and German monks were the first to arrive in the visited place. However, it was from the XI to XIII centuries when the pilgrimage site experienced its golden age. Santiago de Compostela consolidated as an international religious destination amongst pilgrims coming from France, Italy, central and eastern Europe, England, Germany, including Iceland, and of course people from Portugal and Spain.

Figure 5 - Santiago de Compostela city



Nowadays, more than 300 thousand people a year travel to the ancient pilgrimage routes in Europe towards the city of Santiago de Compostela on foot, by bicycle or horseback (The way, 2021). At the beginning of the XXI century and the millennium, the pilgrimage is a transversal phenomenon: on the one hand, spiritual and ecumenical, as well as open to knowledge, adventure, friendship and mutual understanding. Moreover, today the Way of Saint James is a sacralized geography, which is also a historical and cultural Itinerary. It is, in short, a pilgrimage route that does not deny the traditional but adds to this the yearning and the motivations of contemporary societies.

Different routes lead to Santiago de Compostela: the French Way, Vía de la Plata, the Primitive Way, The English Way, The Portuguese Way, and others. The French and the Portuguese Ways are the most visited currently. The French Way comprises a distance of 780 km from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port on the French side of the Pyrenees until Santiago de Compostela. A typical French Way walk takes at least four weeks, allowing for one or two rest days on the way. 60% of pilgrims traveled to Santiago de Compostela via the French Way according to recent statistics from the Santiago's Pilgrims Office. The Portuguese Way is the second most popular way attracting around 20% of the pilgrims. This route is 227 km long starting from Porto or 610 km long starting from Lisbon. From Porto, a typical way takes at least 10 days walking.

Figure 6 - Most famous ways to Santiago de Compostela



Source: Marly Camiño

1.1.4.3 Juazeiro do Norte – Ceará - Brazil

The city of Juazeiro do Norte has witnessed its own development because of the huge visitation of pilgrims. The city celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011, moving from a small village to the top three economies in the State of Ceará - Brazil. Juazeiro do Norte welcomes annually around 2,5 million pilgrims that drive the success of its touristic industry, mainly hospitality services, bars and restaurants, and the retail sector. Pilgrims in Juazeiro do Norte demonstrate adoration and homage to two main spiritual figures, namely Padre Cícero (Father Cícero) and Our Lady of Sorrows (considered patroness of the city).

Father Cícero was born in 1844 in the city of Crato, close to the same region where Juazeiro do Norte is located right now. After concluding his studies in the seminary, the priest decided to come back to his hometown, and began to execute his devotion to the most unprivileged people in that region, especially in the village that turned out to become Juazeiro do Norte later on. In 1889, an event marked the history of that place. At the time of communion, the sacred host poured blood into and out of the mouth of the Blessed Maria de Araújo. Subsequent investigations on the authenticity of the event, ended up by denying the occurrence of a miracle and taking Father Cícero away from his activities. However, the news about the

supposed miracle spread across Northeastern Brazil, and soon the village started to witness the continuous arrival of people from everywhere. Father Cícero died in 1934, considered as a saint for the pilgrims that followed their steps, but not recognized as such by the Church (Dumoulin, 2017).

According to the anthropologist Luitgarde Oliveira Cavalcanti Barros (1988) what we see in Juazeiro do Norte is the historical movement of pilgrims coming from poor and underprivileged regions in Brazil, especially northeastern Brazil, in search to find relief from their turmoil and struggle in life. Barros (1988) explains religion was obviously an alternative of salvation for these pilgrims and they called upon some key spiritual leaders that appeared over the past 100 years in this part of the country. Names such as Father Cícero and Frei Damião (Friar Damião) were great examples of those spiritual leaders, normally men who dedicated their lives to assist people in need for help and were considered as Messiah, sent from God (Barros, 1988). Faithful people started to follow these spiritual leaders whenever they were when they were alive and even after their death, such as the case of Father Cícero.

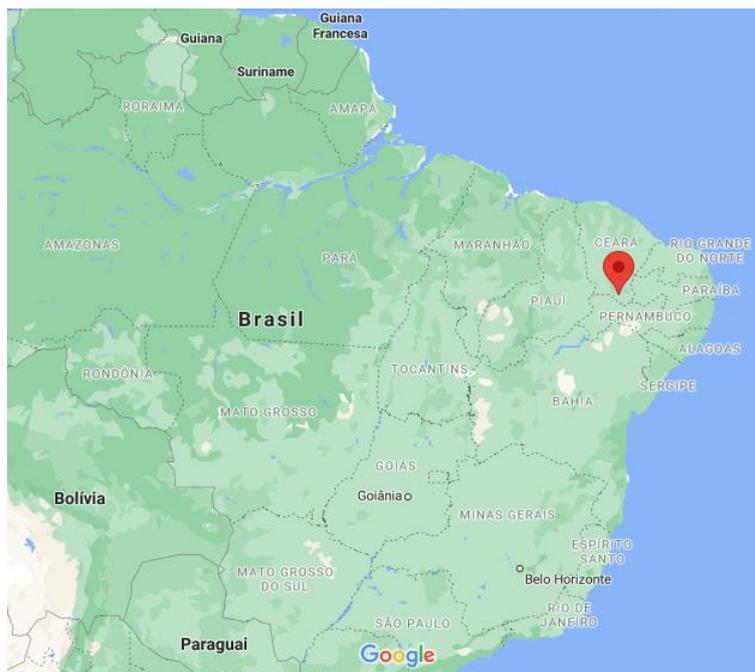
Nowadays, the diocese in Juazeiro do Norte organizes four main pilgrimages per year, yet the flow of pilgrims does never stop. The higher flows of pilgrims' visitation happen in the four: (i) the pilgrimage of Candeias, normally takes place on February; (ii) the pilgrimage in homage of Father Cícero's death, which takes place on July 20th; (iii) the pilgrimage of Our Lady of Sorrows, takes place on September; and (iv) the pilgrimage of All Souls that normally takes place on November. Each pilgrimage period can have from 07 to 15 days of duration. Pilgrims normally go on pilgrimage one specific period of the years that best fit their personal calendar, but some of them can go twice or even more times at the same year.

Figure 7 - Statue of Father Cícero in Juazeiro do Norte



Juazeiro do Norte is a city in the south of the State of Ceará (in a sub-region called Cariri) in northeastern Brazil (See Figure X). Juazeiro do Norte is located around 500km south of the state capital Fortaleza. The city itself covers 248 km² and is one of the smallest cities of Ceará state. Juazeiro do Norte lies in the middle of the *sertão*, or the semi-arid region receiving low levels of precipitation and consisted mainly of low uplands.

Figure 4 - Juazeiro do Norte - Ceará - Brazil



The city is considered the economic capital of the Cariri sub-region. The municipality holds a population of 276,264 (according to the last official census in 2020). Its economic relevance is mainly due to the pilgrimage activity in the city, that counts for around 500 million Reais (around 100 million euros) (Rodrigues, 2020).

Northeastern Brazil, generally, is historically one of the less privileged parts of the country, especially the backlands away from the Atlantic coastal, where the Portuguese first settled in South America in the early sixteenth century and few tried to make inroads into the *sertão* region.

1.1.4.4 Círio de Nazaré – Belém – Pará - Brazil

Círio de Nazaré is the given name of a series of religious and non-religious agenda of activities in the city of Belém, the capital of the estate of Pará - Brazil. Throughout an extensive agenda that takes almost the entire month of October, the Círio de Nazaré has its most important event happening on the second Sunday of this month, in the so-called Procession of the Círio de Nazaré.

The Círio de Nazaré is known for hosting the largest Catholic procession in the world. Even being hard to quantify precisely, the estimates point to around 2 million people walking in the streets of Belém during the processions of the Círio de Nazaré in a single day. This number of pilgrims is drastically different from the 1940s, when the number of pilgrims used to be around 120 thousand people (Furtado, 2019).

The story of Círio de Nazaré started in 1700, when the cabocle Plácido, who was a fisherman, finds the image of Our Lady of Nazaré, on the banks of a stream. The place today is exactly where the Basilica is located. Plácido found the image in the stream and took it to his home. The next day, the image was gone and when he returned to the stream, he saw that the image had mysteriously returned to its original place. He took her home again and again, but the image always returned to the stream. Once he even locked the image, yet the image found a way to come

back to the stream banks. Therefore, he decided to build a chapel for her, where today is the basilica. Nowadays, the processions of the Círio de Nazaré take the image of our Lady of Nazaré to the streets and rivers of the city of Belém, but always return it to the Basilica.

Figure 5 - The Círio de Nazaré main procession



The city of Belém has around 400 years since its foundation and a 1,5 million population. Belém is considered as the portal of the Amazon rainforest. As the city lies close to Equator line, it presents a very hot and humid weather constant throughout the year, which can be a challenge for some participants at the overcrowded processions during the Círio, for instance.

The Pará State Department of Tourism (Setur) estimates tourists and participants in the Círio de Nazaré add around 100 million Reais (around 18 million dollars/15 million euros) to the local economy (Furtado, 2019). The participants of the festivities are yet quite different in comparison to other pilgrimage sites. The Círio de Nazaré is experienced mainly by people that lives in the town, despite considerable growth of the number of tourists. In 2019, 83 thousand religious tourists were expected in the city (Círio, 2019).

According to a survey by the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies of Pará (Dieese), it is estimated that, with the festivity, around R\$ 1 billion will be injected into the Pará economy. The sectors that will benefit the most will be services (such as religious tourism and hospitality); commerce (with sales activity in general); industry and agriculture, especially

highlighting the increase in the supply of manioc and flour, from the interior to the capital that is one of the main ingredients for the typical food produced during this period. In 2019, agroindustry's expected to produce 200 tons of manioc.

Figure 6 - Círio de Nazaré - Belém - Pará - Brazil



1.1.5 Summary of Selected Pilgrimage Sites

Table 1 - Selected Pilgrimage Sites

Pilgrimage Sites	Lourdes	Santiago de Compostela	Juazeiro do Norte	Belém
Geographical location	France	Spain	Brazil	Brazil
Main spiritual leader	Our Lady of Lourdes	Saint James	Father Cícero	Our Lady of Nazaré
Number of pilgrims annually (per year)	6 million	300 thousand	2,5 million	2 million
First pilgrimages	Since 1858	Since 820 a.d.	Since 1889	Since 1793
Religion roots	Catholic	Catholic	Catholic	Catholic

1.1.6 Access to the field

Accessing these fields of pilgrimage had some facilities as well as difficulties. By having previously researched in Juazeiro do Norte (Santana & Botelho, 2019), I could use some strategies previously adopted to facilitate the access to the field. For instance, reaching local Church representatives proved to be a good strategy to access pilgrims and other actors. Such representatives are closer to pilgrims and can provide appropriate moments to talk with them, since they are normally engaged in specific activities and following an intense program during the pilgrimage. In addition, by following previous ethnographic research strategies to access similar fieldworks was of great value (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019; Higgins & Hamilton, 2014; 2018; Higgins & Hamilton, 2018).

I faced some singular difficulties on each pilgrimage site, be it by interviewing while walking with pilgrims in the Camino de Santiago, or by speaking with English, French, Spanish and Portuguese speakers. These scenarios imposed some difficulties, once it is less possible to make formal long interviews with participants; but it also reflects how these experiences are connected to an intense bodily way of doing them. As solutions for these particularities, I decided to make shorter interviews and several informal interactions with people in non-traditional settings, which were registered in the observations' notes.

Further characteristics related to the facilities and difficulties in accessing each pilgrimage field are explained in the following section.

1.1.6.1 Lourdes

In Lourdes, establishing connection with key service providers were equally important to facilitate the data collection. Before engaging in the pilgrimage, I contacted by email some key priests that worked with the reception of pilgrims in Lourdes. I could talk to, interview them, as well as they introduced me to some pilgrims facilitating my rapport with them.

Another key strategy of access to the field was by volunteering to help on the pilgrimage site. By volunteering in the Information Service, Library, and in the Pools of Lourdes, I could be on the service providers side and, at the same time, be close to pilgrims. While serving as a volunteer I made crucial observations of pilgrims, and I also disclosed my position as a researcher to ask them to be interviewed by me. Moreover, volunteers in the Information Service are obliged to wear a volunteer vest, which certainly instantly moved me from the position of going after pilgrims, but the other way around. Pilgrims went to me to ask question related to the program, where to find a specific place in the sanctuary, and so on. For those who were less in hurry and available, I initiated conversations, informal interviews, or simply observations.

Figure 7 - The researcher dressed with the volunteer vest



1.1.6.2 Santiago de Compostela

As the Camino is made by walking hundreds of kilometers, you have the chance to connect with people along the way, by the simple act of walking and sharing some

steps and thoughts with them, or even sharing the same auberges, in which you can have more deep conversations and enter into their stories.

Meeting people and interacting with them is also a Russian roulette. Sometimes, I used to cross a pilgrim while walking, and then we met in the next stop for a sleep over, we shared our stories, and then we never met again. There were other stories, in which I met a person once in an auberge, and only saw the person again in Santiago de Compostela, and the feeling of finding people at the end of the journey is overwhelming. To not lose contact with the people I liked the most, and that were important for the data collection, I collected all their social networks to get in touch later.

Figure 8 - Dressed like a typical Camino de Santiago pilgrim



As the Santiago de Compostela was the most embodied pilgrimage I engaged in, it was necessary some preparation. Two months prior to the start of the journey, I bought all the equipment necessary. I started to get ready by walking around Paris, especially inside the Buttes Chaumont Park in the 19ème arrondissement that was quite close to my apartment. I went twice in a week to the park, but I realized it was not enough as soon as I started to walk the Camino. The experience is hard and by walking 01 hour inside Paris would never replace the real experience of walking the Camino, around 30 km per day.

1.1.6.3 Juazeiro do Norte

In Juazeiro do Norte, establishing connection with key service providers (e.g., priests, hotel owners) in the pilgrimage site was key to the data collection process. The intermediation of such service providers helped me with authentication and confidence stamps, as a researcher, to create a better rapport with respondents. For instance, the parson of the Basilica of Our Lady of Sorrows introduced me to some pilgrims and they shared with me they considered me more reliable because of that, and they were also more relaxed and opened to interact with me. Accordingly, a hotel owner facilitated my entry into her inn, and it was because of her seal that I could approach pilgrims inside the inn with no worries.

Especially in Juazeiro do Norte, I observed pilgrims were sometimes locked to interaction when they felt they had nothing to offer or share with someone from with higher degrees of knowledge. That was the reason I used to dress me like them, with not-fancy clothes, and using some key artefacts that are part of their culture, such as the straw hat. Even in the way I spoke to them, I watched my tone and accent to be as close as possible to them. That was easier to me, since I was born in Juazeiro do Norte, and basically the accent of the city was constructed from the mix of accents from pilgrims coming from everywhere.

Figure 9 - The researcher dressed as the local pilgrims



1.1.6.4 Círio de Nazaré

For the Círio de Nazaré festivities, the access to field and to respondents was guaranteed by service providers that connected me with some participants. Meanwhile, the key strategy to immerse myself into the culture was to be hosted by local families into their houses, being it by living with them for a couple of days or experiencing family rituals for a couple of hours. It helped me to observe the moments pre-, during, and post-Círio, as well as observe the family dimension of this festivity.

Figure 10- The researcher (red t-shirt) interviewing pilgrims in the motorcycle procession



1.1.7 Fieldwork

1.1.7.1 Lourdes

Lourdes was the first pilgrimage site I engaged in for this research data collection. Accessing the site was quite easy by train from Paris to Lourdes. The ticket price (round trip) totalized 184 euros for an economy class seat in a high-speed train. In less than 05 hours, I arrived in Lourdes. A one-star hotel-stay in Lourdes historic downtown costed 400 euros for a 10-night stay. The city of Lourdes provides a wide range of hotels and campaigns, from the less expensive to the most luxurious. To adept to my budget, I decided to go with a simple hotel.

I stayed 10 days in Lourdes, from the 20th to the 30th of April 2019, exactly in the Easter season, known as one of the most visited seasons in Lourdes. Pilgrims from Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, United Kingdom, Netherlands is the most seen in Lourdes, despite great visitation from people from Asian countries such as Sri-Lanka, India, and others.

Data collection was facilitated by the use of a tool, my own smartphone, with which I could register interviews with pilgrims, capture moments through photos and videos and also register notes in voice-recording and typing and transcribing them later to my diaries. A typical data collection day in Lourdes started with me going to the sanctuary and engaging with pilgrims and activities such as going to the grotto, taking participation in Masses, the Rosary prayers, and following the agenda activities of the day.

I tried to dress myself as close as possible to the pilgrims in Lourdes. As it was the beginning of the spring in the south of France, close to the French Alps, it was quite cold for a Latin American researcher used to live nearby the Equator line. Therefore, I tried to use more sober tones clothes and a black jacket to cover myself from cold, which helped to me to navigate on the site without being a clear outsider.

I also used time during meals to continue my observations. Lourdes has a wide range of restaurants and bar options for tourists. For the initial days of data collection, I went to different restaurants, cafés, and bars to observe and interact with pilgrims and experience the market of Lourdes. A typical breakfast would cost around 05 to 10 euros and a lunch or dinner would cost around 10 and 15 euros. Close to my final days in the city, and as I started to volunteer in the sanctuary, I started to have my meals in a welcoming house and restaurant own by the sanctuary, in which other volunteers and pilgrims

1.1.7.2 Santiago de Compostela

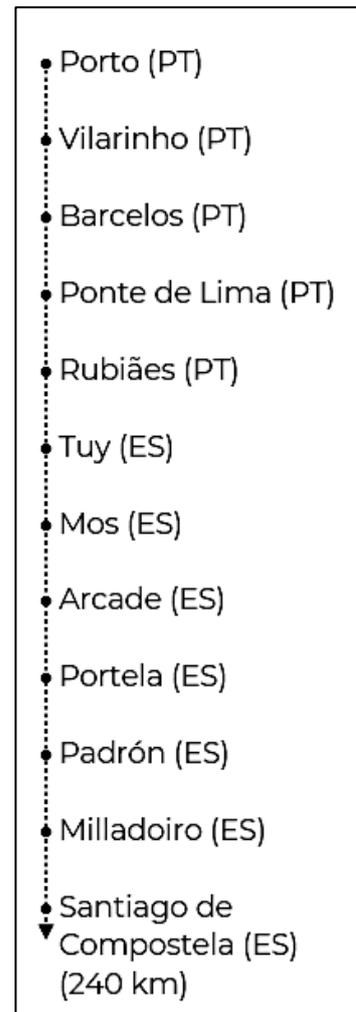
The Camino de Santiago was the second pilgrimage site I engaged in. A pre-Camino preparation included two-month gathering of information to help on the decision of which Camino to engage with, as well as to get physically ready to start the journey. Before going to the Camino, I bought all the equipment necessary to undertake the experience, including a trekking backpack, trekking clothes for hot weather and rainfalls, new boots for trekking and some other materials that totalized 330 euros. Decathlon is the most-suggested store for buying your Camino

toolkit according to the various online forums, YouTube videos and book guides I found.

Figure 11 - Camino's trajectory

I decided to follow the Portuguese Way, from Porto to Santiago de Compostela. I got a one-way flight from Paris (France) directly to Porto (Portugal) that costed around 90 euros and took around 1,5 hour and another one-way flight from Santiago de Compostela (Spain) to Paris that took a similar time.

My Camino de Santiago took 11 days during the summer of 2019, from Porto to Santiago de Compostela. I spent a couple of days in Porto before the Camino started, and another couple of days in Santiago de Compostela. The summer is known to be one of the moments with the higher number of pilgrims doing the Camino. I walked around 25 to 30km a day, and stop in the following cities: Vilarinho (PT), Barcelos (PT), Ponte de Lima (PT), Rubiães (PT), Tuy (ES), Mos (ES), Arcade (ES), Portela (ES), Padrón (ES), Milladoiro (ES), and Santiago de Compostela (ES). In total, I walked 240 km. A typical day of the Camino starts around 05h30, when people start dressing up and getting ready the auberge, we keep walking until mid-day or later until we feel tired enough, or find the next auberge available.



Auberges are normally non-profit accommodations where you can stay in collective rooms with dozens of beds. It normally provides bathrooms, kitchen, laundry areas and all the basics for a sleep over. Costs for staying in an auberge varies from 05 euros to 10 euros, and is considered as a donation, more than a marketed price.

Auberges does not offer meals, so the pilgrims normally buy some food to cook in the auberge's kitchen, or go for nearby restaurants and bars. For lunch and dinner, pilgrims can easily find the so-called "Pilgrim Menu" in the surroundings restaurants, which is a menu (first course, main course, and dessert) for a price

around 07 and 15 euros. The Pilgrim Menu was always a good way to end up the day after an intense morning of walking. Pit stopping in cafés during the walk is also normal as pilgrims often leave the auberges and tend to have their breakfast on the Way. We used to stop at least two times along the walk every day to have a coffee, bread and some fruits, to rest for 20 minutes and then continue the walk.

The experience of the Camino is related to minimizing or reducing our speed and the number of things we really need to survive, so pilgrims tend to avoid overconsumption during the walking, and sometimes, they tend to reduce the level of things they are carrying with them. I had a backup weighting around 10 kg with all the necessary clothes to keep the walking. Whenever we had dirty clothes, we used the auberge's laundry to wash our clothes and even when it didn't dry the day after, we used to hang it in our backpacks so we could have them dry at the end of the walking day.

Collecting data in this setting was then very different from other pilgrimage sites. I used to have informal interviews with pilgrims along the way, and during our stops in the auberges, or even in the cafés. More formal interviews were done in the auberges and, mainly, when we arrived at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Pilgrims normally concentrated at the main square in front of the Cathedral, and tend to sit, relax, and spend some time there. It was the main place where I have done such formal interviews, and I could record them, develop themes more precisely and in depth with pilgrims.

As observations and conversations happened most of the time while I was walking, my smartphone was a crucial tool to register videos, photos, and field notes written or voice recorded. At night, at the end of each day of walking, I recorded and/or typed the fresher memories that were not registered during the Camino. And after the experience, I organized all the ideas and events in a chronological manner.

1.1.7.3 Juazeiro do Norte

Fieldwork in the pilgrimages to Juazeiro do Norte happened twice in the second semester of 2019, from 01 to 15 September and from 28 October to 02 November.

The two periods correspond to two of the biggest pilgrimages in the city of Juazeiro do Norte. In September pilgrims celebrate the Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Sorrows, which is the patroness of the city. In November, pilgrims celebrate the Pilgrimage of the All Souls or the Pilgrimage of Hope.

I bought round-trip flight tickets for each pilgrimage data collection from São Paulo (my base while I was doing data collection in Brazil) to Juazeiro do Norte. Each flight ticket costed around 800 reais (around 125 euros). It is not rare that some pilgrims can take airflights to attend this pilgrimage, since the city of Juazeiro do Norte is equipped with airport facilities. However, the most common trip transport pilgrims use to get to the pilgrimage is bus. Most of them come from Northeastern Brazil, and bus trips to Juazeiro do Norte can take up to 15 hours, depending on departure distance, number of stops, and road conditions.

I stayed at my parents' house in Juazeiro do Norte during data collection. As their house is not that close to the pilgrimage main activities, I tried to attend as much as possible the pilgrimage calendar, such as participating in the processions, masses, and even creating moments of connection with pilgrims by walking with them in the sacred trails present in the city, or visiting them in their accommodation. The idea was to be present as much as possible in different touch points of their experience.

Lunch time and dinner were also good moments to gather around pilgrims in restaurants and bars and start conversations and interviews with them. In Juazeiro do Norte there are a lot of restaurants close to the sanctuary that offer meals to pilgrims mainly. A typical menu (salad, main dish and fruits) in Juazeiro do Norte can cost from up to 15 reais (around 3 euros). At night, during the pilgrimage period, the sanctuary offers a kermess with religious bands and musicians, a decoration like the original village where the first miracle of Juazeiro do Norte happened, and stalls selling local cuisine dishes. Taking participation in such kermesses were also a way to make observations and interact with pilgrims.

1.1.7.4 Círio de Nazaré

As the Círio de Nazaré happens once in a year, during the month of October, my data collection took place from the 02nd to 16th October 2019. I flight from São Paulo to Belém do Pará. A round-trip ticket costed around 800 reais (around 125 euros). Despite the growing number of tourists that visit the city during the pilgrimage, and the pilgrims that come walking from different parts of the Pará estate, in which Belém is the capital, most of the participants of this pilgrimage experience live in the city.

My accommodation were the houses of two local families in different parts of the city and distinct incomes and backgrounds. One of them lives in an expensive neighborhood and the other one lives in the city suburb. Spending some time with these families helped me to understand their understandings and practices related to the Círio de Nazaré.

Dozens of processions are part of the official program in and outside the city, some of them happening one after the other. Therefore, it is difficult to keep up with everything that is going on in the Círio de Nazaré. This situation urged me to decide strategically where to stay and where to go according to my own research interests and following locals' suggestions. For instance, three processions were happening in a specific morning of the Círio de Nazaré season. And somehow, those events were crossing each other at a particular geographical place in the city. Therefore, I decided to stay exactly in this intersection point, so I could observe the occurrence of all events and interact with participants in two out of three processions. Decisions like that were recurrent and needed to try to grab the most out of the experience.

Two processions are the most important on the Círio de Nazaré season. And they happen with a short interval between them. Each procession embraces millions of pilgrims at the same time walking on the streets of Belém following the image of Our Lady of Nazaré between the Basilica and the Cathedral. I took participation in both processions. One of them happens on a Saturday evening from 05 to 09pm and the other the day after, from 05 am to mid-day. Right after the Círio de Nazaré procession, the families in the city gather together to have the Círio Lunch which is

a feast with plenty of local cuisine dishes to celebrate the day. I went to three different Círio Lunches on the Sunday afternoon and that were equally relevant to understand the construction of family moments and memories closely related to religious festivities.

Religious and profane activities are part of festivities of the Círio de Nazaré. I tried also to engage in the profane activities of the season, such as the Auto do Círio, a kind of carnival parade mixed with theatrical shows that goes on the streets of the historic city center.

1.1.8 COVID-19 and fieldwork restrictions

As the COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly marking humanity history, and has been impacting our lives in many ways, I believe it is necessary to register this chapter of our world in this document, especially the singular manners in which it has impacted the development of this research. The idea is not to make excuses to what this doctoral research could have been without a pandemic, but to situate this research in time and history, and in some way to value the efforts made even in the face of the calamity we are experiencing.

Because the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease that can lead from mild to moderate and severe respiratory illness (WHO, 2021), any types of gatherings became highly not recommended, if not prohibited since the beginning of 2020. That was the case for pilgrimages. These religious and spiritual gatherings bring together millions of people coming from different parts of the world. Therefore, it was impossible to access pilgrimages physical settings and collect data.

There are three main ways in which the pandemic distorted this doctoral dissertation strategy: (i) multiple rounds of data collection; (ii) access to library; and (iii) geographical distance. The first constraint is related to data collection strategy, which initially predicted at least two reentrances in each pilgrimage site. The original idea was to provide robustness to this research data set designing multiple rounds of data collection. However, the pandemic restrictions turned it impossible

to accomplish. Fortunately, I collected a significant corpus of data in my first year of the doctoral school, 2019. That helped me to use the subsequent years of research to develop the analysis as well as other activities related to the doctoral school, such as teachings and assistantships.

The second constraint turned it difficult to access physical library at ESCP Business School, which could have been crucial to access some books and a place important so far for the development of this thesis. Some digital books and papers were used instead, but the experience is different and something was missing. Finally, the third constraint is the geographical distance, once I came back to my home country and couldn't access the campus anyway, I thought it difficult once the end of a thesis is normally accompanied by thoughtful discussions and sharing with colleagues, but that was also not the case for this doctoral research at this specific moment of our history.

Beyond my own worries about data collection constraints, the current pandemic restrictions triggered my attention towards the sustainability of these pilgrimage sites in the mid to long terms. Pilgrimage sites are normally economically dependent on the touristic activities related to the pilgrimage, such as services, retail and others. The COVID-19 pandemic could potentially promote a crisis that can threaten the survival of local entrepreneurs and of the pilgrimage itself (Rodrigues, 2020).

1.1.9 Summary of data set

The following table sum up the data set across the four different pilgrimages studies for this doctoral research.

Table 2 - Data set

Where	Lourdes – France	Camino de Santiago – Spain	Juazeiro do Norte – Brazil	Belém - Brazil
When	Duration: From 20 to 30 April 2019	Duration: From 15 to 30 June 2019	Duration: From 01 to 15 September 2019 and from 28 October to 02 November 2019	Duration: From 02 to 16 October 2019
How (tools)	Smartphone for audio-recording interviews, registering moments (photos and videos), and as a tool to register some audio and written notes during observation that were later on transcribed to the diaries.			
How (techniques)	Ethnography Approach -Observations -Interviews -Fotos/videos	Ethnography Approach -Observations -Interviews -Fotos/videos	Ethnography Approach -Observations -Interviews -Fotos/videos	Ethnography Approach -Observations -Interviews -Fotos/videos
What	Interviewees: 14 Photos: 580 Videos: 136 Observations: 10 days Volunteering: 06 days	Interviewees: 15 Photos: 950 Videos: 116 Observations: 12 days	Interviewees: 31 Photos: 562 Videos: 268 Observations: 19 days	Interviewees: 14 Photos: 394 Videos: 266 Observations: 14 days
Methodological insights from	Higgins & Hamilton (2014)	Husemann & Eckhardt (2018) Cova et al. (2018)	Santana & Botelho (2019)	Thesis from local Universities

1.2 Observations: spiritual and commercial consumption patterns in pilgrimage contexts

This section presents the spiritual and commercial consumption journey of pilgrims across the pilgrimages under study. As Arnould (1998) affirms, ethnography requires strategies for representing research findings. And these representations should aim to unravel the layered meanings that marketing activities hold for the customer (Arnould, 1998).

In the pilgrimages studied, a reliable representation could be translated through three main episodes: (i) the pre-pilgrimage moments, (ii) the pilgrimage consumption, and (iii) the post-pilgrimage moments. These episodes are presented for each pilgrimage in the following subsections.

Lourdes

Case 1

1.2.1 Lourdes

1.2.1.1 Pre-pilgrimage

Pre-pilgrimage moments include the preparing activities to engage in the pilgrimage of Lourdes. Such arrangements can be observed from pilgrims, church and market perspectives.

1.2.1.1.1 Pilgrims' preparation

Going to Lourdes requires organization, such as tourists normally do for non-religious touristic destinations. For some pilgrims, this organization can be done by their local Diocese, others buy religious touristic packages from touristic agencies. Yet, there are also pilgrims that decide to come by themselves, or with their families.

As the pilgrimage to Lourdes is a high expected experience for these pilgrims, they decide they are going a couple of months in advance, especially those one that are coming from countries other than France. For instance, a group from Brazil needed to financially organize themselves a couple of months in advance to go for their religious touristic travel. They paid around R\$ 10.000 each (around 1.500 euros) to travel to different religious sites in Europe (e.g., Portugal, France, Italy and Israel). The travel was booked and organized by a touristic agency. Pilgrims from France and other Western European countries normally come to Lourdes with their local Dioceses. They come once in a year and they also pay for the accommodation, tickets and other expenses included.

Figure 12 - International groups of pilgrims organizing for a picture in Lourdes



When coming with their Dioceses, pilgrims need to organize themselves in advance. For instance, Etienne, a French pilgrim from Versailles came to Lourdes with a group of about 300 people from the diocese of Versailles. They booked a train only for them. Many are people with special needs, so the train has some adaptations that are done to accommodate beds and larger spaces for wheelchairs, for example. Each person with special needs is cared for by another person, willing to help and serve. Often this work is done by a professional in the field of nursing or who receives similar training, which are called '*hospitaliers*'.

Pilgrims have a schedule of activities to accomplish during the pilgrimage. When they are coming with their local Diocese, this schedule is organized in advance. It can be printed and distributed to pilgrims of that Diocese, and they normally carry with them to not miss any activity going on. A pilgrim showed me the agenda of the Montfortain Diocese. The group has an intense program that goes from April 27 to May 3, 2019. For each day they have activities such as masses, meditation, meal time, activities in the city, confession and other profane events, including festive activities.

Figure 13 - Montfortain schedule for the Lourdes Easter Pilgrimage 2019

PROGRAMME DU PÈLERIN 2019 (Les Pèlerins Malades, les Hospitaliers, les Jeunes du 'Lion' et les enfants ont des programmes particuliers)				
Dimanche 28 Avril	Lundi 29 Avril	Mardi 30 Avril	Mercredi 1 Mai	Jeudi 2 Mai
8 h 30 Découverte des Sanctuaires	De 7 h 30 à 9 h 00 Chemin de Croix (Cathédrale/Palais) Confessions	8 h 15 Messe de L'ouverture des Sanctuaires	8 h 30 Messe Internationale	9 h Louanges Matinales Méditation. (Ste Bernadette)
9 h 00 Louanges Matinales & Méditation (Eglise Ste. Bernadette)	10 h 00 MESSE St Louis-Marie de Mont- fort (Basilique St Pie X)	11 h 00 Méditation dans l'hospitalité (Basilique St Pie X)		
12 h 00 Déjeuner	12 h 00 Déjeuner	12 h 00 Déjeuner	12 h 00 Déjeuner	12 h 00 Déjeuner
14 h 15 MESSE D'OUVERTURE (Basilique St Pie X)	14 h 30 CELEBRATION MARIALE (Basilique St Pie X)	14 h 00 Chemin de Berna- dette	14 h 30 Conférence Mgr Hervé GOSSELIN (Eglise Ste. Bernadette)	14 h 15 Messe d'envoi en Mission
16 h 30 Préparation « Onction des malades » Pèlerins en Hôtel (Les Grottes)	16 h 00 Chemin de Bernadette	16 h 30 PROCESSION EUCHARISTIQUE	Excursion possible	
17 h 00 Conférence Don Anne-Guillaume VERNAECKI (Eglise Ste. Bernadette)				
19 h 00 Dîner	19 h 00 Dîner	19 h 00 Dîner	19 h 00 Dîner	19 h 00 Dîner
20 h Chemin de Croix de l'HOSPITALITE		20 h 30 SOTIEE FESTIVE	21 h 00 PROCESSION MARIALE	

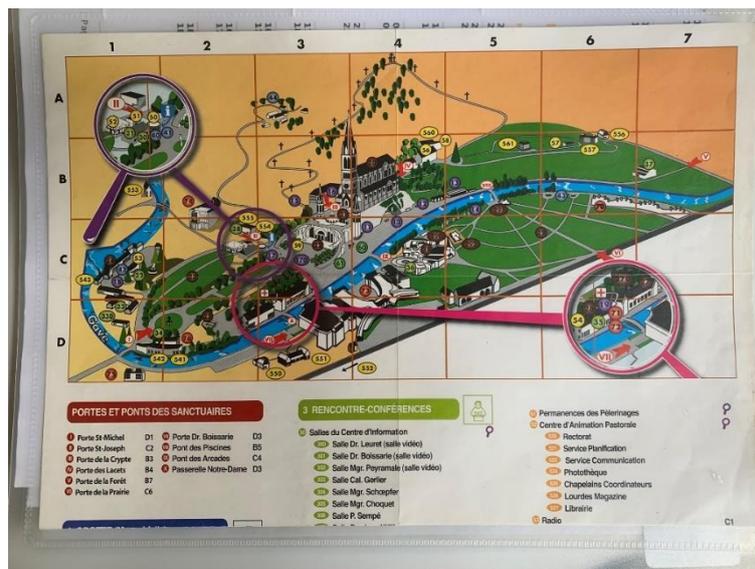
Les Sanctuaires organisent tous les jours,
à 17 h 00 : la Procession eucharistique
et à 21 h 00 : la Procession mariale.

1.2.1.1.2 Church preparation

The Lourdes Sanctuary is a place that was designed to link nature and religion. Lourdes is a pilgrimage site connected to the nature, with the river Ousse crossing the city, the Pyrenées mountains in the background and a lot of green areas around. Therefore, the maintenance of this connection is part of the sanctuary's preparation to receive pilgrims. In addition to preserving the surrounding nature, the sanctuary's space itself is well maintained, with pruned trees, the floor always clean, and gardening.

The sanctuary property is divided from the rest of the city by bars and. To enter the sanctuary, then, pilgrims access it by one of the available gates. When accessing the sanctuary by the main gate that is connected with the central promenade, the pilgrim can see the two basilicas that are one above the other. One is the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception (which is above) and the Basilica of Our Lady of Lourdes (which is right below). However, they seem to be just one big church a priori. The gothic architecture of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception provides the whole religious complex a kind of castle vibes.

Figure 14 - Map of the Sanctuary of Lourdes



As pilgrims approach the basilicas, they observe the footbridges that help them to reach the upper basilica, in which there are statues of the 12 apostles. At the bottom is a large courtyard that welcomes people to enter the lower basilica.

These basilicas were built on top of the grotto where Bernadette witnessed the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes. By the way, the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception was built in this exact place, because it was one of the messages and demands that Our Lady of Lourdes asked for Bernadette. In one of her apparitions, the Virgin Mary said to Bernadette: "Go and tell the priests to build a chapel here". So, the chapel then turned into the Basilica, and then the second basilica were also built more recently. Between the two basilicas there is also a crypt, which holds Bernadette's remained body (which were actually transferred elsewhere) and a chapel.

The Sanctuary organize a fixed program throughout each day containing Masses, rosary prayer moments, processions and other activities. The sanctuary provides several screens at its facilities containing information on temperature, time and place of masses, processions, worship, and rosaries' prayers. This information is also shared with pilgrims in different languages.

Figure 15 - A screen at the sanctuary's promenade



The events themselves are well organized to attend and welcome people from different nationalities. For instance, the Masses in Lourdes can be celebrated in Italian, English, French, Spanish and Latin. Moreover, the sanctuary also offers the International Mass, which basically provides subtitles for pilgrims.

As the pilgrimages to Lourdes are a well-known activity among people with disabilities, the Sanctuary provides a structure to receive such pilgrims. One of the main facilities provided by the church are comfortable wheelchairs. These wheelchairs are blue and have an umbrella system, such as convertible cars. They are covered with a rain-resistant material as well. As it can very cold in Lourdes, pilgrims are also offered a blanket. While the pilgrims are using this wheelchairs, other pilgrims are designated to help them to move along the city. Such helpers, also called hospitaliers, are chosen or apply for the position in their local Diocese.

Figure 16 - Pilgrims in wheelchairs



Those pilgrims and hospitaliers that move along the city have also a structure that provide more safety once they share street space with cars. Therefore, it is usual to see a red band on the street floor, which precisely indicates the exact location where wheelchair users should be safely driven. Cars and other vehicles respect the movement of these people in the city.

Figure 17 - Moment when pilgrims use the wheelchair red band to cross the street



1.2.1.1.3 Market preparation

Right outside the bars and gates that determine the religious space of the sanctuary, pilgrims can find a diverse atmosphere of market products and services in bars, restaurants and stores. This commercial market seems to be well prepared to receive the international community of pilgrims, once the city has a variety of Indian, Spanish, English, or Sri-Lanka restaurants and bars for instance. The main commercial street of Lourdes has several restaurants, coffee shops, hotels, and so on.

In terms of hotels, Lourdes has 157 hotels and 12 camping areas. The city receives about 06 million people per year, 37% of whom are French and 63% foreigners, mainly from Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. There are around 325 million euros circulating in the local economy because of the pilgrimage. Estimates say pilgrims spend about 154 euros per day in Lourdes when they come on their own and 104 euros for the pilgrims who come with an excursion. In addition to religious tourism, the Lourdes region also has several places with thermal pools that attract many tourists, including religious ones.

The hotel where I was accommodated was a simple hotel, but there are several hotel categories in Lourdes. Some of them, in privileged positions in relation to access to the sanctuary, view to the valley in which Lourdes is located, spa, heated swimming pool and so on.

Figure 18 - Hotel & Spa Belfry - Lourdes



Some touristic agencies and charities provide distinct service experiences to their customers and participants. For instance, pilgrims coming from the United Kingdom normally are organized by a national charity called HCPT that offers "Life-Changing Pilgrimage Holidays to Lourdes. This charity is devoted to promote this experience for disable and disadvantage people around the UK and they recruit volunteers' helpers to take care of disable and disadvantaged people during their holidays.

Pilgrims from the HCPT group are clearly recognizable in Lourdes. The group includes normally children, adolescents, adults and the elderly. They use same flashy-colored t-shirts and sweaters (in orange, green, purple, and so on) with the name "HCPT" printed on it. Their outfit also includes hats and buttons. They walk normally in groups in the streets and in the sanctuary. HCPT leaders on each group have voice amplifiers that help them to organize better when they are outside, or to sing along while walking in the streets.

1.2.1.2 The pilgrimage

In Lourdes, pilgrims follow their schedule and commercial and spiritual consumption widely present throughout the days they spend in the city of Lourdes.

1.2.1.2.1 Arriving

People can arrive in Lourdes by different means. Train, airplane and bus are the most known ones. I went to Lourdes by train and it is quite easy to get to the pilgrimage city. From Paris to Lourdes, it took me around 05 hours and the train ticket costed about 180 euros. The train departed from Paris to Tarbes, and then I transferred to another train until reach Lourdes. The train station is located close to Lourdes historical downtown as well as to the sanctuary and main hotels in the city. From the train station to my hotel, it took me less than five minutes walking.

The train was pretty full of passengers disembarking in Lourdes. At the train station some staff members help people in wheelchairs to cross the rails and leave the station. As people are coming for a couple of days, sometime a whole week, their luggage ranges from medium to big. While I was leaving the station, I also noticed people disembarking and picking up their luggage through their way out.

Figure 19 - Pilgrims arriving in Lourdes' train station



It is also visible the great number of buses and cars arriving in Lourdes. When arriving, buses normally cross the main commercial street of Lourdes and park in a large parking lot that is placed inside the sanctuary. In addition, pilgrims that are travelling on their own and coming from the surroundings of Lourdes, can come by car.

Figure 20 - Buses and cars arriving in Lourdes' main street



Pilgrims arriving in the sanctuary for the first time are invited to watch a 30 minutes film about Bernadette's life and the history of Lourdes as a whole. This film is presented in a small movie room placed in the Pilgrims' Reception building. I went at the scheduled time, at 9 am and waited for the start of the session. The film covers Bernadette's early life, her relationship with her family and the financial issues they went through, as well as Bernadette's call to religious life and then the apparitions of the Virgin Mary. At each of the 18 apparitions, the film shows the signs and teachings that Our Lady passed to Bernadette. And how these apparitions were building the history of Lourdes, the construction of the chapels and later Basilicas. It finally covers the story of the miracles and cures that people achieve in Lourdes. After the film, people are then invited to go to another room where Father Anne-Guillaume (responsible for Pilgrims' Reception Department) explains the film and the story of Lourdes and is available to pilgrims' questions.

1.2.1.2.2 Accommodation

The first thing I did when I arrived in Lourdes, I went to the hotel and did my check-in. My room had two single-beds. A big glass door with a curtain and another door outside to cut the light. There is a small balcony where I can see the street and the other old buildings around. We are in the middle of this historic part of the city. The

room has also a small bathroom. Back to the room, there is a telephone hanging on the wall that makes this noisy sound every minute. There is also this open wardrobe with an eiderdown that I am not using, some hangers for clothes and a chair. A small table also is placed right close to the wardrobe. Hanging on the walls are two paintings and a mirror too. The room has just one light that is close the telephone and the room is poorly illuminated. There is some information in the back of the door about fire accidents and the room has a heating system. The walls are all in white with a similar rough texture, including the ceiling

Figure 21 - Street right in front of the hotel



When pilgrims coming in excursion, they tend to be all hosted in bigger hotels or one of the Catholic welcoming houses of Lourdes. For instance, a group of pilgrims coming from Versailles was hosted at a huge welcoming house facility in the center of Lourdes. Each person with a special need, whether physical or mental needs, was hosted in a room with a companion / caregiver responsible for helping with transporting and caring for that person. These houses and hotels are equipped and prepared to receive pilgrims in such circumstances.

1.2.1.2.3 Pilgrims' Activities

There are 4 main steps that must be done by every pilgrim in Lourdes and these activities were named "The pilgrims' way": (i) *se rendre à la grotte* (go to the grotto);

(ii) *se recueillir en silence* (reflect in silence); (iii) *accomplir le geste de l'eau* (making the water gesture); (iv) *aller déposer et allumer un cierge* (light up a candle). Such steps are reinforced by the sanctuary and are available in the sanctuary website.

Figure 22 - Pilgrims' Way in Lourdes



Source: Lourdes Sanctuary website

a) Going to the Grotto

Pilgrims first step is Going to the Grotto, which is exactly where Bernadette saw Our Lady for several times. Due the high number of pilgrims visiting the place, they normally make a queue so that the pilgrims can pass along the walls of the Grotto. One by one, they circulate the circumference of the Grotto. Along all the way they can touch the rock as they walk. At this moment they can reflect upon their lives and upon their wishes and prayers.

They can also leave some flowers accompanied by photographs, thanking for something achieved and also asking for some miracles. These flowers are placed close to the source of water of the grotto. I realized that this practice is repeated mainly with people who apparently are of Asian origin (in particular, Indians, Pakistanis, etc.). The source of water is protected by a glass, and no one can get close to it. Close to ending the grotto there is this image of Notre Dame de Lourdes above our heads. She is there, close to the original place of her apparitions.

Figure 23 - The Grotto



In the queue to the grotto, people arrive with empty bottles and candles. As the next steps will be to make the water gesture and the light up the candle, they normally come to the Pilgrims' Way prepared for all the steps. Even that is not recommended to fill bottles with the water of the Lourdes in the fountains of the Pilgrims' Way. The sanctuary offers dedicated sources of water exactly for its purpose.

Figure 24 - Pilgrims at the queue to the Grotto

The experience of going along the Grotto is an extraordinary experience. The pilgrim is invited to form a line that accompanies the rock that makes up the Grotto. Even before entering the Grotto, I was attracted to touch the rock and feel it. Continuing in the grotto, as people are walking and touching the rock, a kind of darker mark was created on the rock in those places where the touch occurs. Instantly, we think about the other millions of pilgrims that passes in this same place every year. Some pilgrims kneel at the Grotto and touch the rock. Many of them stand still for minutes touching the rock. They lean their heads against the rock and say their prayers.

As it was very cold, the rock itself was also cold. In some places, some water was dripping. As the water dripped, people passed their hands wetting them and made a sign of the cross on their foreheads, or just wet their faces. I did the same in the sense of seeking protection and blessing. Little by little, one by one, people are walking. As pilgrims walk, they also touch the rock and feel all the reliefs and textures on it.

b) Reflecting in Silence

At the same time that pilgrims are living their experience on the Grotto, there are other ones who are right in front of the Grotto, doing their moment of reflection. If you are inside the Grotto, it is not so easy to see the image of Our Lady of Lourdes, but when you are outside, in front of the Grotto, it is easier.

At this stage, it is possible to see several candles right close to the image of Our Lady. They are placed also close to a kind of altar where masses and prayers of the rosary take place daily. It is an area of extreme silence, in which people are asked to be silent, even though it is sometimes difficult to see people respecting the rules.

I sat in front of the Grotto and noticed a line that never ends with people of different nationalities and ages. I could hear a lot of murmurs from people, children talking loudly, and suddenly, a person from the staff asks the pilgrims to be silent when shouting loudly "sshhhhhiiiiiii". Then, in silence, the only thing you can hear is the noise of sneakers rubbing against the cement floor as people walk their way along the Grotto.

c) Make a Gesture with the water

“Go and drink at the spring” is Mary’s invitation to Bernadette on 25th February 1858 (9th apparition). Bernadette scrapes in the earth and brings to light the spring from which we can drink water today. It is ordinary water, like that of neighboring springs. Although many healings are associated with it, it is neither consecrated nor miraculous. According to the sanctuary and to Bernadette, it is God who heals through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and the prayer of Christians. Bernadette said herself, “this water would have no virtue without faith”.

After leaving the Grotto, the path leads to a wall with several taps where you can press a button and get some water from the source. It is not possible to fill a bottle of water there, as a bottle cannot easily fit below tap. The sanctuary advice pilgrims invited to make the “water gesture”, which involves three main rituals: (1) drink, (2) wash your face, (3) bathe in the pools. For those who want to take the water home,

CASE 1 – LOURDES

there is another place at the sanctuary that contains taps and a larger space more convenient to filling bottles.

Pilgrims can drink the water right after they leave the Grotto area. They have about 10 taps and people make queue to make the water gesture. Even without being able to fill bottles there, people keep trying to fill their bottles. I even tried to fill it myself but it didn't work out very well. The bottles that people use are mainly made of plastic and glass. There are several models available in the city center, with bottles containing a few milliliters, even 5 liters.

Figure 25 - Drinking fountains



The pools of Lourdes are a free service offered by the sanctuary. The pool has two large spaces, one for men and the other for women. Volunteers that facilitate pilgrims' bath are also divided in the same way. There are about 10 piscines for men and maybe more for women, because there are usually more women than men taking the baths.

There are volunteers who are responsible for welcoming people outside, organizing the queue, and inviting people to enter. Others who stay inside the piscine space organizing the queue and inviting people to enter. After the person passes the first curtain, she will be received by a volunteer who will ask her to remove her clothes and wrap herself with a navy-blue towel and wait. In this antechamber, where the person gets ready, she has a place to hang clothes and benches to wait for her turn to take the bath. Another curtain separates this antechamber from the pool. When

the person is ready, she is invited to enter. A team of 04 or 05 volunteers receives this person. One at a time.

The pool room is made of stones and having in the center a stoned bathtub filled with the water from the source of Lourdes. The volunteers, always kind and with a smile on their face, invite the person to place themselves next to the pool, facing the image of Our Lady of Lourdes which is located on the wall in front of the person. There, the volunteers ask the person to say their prayer, out loud or in silence. And then get in the water. Still standing in the water, the volunteers ask the person to walk to the end of the pool, and that is when the volunteers help the person to sit down and then lie on their back in the water. In a matter of seconds, the person is immersed in the water and then emerged out of it.

Pilgrims want to bath in the miraculous water of Lourdes, as it is known. The water is very cold. And it is common to see people shivering as soon as they enter the water and after they leave it. Right after taking the bath, the person leaves the pool room, changes clothes again and leaves the space, making room for other people. In rare cases, more than one person is allowed in the pool room, only if there is someone with a special need who needs the company of a family member or caregiver.

This whole process of entering, changing clothes, taking the bath, and getting out can take between 5 and 15 minutes or so. However, the queue outside is huge, so it can take hours from the minute you arrive in the pool area, until you do take your bath.

All kinds of people take the bath in the miraculous water, people from different countries, people who even seemed to have other religions as well, and in general people suffering from some issues in their lives and who were there because they wanted to be cured. I didn't see any physical miracle healing happening, but the cure is probably more mental and psychological.

One thing that is very noticeable is how people are really present at that moment. Many have a huge admiration for Our Lad Lourdes and when they see her image

CASE 1 – LOURDES

right in front of the bathtub, they get emotional, and they feel a mixture of fear and relief when they enter the pool and live the experience.

A common practice among pilgrims in Lourdes is buying empty bottles in the local market to fill it with water from the sanctuary sources and give to family members and close friends in need. I observed pilgrims carrying different bottles, some with the shape of Our Lady of Lourdes, others traditional bottles, some others little receptacles in glass, and also pilgrims carrying a 5-liter bottle.

Figure 26 - Pilgrims carrying candles and bottles of water



There are some places that the sanctuary placed taps where pilgrims can access the water from Lourdes. I observed a group of people filling several bottles at once. It was a group from Paris that organizes these excursions to Lourdes. And I had a quick chat with the organizer who told me that they usually come to the pilgrimage during the Easter season with several young people from the diocese. They are all dressed in black clothes and red berets. They are filling several little bottles of and placing them in boxes to be distributed to people who have not been able to come.

Figure 27 - Group filling several bottles of water



I am taking the water from Lourdes in three different bottles. A plastic bottle in the shape of Our Lady of Lourdes, a rounded glass bottle and a different shaped glass bottle. I gave those bottles to my grandmother, and to people close to me, in addition to keeping one of them for myself as well.

Figure 28 - The water I took back home from Lourdes



d) Leave and Light a Candle

Nobody leaves Lourdes without lighting a candle and praying. After going through the water moment, pilgrims go to the last step which is to light a candle. For this, it is necessary to use the bridge to cross the river that passes right next to the Grotto. It is common to see ribbons, bracelets, padlocks, and other personal objects that people attach to the bridge.

The sanctuary built a place where people can go and light up their candles. In this place, the sanctuary also offers their own candles, for which pilgrims can pick and leave a donation. Candles have a suggested donation price. I took an average candle, which suggested donation were 3 euros. There are three main types of candles, small, medium and big ones. But it is also possible to see smalls candles colored like. They already come with a hole in the bottom that facilitates the fitting in the metallic structures that are in the chapel of the candles and also have a blue symbol that is the logo of Lourdes. I noticed that there are always employees who remove the excess melted paraffin that is at the bottom of the metal boxes and remove the already burned candles. I lit my candle and asked for my family and friends. I did a moment of prayer and reflection and continued my observations.

Figure 29 - Candles offered by sanctuary



I observed a family that were heading to the candles chapel. One of the members of this family, a young man was holding a 04 kg candle. I saw they were struggling to take a picture of themselves and I promptly went there to talk to them, I took a picture for them, of the whole family around this candle and with the Church behind them. I asked him the reason why he had bought this candle, and he told me that they believe that if they buy this candle in Lourdes and light it here so he can achieve what he is looking for, a great job and lucky in life. He mentions that he believes on it because his little brother, when 05 years old and had an illness, the boy came to Lourdes and got cured later. So, they really believe they can achieve it by doing this. I tried to follow their steps until lightening the candle, and I saw then posing to pictures at least other two times with the church behind them.

The sanctuary only allows candles sold in the church to be burnt in the sanctuary candle chapel. However, it is common to see pilgrims buying their candles elsewhere and they lighting up in the sanctuary. Beyond the medium sizes available in the chapel dedicated to candles, pilgrims can also buy larger candles that are sold at another part of the sanctuary. The 1 kg candle costs 30 euros and the 4 kg candle costs 80 euros. Candles are purchased and are then burned by church staff.

Figure 30 - Candle self-service kiosk at the sanctuary



I also accompanied a group of pilgrims from the UK who were going to leave a giant candle in the chapel of candles. Their candle was all decorated but all members,

CASE 1 – LOURDES

which also put their names, as well the names of loved ones on brightly colored papers, and decorate them with images of Our Lady of Lourdes and with other things that are important to them or to embellish the candle, such as flowers.

Figure 31 - Group preparing to light up their candles



The group is doing this to end up the pilgrimage. One of the pilgrims from this group is accompanying a disabled child. She shared that the group as a whole has 25 people and have been here for a week. She told me that she has a lot of questions about his faith, but she was very impressed and wants to come back again. In a nutshell, she told me that Lourdes represents peace and she also managed to express her emotions very well this week, she smiled and cried a lot. The candle represents all the participants in the groups, all the intentions of each one. They also delivered a smaller candle for each child with a special need. They did a moment with music and prayers and then lit the candle.

Figure 32 - Candles decorated by different groups



1.2.1.2.4 Other spiritual activities

Other than the Pilgrims' Way, the pilgrimage to Lourdes involves further spiritual and profane activities. At this subsection, other spiritual activities are exemplified.

a) Following the Eucharistic Procession

Every day, at 5pm, there is the Eucharistic Procession. All the groups of pilgrims who are in Lourdes are invited to do the procession toward the underground Basilica of Saint Pie X while praying the rosary. The groups continue in procession from the area near the candles area heading to the underground basilica. Distinct groups, coming from diverse dioceses, unite themselves to this moment. Some dioceses walk the procession hanging their country flags as well as their standards.

Figure 33 - Procession in Lourdes



In the huge basilica, with a television system that transmits images of the altar and subtitles for the songs sung, there is a moment of adoration for Jesus, which passes through the four corners of the basilica. After that He is exposed for worship in the basilica's worship room and then the procession ends. The whole event lasts about an hour.

Figure 34 - Pilgrims inside the underground basilica



b) Participating in the Marian procession

The procession begins exactly at 9 pm near the Basilica of the Rosary. Around 8 pm it is possible to see pilgrims starting to arrive with their candles or buying candles at some self-service kiosks that are available in the squares of the sanctuary. It is possible to buy a candle and a support to avoid burning your hand (and it comes with some prayers in Latin, French, English, Danish).

As the procession goes on, all pilgrims pray the rosary with the help of the speakers that are scattered throughout the field. The procession takes a great turn around the entire length of the sanctuary promenade, which is right in front of the sanctuary. At the head of the procession is the image of Our Lady of Lourdes carried by some people. The rosary is prayed in several languages, each mystery is conducted by people speaking in different languages, Italian, Latin, English, French, German. The end point of the procession is in front of the Basilica of the Rosary. In the front goes the sick people in their wheelchairs.

Figure 35 - People waiting for the procession kick-off



After the end of the procession, many pilgrims go to the Grotto, drink the water from the source, and then they will leave their candles in the “candle's chapel”. After the procession, pilgrims return to their hotels or go to bars, coffee shops, restaurants, or to the stores of the commercial center.

Figure 36 - View from the top of the Basilica of the Rosary



c) Following the Way of Cross

Following the Way of the Cross is another spiritual activity pilgrims normally do in Lourdes. In the hills close to the sanctuary, the Way of Cross was installed with the most representative moments before Jesus' crucifixion. At each station, in general, pilgrims kneel down and have a moment of reflection in silence. The whole Way of the Cross can take about an hour.

Figure 37 - Pilgrims kneeling at the Way of the Cross



d) Following the Steps of Bernadette

In Lourdes, there is a touristic and spiritual activity that is called "Chemin de Bernadette" (Bernadette's Way). It is, basically, the path through the places where Bernadette lived and that represents her story. Throughout the city you see a blue line that connects all the important points of that path. I followed the lines and visited the most important places such as the Moulin Gras and Moulin de Boly, or even one of the houses that she lived in the city. In fact, the blue line that cuts through several points also passes in front of the hotel I was staying.

*1.2.1.2.5 The signs of Lourdes**a) The rock*

Touching the rock represents the embrace of God, solid as a rock. Throughout history, grottos have always served as natural shelters and have stimulated man's imagination. Here in Massabielle, as in Bethlehem and in the tomb of Gethsemane, the rock of the Grotto has also sheltered the supernatural. Without any education, Bernadette instinctively understood. "It was my heaven", she said concerning this Grotto. Facing this rocky mass, you too are invited to pass inside; see how the rock is smooth, polished by the touch of billions of loving caresses. As you pass through, take time to look at the ever-flowing spring, at the rear left.

b) The light

Near the Grotto, millions of candles continuously burn since 25th February 1858. That day, Bernadette arrived at the Grotto with a blessed candle which she held, still burning, in her hand until the end of the apparition. Before she left, the Virgin Mary asked her to leave the candle burning in the Grotto. Since then, the candles offered by the pilgrims remain alight day and night. Each year, 700 tons of candles burn for you and those who cannot come. This sign of the light is omnipresent in sacred history. Pilgrims to Lourdes express their hope in a tangible way by carrying a candle in the procession.

c) The water

“Go and drink at the Spring and wash yourself there”: this is what the Virgin Mary asked of Bernadette Soubirous on 25th February 1858. Lourdes water is not holy water. It is normal water. It has no thermal virtue or specific property. Lourdes water from the Spring became popular because of the miracles associated with it. The people who are cured either apply it or drink it. Bernadette Soubirous herself said: “This water is being taken as medicine... One must have faith, one must pray: this water would have no virtue without faith!” The water of Lourdes is also the sign of another water: that of baptism.

d) The crowds

For over 160 years, the crowds come to Lourdes from all corners of the earth. During the first apparition on 11th February 1858, Bernadette was only accompanied by her sister Toinette and a friend Jeanne Abadie. After only a few weeks, Lourdes gained the reputation of the “city of miracles”. Hundreds and then thousands of the curious flocked from the surrounding countryside. After the official recognition of the Apparitions by the Church in 1862, the first local pilgrimages were organized. The reputation of Lourdes assumed an international dimension in the first years of the 20th century. However, it was only after the Second World War that the statistics show a sharp increase. From April to October, each Wednesday and Sunday at 9.30am, an international Mass is celebrated in the Basilica of Saint Pius X. International Masses adapted for young people also take place in the Sanctuary during the months of July and August.

e) The sick people and hospitaliers

What is particularly striking to the casual visitor is the number of sick and disabled people present in the Sanctuary. All those traumatized by life may find a certain degree of comfort in Lourdes. Officially, 80,000 sick and disabled people from many countries come to Lourdes each year. Despite their wounds or disabilities, they feel

they are in a haven of peace and joy. The first cures of Lourdes occurred during the Apparitions. At the time, the sheer sight of the Sick moved people to offer their help spontaneously. They became the men and women Hospitaliers. The cure of the body cannot conceal the cure of the heart. The Sick and the so-called able-bodied meet and pray together in front of the Grotto of the Apparitions before the Virgin Mary.

When I arrived at the sanctuary, I saw something unusual for me, a large group of people in wheelchairs formed a line to pass through the grotto. Each wheelchair user was accompanied by a person who took care of them. Indeed, the pilgrimage of Lourdes can be a place where disabled and sick people find community, moments of peace, and also, they can believe in the impossible as they see other miracles that happened in the site.

Figure 38 - Disable and sick pilgrims waiting to access the Grotto



1.2.1.2.6 The spiritual market

The city center in Lourdes offers a variety of spiritual products. For instance, there are several types of bottles being sold. Some in the shape of the Our Lady of Lourdes and other with her name or her image on it. There are also small ones or big ones capable of receiving up to 5 liters. They can be in plastic or glass.

CASE 1 – LOURDES

One of the most interesting images I witnessed was a priest inside a store happily singing while he was blessing the products of that store. It is interesting because I thought the priests would bless bought objects at the Church, but this one was blessing the products in the store, before consumers have bought them.

Candles are another example of products that is highly consumed in the Lourdes experience. Pilgrims can find candles in city center, as well as inside the sanctuary. There are also small and larger candles available at prices ranging from 1 up to 80 euros in the sanctuary and even more expensive in the city center. In the sanctuary pilgrims are not encouraged to buy a candle, rather to deposit an offer to the sanctuary.

In several places in the sanctuary there are kiosks where people can pick up candles and leave offerings in return. They are well organized kiosks with candles in different sizes and different values associated with them, varying between 1 and 10 euros. People can also pay it with cash or card. If the person wants a bigger candle, it is still possible to get it in a physical facility that is also in the sanctuary.

Some stores in the city center are quite large and looks like a super store. Several images of saints in different sizes and different prices are available in those stores, as well as non-religious products. Others stores, smaller ones, offer better quality images of saints with prices ranging from also, 50 euros up to 800 euros. Mostly small size images, well worked and with a lot of details.

The bookstore, in the sanctuary, is also a commercial store that is well visited by pilgrims. It sells not only books but also souvenirs, stationery and audiovisual materials, among others. It focuses, obviously, mainly on religion-related literature.

Figure 39 - Lourdes city center



Figure 40 - Different plastic bottles for sale at a local store



Figure 41 - Glass bottles for sale at a local store



Figure 42 - Bracelets with the name Our Lady of Lourdes



Figure 43 - Notebooks and stationery products



Figure 44 - Rosaries for sale at a local store



Figure 45 - Religious images in different formats



Figure 46 - More sophisticated and stylish rosaries



Figure 47 - Bags and accessories



Figure 48 - Book store inside the sanctuary



I realized that the interests of pilgrims are really quite plural, I saw them looking for books about Lourdes, books for their grandchildren and children, books on baptism, confirmation and other religious celebrations and even CDs by religious musicians. Many were looking for a recent book by an author who writes a lot about religion.

Figure 49 - Images of saints for sell in the sanctuary bookstore



Figure 50 - Images of saints for sell in the sanctuary bookstore



Figure 51 - Images of saints for sell in the sanctuary bookstore



1.2.1.2.7 *Profane products and services*

The commercial city center offers different types of products and services, such as perfumes and soap, personalized products, such as ceramics, bracelets, among others. Close to the sanctuary, there are lots of some souvenir shops, ATMs to withdraw money. All well signposted in several languages. Some stores are dedicated only to the sale of wheelchairs of various types, such as electronic and non-electronic ones.

Lourdes also has several bars and restaurants offering different cuisines. After pilgrims follow their activities in the sanctuary, they come to those bars and restaurants to have communal experiences with their fellow pilgrims from the same group or others.

Profane activities also involve going on city tours, visiting the castle located at the top of a hill, or visiting one of the mountains that are around the city. Also, the region where Lourdes is located has a vast offering of thermal water facilities that attract pilgrims and other tourists.

1.2.1.2.8 Communication tools

The Sanctuary of Lourdes has some communication tools to access and promote a communication directly with pilgrims. The Sanctuary manage social networks accounts on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. YouTube and Facebook are key communication tools to stream live activities taking place at the sanctuary. Such tools do not seem to be used by pilgrims during participation in the pilgrimage, but rather as a mechanism to get up to date with the sanctuary back in their ordinary lives.

In site, pilgrims tend to follow the fixed schedule of activities with their group or promoted regularly by the sanctuary. They can easily access such activities in one of the digital screens placed in different spots in the sanctuary, by asking to the volunteers, or by going to the Information Service department.

1.2.1.2.9 Crossing Contexts

Lourdes is part of the itinerary of the Camino de Santiago that departs from France. I saw a Santiago de Compostela pilgrim dressed with tracking clothes and I believed he would be going to Santiago. He entered the church and then took a short break and continued on his way. In Lourdes, it is also observable the arrows that show the way towards Santiago de Compostela. I saw some inscriptions for guidance on the way to Santiago. It is a yellow sea shell or arrow on a blue background, a code “GR78” and a kind of flag in white and orange.

Figure 52 - Camino de Santiago signal

1.2.1.2.10 Community

In Lourdes, pilgrims are almost all the time divided in their groups. Sometimes they are gathered with their fellows from the same diocese, others they are gather with people from the same country, or even from totally different backgrounds. Pilgrims from the same diocese tend to be close during the pilgrimage, once they normally have their own schedule of activities in Lourdes, which entails moments of prayer, Masses dedicated specially to them, and other activities outside the sanctuary. For instance, a group of Americans had a private mass on the crypt chapel of Lourdes. Those types of ceremonies are way to affirming their community and providing moments of togetherness during their stay in the city.

There are people from different nationalities in Lourdes, and they often have a great proud from their home countries to the point of showing their national flags during processions and other moments. In Lourdes, I observed people coming from the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Portugal, India, Siri-Lanka, and others. They often tend to walk and participate in event all together.

Figure 53 - Pilgrim raising the Portugal flag during a procession



An important point of their pilgrimage is the moment when they take the official photo of the pilgrimage group. In the center of the courtyard, with the basilicas behind them, huge group of pilgrims get ready to take an official photo. Groups with hundreds of participants, or smaller groups organize themselves to take pictures. As the number of people is higher, photographer need a special structure, materials and distance to capture all of them. There are stairs for photographers to take the picture from a better angle.

Figure 54 - Huge group of pilgrims getting ready to take a picture



One moment that pilgrims from different nationalities are placed together are the International Masses. The event takes place at the underground Basilica St-Pie X. It

CASE 1 – LOURDES

is a huge structure and it looks like the inside of a vessel. As the church is huge, giant screens are placed on the ceiling and in the center of the underground structure to facilitate the observation from pilgrims in the most distant places. And the mass is an international mass, so the songs and prayers are done in different languages. On the screens it is possible to follow the songs that have subtitles in English, Italian and Latin too.

Figure 55 - International Mass



1.2.1.2.11 Spiritual Connection with Our Lady of Lourdes

The image of Our Lady of Lourdes is placed in a room inside the Basilica of the Rosary. It is the same one that moves with the processions every day. The public has access to this image during the day. In the small room where the image is located, pilgrims light up small candles and have their intimate moments with Our Lady of Lourdes. It is possible to see people's connection to the image. People arrive, take a candle and make an offer to the sanctuary. They look at the image. Reflect with closed eyes, heads down.

Figure 56 - The image of Our Lady of Lourdes inside the shrine



Another sign of close connection with Our Lady of Lourdes are the offering from pilgrims to her. It is common for people to leave flowers and other objects on the grid that protects an image of N. S. de Lourdes, which is right in the center of the sanctuary promenade.

Figure 57 - The flowers hanging close to the image



1.2.1.2.12 Volunteering

Volunteering is a highly appreciated activity in Lourdes. If at one hand, there are several disabled and sick people that seek Lourdes in search for a miracle and peace, at the other hand volunteers are necessary to assist those people in need. While I was volunteering, I could sense the good feeling of helping others, being it on the piscines, helping the pilgrims on their miraculous bath, or even by giving information to them on how to access the closest basilica.

Volunteers come from different parts of France and the world because they want to do something to other people. Observing and talking with volunteers, and witnessed people that have a kind of volunteer DNA, once they are serving in Lourdes for years, decades sometimes. And they do it with passion and because they believe in the power of the pilgrimage to people. I followed closely the affectionate way in which the volunteers accompanied people with special needs. I was really delighted with the affection and attention they showed people. It was as if they had no life out there, as if all they were born to do was take care of these people. And so, I learned too, people arrived and I helped them too.

I thought it was amazing to be able to have this experience here. I thought it was transformative. I have never experienced anything like this, I have never seen people so close up experiencing problems or living with limitations and being able to help them in any way. It is like one of the volunteers said to me, our work is touching the lives of these people in a positive way, with love, with attention, with a smile and helping them to have a special moment here in Lourdes. Because they already live such difficult lives, that it is precisely here that we cannot let anything bad happen.

1.2.1.2.13 The Miracles of Lourdes

In Lourdes, a medical verification department was opened to assess whether the cures had physical or spiritual causes. Criteria were determined to ensure that a miracle had occurred: (1) the illness must be serious; (2) the cure cannot be attributed to a treatment; (3) be sudden and complete; and (4) be irreversible. The

medical department is still in operation today, and anyone who claims to have had a miracle in Lourdes can look for it. Miracles still happen today, though less often than in the past due to medicine progress.

Figure 58 - Picture from the Miracles Exhibition in Lourdes



Translation:

L'Abbé CIRETTE

A violent desire to go to the Grotto

In 1893, this man had nervous manifestations and mental confusions, inability to walk, speak, and even loss of memory for a period. He took a bath in the pools, and after feeling a strong desire to go to the Grotto, when he reached the Grotto, he was completely healed of everything.

In this fixed exhibition in Lourdes, there are all the registered miracles of Lourdes, organized chronologically and explanation on how miracles are considered under some criteria and how to proceed with the registration of a new one.

Figure 59 - Picture from the Miracles Exhibition in Lourdes



Translation: Delizia CIROLLI, in 1976, discovered a tumor that could be fatal and doctors asked her to amputate her leg. That was when she decided to come to Lourdes, and the following Christmas, after her condition worsened, the people around her beg for Our Lady of Lourdes and she has a quick, sudden cure. She quickly returns to her normal life.

Translation: Jean-Pierre after diagnosis of sclerosis begins to degrade and become 100% invalid. In 1987, he went to Lourdes at the Rosário pilgrimage in October. The next night, an inner voice says to him, "Get up and walk." That's what he did. He says that "you healed your heart first and then your body".

A local newspaper publishes stories of pilgrims and other important information on the pilgrimage. The name of the newspaper is Lourdes News. A section of this newspaper is devoted to the story of healings and miracles in Lourdes. I went to the place where this magazine is organized and asked for access to their files. One of them has the title: "I started walking again in Lourdes". And the text tells the testimony of a person who talks about his miracle.

Figure 60 - Cover page from the local newspaper



Transcription: "Just over two years old, the surgeon told me that I would no longer be able to walk. But I started to pray to the Virgin Mary to help me walk again. I asked to put my intention on Radio Présence Lourdes so that it could be read at the beginning of the daily rosary prayer in the Grotto. I even wrote to Lourdes saying how sad I was not to hear my intention being spoken. And the sanctuary even answered me saying that even the intentions that are not read, are directed to Our Lady of Lourdes and deposited in the grotto. And the same letter from the church said that I should not be discouraged and keep asking because - Ask and you will receive (Matthew 7, 7) -. Last September, I went to Lourdes on a pilgrimage with the Lourdes Cancer Group. In the pools, as the hospitaliers helped me get into the water, I felt a great heat that came from the tip of my feet up to my neck. The women saw me get out of the water without any help and shouted: Miracle! I cried, I found myself walking alone. They put the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes on my arm and I hugged it with all my strength. I was not buying into what was going on. When I returned, my doctor considered this an extraordinary cure. For him it is a miracle. God, through the intercession of His hand, gave me this grace, to me that I prayed since the beginning of my paralysis. What a joy to walk without any help. My whole daily life changed after I didn't spend half my day in bed. And I also received another grace. My 41-year-old daughter, who had not

spoken to me in 11 and a half years, returned to me on her birthday. When I said that I had been healed in Lourdes, she wept with joy. Two of my other 04 children haven't spoken to me in 11 years. I believe that my husband who has died for 38 years, protects me and prays for me. I know that the Virgin Mary will never abandon me. My whole life I will say "merci". As soon as I have the means, I will return to Lourdes, so that the virgin protects my children and my 07 grandchildren. (Reine Marie, France)

1.2.1.2.14 Connection with nature

Lourdes is place well connected with nature. I photographed the basilica from a new angle today. An angle that showed the beautiful day, super blue sky with few clouds, the river ahead with this clean water the bridge that connects the two sides of the river. The Grotto, the church and the arches that give access to the churches above the Grotto. I believe that this wonderful landscape has all the influence on the well-being of the people who visit here. That's because people usually always comment on how well they feel in Lourdes, how much they forget about their lives when they are here. In addition to the religious fact, the structure and this landscape might influence it all.

At the end of the pilgrimage, I went to the candle chapel. The day was just amazing. The sun was already setting and the light was perfect. I recorded the moment in photos. And I did my last thoughts in that place. I looked at the pools and remembered the stories and the moments that I live there, the interviews I did in Lourdes, the observations, and I saw the place already empty, with almost no people.

Figure 61 - Connection with nature



Camino de Santiago

Case 2

1.2.2 Santiago de Compostela

1.2.2.1 Pre-pilgrimage

Preparing to the Camino can take a lot of time for some pilgrims, while others apparently decide to go with a couple of days in advance. To receive such pilgrims, the church at Santiago de Compostela, as well as the whole market that lies on the edge of the trails is organized to receive pilgrims providing accommodations, bars and restaurants as well as information when needed. The next subsections explain the preparation of pilgrims, church and market in the building of the Camino experience.

1.2.2.1.1 Pilgrims Preparation

Preparing for the Camino can take several weeks, months, for some pilgrims and for other just a couple of days. For me, the Camino de Santiago started well before the first day on the road. By talking with people who had done the pilgrimage before and searching some info in book guides and internet forums, it helped me to decide to take the Portuguese route (going from Porto to Santiago de Compostela). Anyway, as a newbie, it was a difficult decision, because I did not know which way to start, or where to start exactly.

Therefore, two months in advance I books flight tickets from Paris - France to Porto - Portugal, and back from Santiago de Compostela to Paris. I also prepared myself for that moment by buying the necessary materials: trekking backpack, light clothes and with fabrics that dry quickly, raincoat, appropriate sneakers, socks, etc.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 62 - Moments before traveling to Porto



I purchased the most important things the book guides and forums recommend to pursue the journey. In order to purchase those things, I went Decathlon, once it is one of the biggest stores that offers everything for sports and it is normally recommended by pilgrims interested in the Camino. For the way to Santiago, you usually need the same materials needed for trekking. Decathlon has a special section for this type of sport. In total, I spent 332 euros with those materials, corresponding to:

- 1 Backpack for trekking
- 1 Mountain shoes
- 2 Anti-blister socks
- 3 Shorts and pants for long walks
- 3 Running T-shirt
- 1 Rain clothes (coat and pants)

I also went to FNAC, another department store, but more focused on selling technological products, books, audiovisual. There I went in search of printed materials on the Camino de Santiago. I found several books on trekking and a few,

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

on the way to Santiago itself. The idea was to buy a book that would give me practical tips on the Way.

One of the first things that many people and videos, and texts, prior to engage in the Camino was paying attention to shoes. I noticed that new sneakers could lead to a high probability to get blisters on your feet. So, pilgrims should wear their brand-new shoes prior to starting the path. And that's what I tried. I ran at least once or twice a week to get to the path more used to the tennis and to avoid bigger issues with blisters.

Another thing that most worried me was whether or not I will find accommodations on the way. It is recommended to book hotels and auberges before starting the journey, but I honestly did not even know if I would be able to get there in the planned time. Everything was undefined. I preferred to find something along the way, as it is also a strategy for some pilgrims.

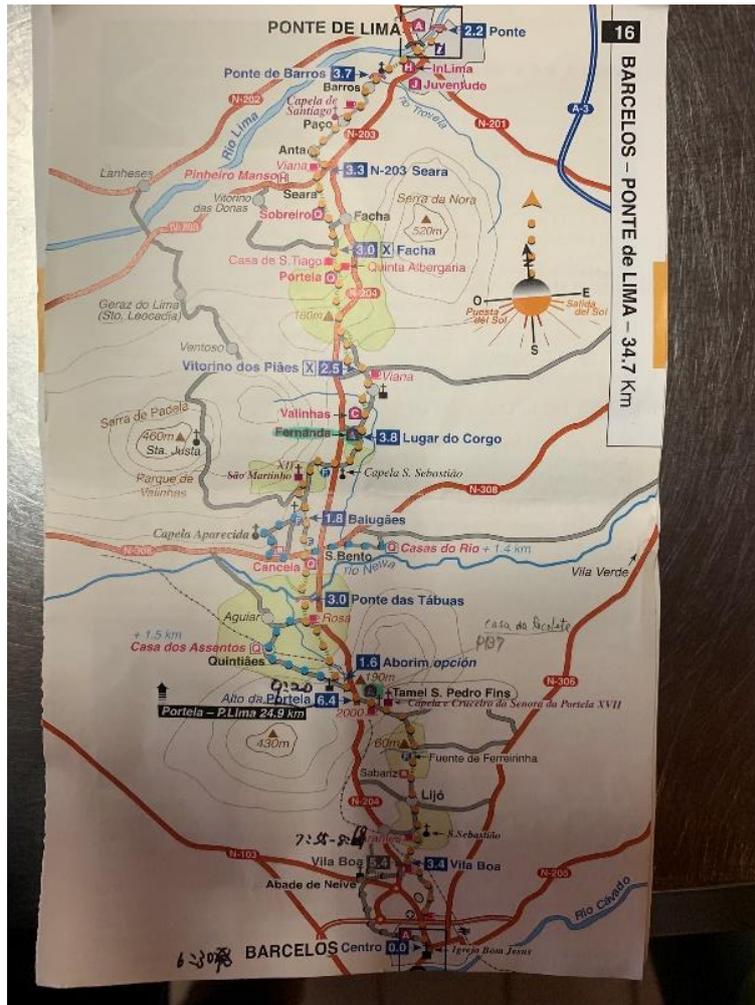
Pilgrims need at least decide on in advance how many days they can devote to engage in the experience. Many of them decide which way to follow based on their availability. Many pilgrims decide to go in the Portuguese Way from Porto to Santiago, because it takes only about 10 days to finish, while others can take up to 30 or even 60 days. As live back in our ordinary life does not stops, pilgrims need to arrange vacations or days off, or even organize family schedule to leave for a couple of days. Anna explains some of her preparing to the Camino:

Yeah, I had two days (to organize my Camino). And the first day was on a Sunday, so there were no stores opened in Germany. [...] I do sports at home so I had all the necessary clothes. But the water bottle and the guide and the flights tickets, it was more expensive, but it all fit. And also, I work in a restaurant and I called my boss and I was like: "can I do it?" and she was like "yeah, go for it." And that was really easy. And I... like, I planned my trip, because I'm German. (Anna, Germany)

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Some pilgrims purchase printed maps of the Way to locate themselves while walking. I observed some of my colleagues' maps, with super complex and detailed information such as geographical reliefs, rivers, and etc. Other pilgrims tend to just check digital maps in their smartphones, or follow the yellow arrows of the way, gather information with other pilgrims, and even follow their intuition.

Figure 63 - Printed map



There is one object that is like part of the Camino identity as is extended to the pilgrims doing the pilgrimage, and that is the Compostela or the shell. Pilgrims normally hang their shells on their backpacks. The Compostela or the shell is the symbol of the pilgrim. In addition to all the clothes we wear, Compostela is one of the clearest signs that characterize the pilgrim. Some pilgrims can start their Way with their shell, but I got mine only after days walking when I found one at a local market.

Figure 64 - Pilgrims with a shell on her backpack



1.2.2.1.2 Church Preparation

The Camino is a millenary way with millions of pilgrims that stepped through the paths that lead to Santiago de Compostela. As a way to provide a better spiritual and adventurous experience to pilgrims, the paths are well signalized with yellow arrows that show the correct path to pilgrims and avoiding they feel lost during the Camino. Along the way you also have more precise information about the path. There are some totems with a map, with the routes, and legends with details.

The centenary and millenary churches along the way are part of the spiritual experience of pilgrims. There is not an elaborated decoration or pavement of the Way, once the idea is to promote an experience of the simple, rustic, and close to nature. So, pilgrims are invited to explore the natural landscapes, the ancient churches, as well as the city centers of bigger and small villages along the Way.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 65 - Arrows along the way



Figure 66 - Totem with detailed information



CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

However, there are of course some preparing the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela promote to receive pilgrims, and one of them was the renovation of their internal structure. As pilgrims arrive in the city, they are also inviting to have a spiritual experience at the Cathedral, such as attending to International Masses, going to confession, or lighting a candle.

One of the most unique things that only happens in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela is the Botafumeiro. According to the official website of the Cathedral, the Botafumeiro (“censer” in Galician) is one of the most famous and popular symbols of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. It is a large thurible that hangs by means of a system of pulleys from the main dome of the Cathedral and swings toward the side naves. It takes eight men to move it, who are known as “tiraboleiros”. It weighs 53 kg and measures 1.50 meters; it hangs from a height of 20 meters and can pick up great speed.

Figure 67 - The botafumeiro



Source: Cathedral Santiago de Compostela website

1.2.2.1.3 Market Preparation

The Camino is structured with hotels, hostels, auberges and other accommodations as well as with restaurants, bars and cafes all along the way. Other services are also present, such as backpack transfer for those pilgrims that cannot deal with the weight of their backpacks, massages, and etc.

Pilgrims can find information to get some of these services as soon as they enter the next accommodation. For instance, auberges normally offer a mural with service information: laundry, backpack transfer, local restaurants and so on. In Vilarinho, the first auberge I stayed, the price for transporting backpacks, for instance was 07 euros. The price for doing the laundry in the auberge were 3 euros per person. We had information about the upcoming auberges. In the mural we also had messages from pilgrims who had passed there and were thanking them for their stay.

Figure 68 - Info board at an auberge



Tourism Offices offer support to pilgrims. Some of them offer maps with relevant and up to date information, such as the names of the cities, the hostels you have in each place, the tourism centers, with telephones and everything. The guide also provides price information for the hostels and the value ranges from 05 euros to 50 euros per stay. Opening hours for guests vary, opening from 8 am until 4 pm and closing hours varying between 8 pm and 10 pm. The value is often just a donation to maintain the spaces. It is also common to encounter some outdoor murals with relevant information about auberge's location.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 70 - Valença city center (commercial site)



We followed the yellow arrows that took us right in the middle of the open shopping area. The narrow streets, the varied shops, the tourists and customers passing by and us and other pilgrims following the yellow arrows. But as pilgrims are not necessarily looking for more stuff to put in their backpacks, the experience of the Camino seems to be less about consumption of material objects.

But the marketing around the pilgrimage is also exploding. Some stores and brand are designing products and services specially designed to pilgrims, such as this store inside a hostel offering all equipment and souvenirs suited to the pilgrimage experience of the Camino, such as hats, rain coats, sunglasses, socks, sneakers, and so on.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 71 - Store with products designed especially for pilgrims



1.2.2.2 The pilgrimage

The Camino is made by walking daily distances from one city to another. However, in order present how pilgrims consume the Camino experience, the following subsection present the most relevant touchpoints of the Camino, such as kicking-off the walking, gathering together with other pilgrims, or feeling nature and culture of the different settings.

1.2.2.2.1 Arriving

All the available Caminos that lead to Santiago de Compostela start in a specific city. Pilgrims can decide if they are starting the Camino from the beginning, or from a specific point that suits them best. Pilgrims however should pursue at least 100 km as the minimum distance acceptable. As I done the Portuguese Way, starting from Porto, I took a plane from Paris to Porto.

Before kicking-off the journey, I decided to one today in Porto to enjoy the city, settle things and find the place where I was going to start the pilgrimage. I made a reservation at a hostel in the center of Porto. After my check-in, the streets of the city center, the cable cars passing in the streets, the historic buildings, the famous

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Portuguese ceramics in several buildings. The city was full of tourists and people on the streets. Tourist buses passing by, lots of people in bars and restaurants. I found the city very much alive.

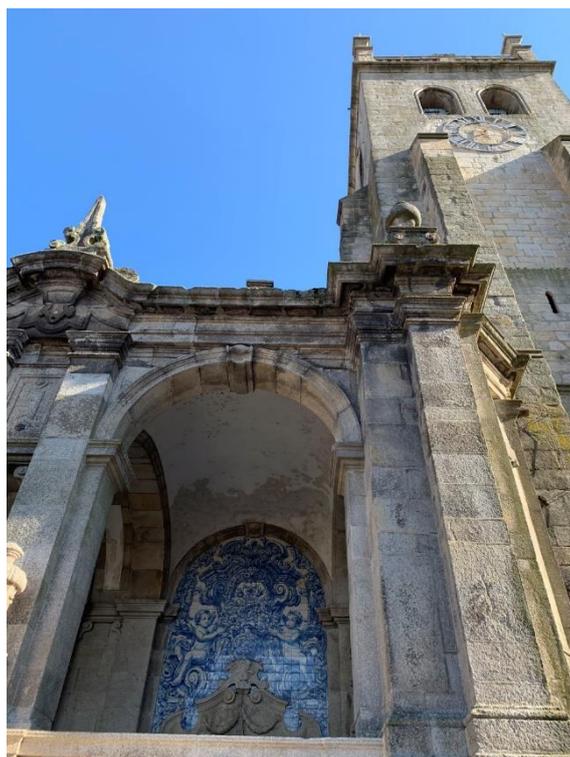
Figure 72 - Exploring Porto



One of the easiest places to find was the Cathedral of Porto. From what I saw, it is one of the departure points from Porto to the Camino de Santiago. So, I made a point of going to see the church, observe the place, start to see the arrows that lead to the Way. I didn't get to enter the cathedral, but I made a point of taking a walk around the area and mainly trying to find some tourism service that could help me.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 73 - The Cathedral of Porto



Since the middle of May, I have been very strange. Without knowing how to deal with social situations, normal conversations with anyone make me want to cry. I have avoided people and direct eye contact. Whenever I am asked if I am well, I feel like crying. Yesterday I even talked to a friend, she helped me to come to a conclusion that this is a reflection of the number of things and responsibilities that I have been having lately. I changed countries, with a language I don't know, started a doctorate, started research funding and started a doctorate, started to collect data in the first year of my doctorate. In the midst of it all, I am also a person who gives a lot of attention to everyone. That I give myself energetically a lot to my friends. It is true that I received several friends in my apartment, and among these friends I went on trips. And I had commitments at ESCP too. So, there are many things, in addition, I am already thinking about the next semester, my vacation and everything seems that I place a high degree of importance and complexity. This has taken me a lot. Making an allusion now, my life must be a little like on the Way, I have to walk with less things. Less weight. Any less.

1.2.2.2.2 Motivations

Pilgrims share the reasons conducting them to come to the Camino de Santiago. said they are here because they like to travel, to live an experience, to relax, or even to escape from their problems. Some of them told me they were facing mental disorders lately, such as Alessandra from Italy:

[...] I was very confused, like, what is missing, what am I looking for? What do I need now to feel better? Because I was feeling bad in the past months, years, [...] kind of depressed. I couldn't find a way out (Alessandra, Italy).

The Camino de Santiago rises, then, as an opportunity to find relief and peace amidst difficulties in life. For instance, Anna, from Germany, also demonstrates the way current life events can be hard to cope with and how she decided to come to the Camino is an alternative.

Yeah, so I don't really know what to study yet (after high school), and I don't really know what to do with my life. [...] Coz I'm really bad at decisions. And I thought "I'm going to go on my own, so I'll maybe get better at it. [...] have some idea what to do or what I'm good at. (Anna, Germany)

Emma, from the United Kingdom, used her vacation time to do something different. And the Camino felt the right thing to do according to her plans:

"Yes, my first Camino, but I think it will be my last. I did it because I had 5 weeks. I'm at the end of a long career break, 6-month break from work. And I had 5 weeks and I wanted to do a really long adventure, something that would push my body. I speak Spanish. So, I was

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

like Spain or Latin America would be helpful to practice that. And then the Camino kind of felt like the right thing to do". (Emma, UK)

1.2.2.2.3 The Way

a) Getting ready to walk

Daily, pilgrims wake up between 05 and 06 am. As the morning rises, we hear people zipping their backpacks, and their steps outside the room. Depending on the weather outside (rainy or sunny), pilgrims get ready accordingly. Despite having some fruits or coffee at the albergues sometimes, pilgrims normally do not take a breakfast before leaving. This 'getting ready' moment can be also quite bustling. Pilgrims wake and we felt a kind of hurry, such as pilgrims dressing up and getting ready to leave very fast.

b) Getting used to the arrows. Feeling a bit lost

It took me some hours at my first day of the Camino to feel more confident with the arrows that are so particular in this experience. The cathedral in Porto - Portugal was my departing point. As I arrived there, I visualized the yellow arrows that show the way and followed them. As I was walking on the streets, I observe other pilgrims walking along the path. Until then, I was able to identify them by the type of clothes and accessories we carry. People with trekking clothes and backpacks. And as they were following the same path, that also makes me more relaxed and confident I am on the right way.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 74 - The first yellow arrow I observed



Walking through the still deserted streets of the Porto, I followed the arrows, which I initially imagined were more distant from each other. But they are very close to each other, so it is difficult to get off the route after all. In the end it is much easier to just follow the arrows than to keep looking at your phone all the time.

Figure 75 - Following the arrows



CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Arrows are everywhere, on the light poles, on the walls, on the floor. We usually find an "X" to wrong directions. Another thing that exists is also arrows to the Sanctuary of Fátima in Portugal. And the arrows are usually in the opposite direction of the Camino de Santiago. Meanwhile, the arrows for the Camino de Santiago are yellow, the arrows for Fátima are blue. In some places the signal is standardized with signs affixed to totems, while in other places the signal is rustic, painted on walls, floors or poles.

Figure 76 - Official signal in a totem - Portuguese Central Way



c) Walking alone & walking all together

Even when you start walking the Camino alone, at a certain point you cross other pilgrims Way and decide to walk with them. Initially, I engaged in the Camino alone and suddenly I made friendship with other pilgrims, with whom I walked for a couples of days.

From the second day to the third day of the Camino, I was walking with Dominika, from Poland. We met in the auberge the first night and decided to walk together. We developed a kind of partnership. When we were out on the street, she

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

remembered that she had forgotten her watch. So, we came back, and she managed to rescue without further problems. We talked a lot on the way, about various subjects. About what we do, about life, about family, about love for animals. And I was surprised how athletic she is, she runs marathons, and she is used to running a lot. Dominika told me that she always wanted to go to Santiago, and she never made it because of work or something that would not let her go. She already said that she already wants to do it again, without even having finished.

As we walk together, we share the same landscapes, ideas, experiences and so on. From the third day on, I needed to stay one more day at a city and Dominika continue her Camino. My foot was hurting a lot, so I stayed and she continued. I felt a little bad because I enjoyed walking with her, but in the Camino soon we realize each person has its own Camino and pace of walking. From the fourth day on, I met Seu Severo, which is Brazilian and we started to walk together. When walking with another person, we tend to decide things together, such as moments to stop and rest, to have a coffee and eat something, time to start walking the next day. Seu Severo and I walked together until the last day of the Camino.

Some pilgrims, however, prefer to walk alone. For instance, a 60-year-old Pole who I met at an auberge in Barcelos, told me that he prefers to walk alone. So, he was walking by himself, but whenever we met him, he was always very kind, and sharing interesting anecdotes.

Figure 77 - Pilgrims walking between Barcelos > Ponte de Lima (Portugal)



CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

As we meet other pilgrims walking, be it someone we already know or not, we tend to wish a "Bon Camino" (Have a good way!), as a manner to communicate and wish good things for their way. Other forms of communication between pilgrims are messages left on paper pieces, transit plates, and everywhere wishing for other pilgrims to don't give up, to keep on going, to persevere.

Figure 78 - Pilgrims leave messages to each other



d) Understanding your body limits

Feeling tired, hungry or dehydrated are normally feelings that people do not pay attention in ordinary life. As pilgrims are walking the Camino, those feelings are part of the experience. Whenever pilgrims feel it is time to make a short break, to have a coffee and drink some water, they tend to search the next restaurant or coffee shop in which they can have this short break, or even just sit a couple of minutes, take off their shoes and let their feet breath for a while.

The Camino also provides time and "living in the moment" experience that make pilgrims pay more attention to their bodies. When I was walking, I observed something quite weird. When walking, I used to make a strange thing with my one of my fingers: I bent one finger into the hand, while the others remain opened. That is an example of how we get more connected with our feelings, the way we are walking, the pain, and so on.

Figure 79 - Noticing a peculiar thing about my body



The same was felt by Anna, when she affirms the Camino let you really feel your body. For her, she realized how much she forgot her own feet her whole life, and that was during the Camino when she started to observe and feel it better:

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

That's what I noticed too on the Camino. You feel your body way more than... like, I never noticed my little pointy toe, like never. I've never thought of my feet this much. Five from nine hours I think of my feet and I never do that at home (Anna, Germany)

e) Feeling the way

At the top of one of the auberge's entrance hall was the following sentence: "A turtle knows better than the Camino than a hare". Soon, pilgrims realize that is not need to run to reach Santiago de Compostela. Pilgrims must appreciate the view, their natural pace of walking, and observe the things around them.

As we walk the Camino, we cross small villages, big cities, rural areas, ancient churches. Pilgrims walk through local history and culture, as well as through forest and beautiful landscapes. Whenever we could, we stopped and took a photo when we found the place beautiful. But even when we cannot stop, just keep walking and appreciating each step is also an exercise. Sometimes, when my thoughts were stronger in my head, I used to lose the focus on the world around me, but that was also necessary, because the Camino helps us to navigate through a lot of emotions and feelings.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 80 - Church along the Camino



Along the way we see old churches, and in some places even explanations of the history of the place. We pass through historic bridges of hundreds and even thousands of years old. We didn't stop much at each location, we admired, commented, and went on. We saw a centenary church in Rates - Portugal that appeared to be very old. Behind the church, there was a quiet village. The church is the Romanesque Church of São Pedro de Rates, which dates from the 12th / 13th century.

Figure 81 - Romanesque Church of São Pedro de Rates



CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

And we never got used of being enchanted by the landscape around us either. So, we were always talking about the colors of green that were in our eyes, about the smell of plants and the place, about how calm and quiet and noiseless the path was. And even about the touch. We touched a wall full of moss and commented how nice it was to touch and feel it.

Figure 82 - Wall covered on moss



The incredible landscapes, the cool breeze, and the good smell of plants, were ways I found to think about things inside of me. Some of my reflections were then written in my fieldnotes:

"It's dawn, the forest's dew, nobody around us, and the first rays of sun coming up and illuminating everything. It was a very beautiful day. And it was the ideal scenario to make several reflections, such as thinking about "slow being a fair way of doing something" and that "people only value something more when they lost it". Those thoughts came to my

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

mind because I was in a hurry at the beginning of the Camino, and it was only after I could no longer walk that I valued walking slowly. Now my feet have new meaning to me, they are so important in helping us to get around, to support us."

Figure 83 - First rays of sun in the Camino



f) Rituals

Pilgrims' rituals along the Way include the practice of stacking stones. I was very curious to understand why pilgrims here do this. By doing a quick analysis, as a participant, I came to the conclusion that when we see the stones it is a sign that other people have been here before and that we are on the right path. It works kind of like the arrows on the path, giving you direction and even comfort. In some places, we saw stones piled up and with the names of people. In one of the stones, it had the name "LUCAS 2019" and "Bella + Ines 11.06.2019".

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 84 - Ritual of stocking stones



Pilgrims also tie colored ribbons in some places. And it seems that some places concentrate these ribbons more. For example, we saw a place that had an image of a saint inside a stone and protected by a mini gate. At the gate, several ribbons were tied, and they were various ribbons, ribbons for running and marathons, shoe laces, and so on.

And along the way it is always common to find traces of other pilgrims, artifacts that they leave so that other people can also see them there, or even when they return to the same path. I also believe in the story that when we see this kind of thing, we know that we are on the right path, it is as if it were another yellow arrow. We saw a kind of frame with hundreds of Compostela with different messages and flags from different countries.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 85 - Shells left at a certain point of the Camino



Figure 86 – Objects left close to a cross in the Camino



g) Coffee-breaks

Coffee-breaks are necessary as we spend a lot of energy on the way. Specially for those who have any breakfast before start walking, sometimes two or more coffee-breaks are necessary. Also, important thing is the connections with other pilgrims that pilgrims normally have during this stop moments or even with the people they are walking with.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

At the top of the hill, in the middle of the Camino, we found a food truck that sold food and drinks. As we are tired, we stopped for a quick snack, replenished our water bottles and continued on our way. There were also other pilgrims too. The place was improvised, but well organized. A trailer, and several tables and chairs for customers. The trailer was right after the end of the climb, very well strategically positioned. In the trailer, several flags from different countries hung, and the very friendly attendants.

Figure 87 - Food trailer at the top of a hill



h) Setting daily walking distance

Pilgrims tend to set daily walking distances such as personal challenges or as a way to achieve their goal of reaching Santiago de Compostela in the predicted time. As the Camino imposes divergent obstacles and difficulties, planning sometimes can be hard to accomplish the way expected. Some days, we can get longer than we imagined, and other days we cannot overcome the kilometers we wished. Being flexible to changes is a skill developed along the Camino.

i) Appreciating each stop

The Way is not only about waking. Actually, pilgrims tend to stay a considerable part of the day in the cities along the way in which they decided to stop. The consumption of the Camino experience then entails those moments.

j) Accommodations

Auberges are the most used accommodation service by pilgrims. They are often managed by city hall or some religious institution and they do not charge pilgrims for a stay. They often request only a donation to maintain their services. Auberges have a considerable structure with dozens of beds in collective rooms, kitchen, bathrooms and laundry. Pilgrims, then, can use auberges facilities to the most essential activities after a morning of intense walking. There are pilgrims that prefer to stay in private hostels, where the number of pilgrims in a single room is not that huge. The relationship with hostel owners and with other pilgrims can be more intimate.

Some auberges have quite comfortable spaces where pilgrims can interact with other pilgrims and rest, such the auberge in Rubiães - Portugal, which has a lawn terrace with beach chairs. I had the chance to watch a sunset sitting in one of those chairs and the experience was relaxing.

Figure 88 - Albuergue Tuy - Espanha



Auberges range from rustic to modern. For instance, we stayed in an auberge in Milladoiro - Spain recently launched and new equipped. The beds were super clean,

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

bathrooms with great structure. And even the entrance hall, the kitchen and a super comfortable living room.

Figure 89 - Albergue entrance in Milladoiro - Spain



k) Meals

Restaurants around the accommodations along the Camino offer special menus for pilgrims, the so-called Menu of the Pilgrim. I had the chance to have a lot of moments of other pilgrims while eating in those restaurants or even in the accommodations itself. While having our meals, we used to share our life stories, dreams, curiosities about our home countries and time used to fly rapidly while we were together.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 90 - Eating moment at a private hostel



Pilgrims also have the chance to taste from local cuisine from different countries while during the Camino. In the Portuguese Way, pilgrims can try Portuguese and Gallician restaurants, bars and coffee shops ranging from small establishments to sophisticated restaurants. Drinking beer and local wines were also part of the experience, especially after an exhausting day of walk.

Figure 91 - Entries in a restaurant on the Camino



We also had meals we ourselves cooked together. We used auberges kitchen and groceries from local supermarkets to prepare some of our dinners. It was an important activity to have meaningful moment of sharing and intimacy with other pilgrims. Some auberges also offered big dinner tables to all the guests. At the table, pilgrims remember their previous experiences of other Caminos or talk about the

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

last couple of days, the planning for the next days. Sometimes, we also engaged in more philosophical reflections and conversations.

Figure 92 - Dinner with pilgrims at the auberge's terrace



1) Communal moments

Pilgrims form an international community of people with the same objective, to reach Santiago de Compostela. They are coming from all over the world. I had the chance to interact with people from New Zealand, Bulgaria, Italy, France, United Kingdom, United States, Germany, Brazil, and others. Individuals are pretty much open to talk, to help each other, to walk together and to spend some time to get to know better people.

Meeting is meaningful, and we share our stories. I met two sisters from Bulgaria, who told me how they loved each other, and wanted to make this trip together for a long time. They are making the Way to relax and rest. Archangelo, an Italian guy, recently divorced, said that he making his Way to have some time to himself. He is an actor, and works as a tour guide in Naples, Italy. Dominica is marathonist and is also looking to relax, be close to nature. Some other pilgrims are doing the Camino

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

again, such as a gentleman who had been doing the path for a year, and did the Camino for 14 times taking different paths.

Pilgrims are open to help each other. For instance, I was feeling some pain in my right foot, and before I left the auberge, I asked for help. One of the pilgrims told me that the best thing that exists for my pain is vick VapoRub, because it gives a relief to the feet. She even gave me some to use. Another example, a pilgrim from Australia shared some tips on how to pursue the Camino better. She recommended to me an ointment that is, according to her, sensational. It's called “Badger Foot Balm” made with “peppermint & tea tree”. It is an organic ointment that she brought with her.

Figure 93 - Pilgrims share receipts and products that alleviate pain



Pilgrims can also have magical moments together. One of the pilgrims took a mandolin to the pilgrimage and started playing in the auberge’s room. Suddenly, what I saw was people gathering around him and starting to sing together. We sang Let it Be, Yellow Submarine, Three Little Birds. It was a moment of very strong connection between us, all singing together, all in the same spirit to share that moment. What a special moment we lived.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 94 - Sing along moment in the auberge's room



m) Local traditions and festivities

As pilgrims move from one city to another, they have the chance to participate in local festivities. There were some of them while I was walking the Camino. The first one was a bullfight in the city of Ponte de Lima. A bull is released in the streets of the city. Apparently, it's still a strong tradition here. I would even like to go and see, but I couldn't cause it was the day I was trying to recover from some pain in my foot. The day after, the city was all decorated to the Corpus Christi Day with brightly colored carpets.

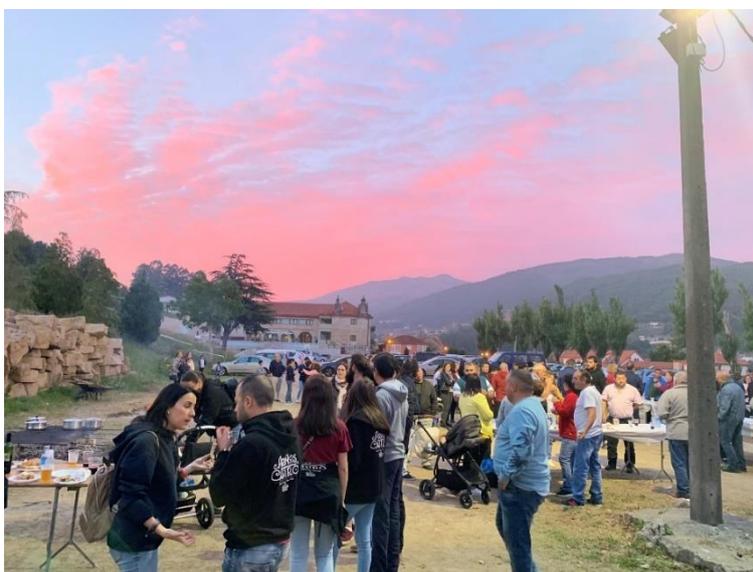
Figure 95 - Corpus Christi in Ponte de Lima – Portugal



CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

In Spain, at another city, we participated in the feast of St. John. It made me miss the feast of St. John so much, which are quite common in Brazil also. Here is a time when people from the village meet, light the bonfire of St. John, they have a barbecue and everyone stays there partying. It was a very interesting moment of acculturation. And the late afternoon sky was just beautiful. We drank, ate, talked to people, and it was a culturally rich moment. The biggest bonfire of the party was going to be burned after midnight, but clearly, we couldn't stay there because we needed to sleep to wake up early the day after.

Figure 96 - St John Feast in Mos - Spain



n) The passport

At each location, restaurant, and auberge we arrive, we get a stamp on our passport of the Way. It is with this passport that we obtain the certificate of completion of the Camino to Santiago. Pilgrims then collect those stamps, show them to other pilgrims.

p) Suffering

Pain is a constitutive part of the Camino de Santiago. Most pilgrims refer to pain and suffering while they are walking. At this section, I introduce my experience with pain during the Camino as well as some other pilgrims' experiences shared with me during interviews.

Feet are the first one to advise our body that we are walking beyond what they can handle. So, during the first days of walk, as soon as I felt my feet hurting too much, I made some short breaks. I stopped for a while, and took the sneakers off to relieve myself for a few minutes. After a couple of hours walking, my feet were already well swollen. At some moments, my feet were hurting so much that I felt it was forming some blisters. So, I used to stop for a while and check, but I didn't see any blisters yet.

Figure 99 - Short breaks to let the relieve



CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 100 - Checking for blisters



At the third day of the Camino, as I was walking, my foot was hurt at a deeper level, but I kept trying to walk. I knew there was still a long way to reach the next city, Ponte de Lima - Portugal. I was trying as hard as I could. We arrived at a point with a small lake and there were several young people there taking a bath, they were really enjoying the place. I really wanted to join them, but I couldn't because I was already very tired. I decided to stop for a while and it was there. We exchanged a few words and they tried to help me. A pilgrim gave me a cannabis ointment that really gave great pain relief. Before that, Dominika had also helped me with a good ointment.

I tried to keep walking, but I simply could not even touch my foot on the ground anymore. That was the moment in which I let Dominika walk alone, and I stayed there to rest for a while and decide to take a taxi or a ride to the next city.

Dominika helped me to get to a main avenue, we went together to a small bar on the side of a road and had a super strong wine, we drank it and within seconds we were even a little drunk. We gave each other a strong hug, wished each other a Good Camino and said goodbye.

I tried to pick up a bus to the next city, but I failed in doing so. After a while, I managed to get a ride with local residents. A guy named Eduardo stopped the car and gave me a ride towards Ponte de Lima. In less than 30 minutes we reach Ponte

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

de Lima. He left me in the center of the city and I slowly tried to find the auberge of the city.

After a day of rest, I wasn't succeeding to walk normally yet. So, I stayed in the city. With the help of another pilgrim, we found a place to stay, because he was also thinking about to stay for one more day at the city. It was a private accommodation located in a place close to the city center of Ponte de Lima. We were greeted by a woman, Portuguese, who introduced us to the place. It was a house that had several rooms. And we were going to have one of those rooms. She told us that other pilgrims would also be staying in the house, in another room.

Figure 101 - View from the inn



After this second day of rest, I could continue the Camino. I felt my feet hurting a little bit, but I learnt with other pilgrims to make some bandages that facilitated. I noticed my feet gets better in terms of pain, however I started to feel that there are some fingers and parts of the foot where there are blisters popping up. In order to delay those blisters, I have taken some precautions such as putting on some band-aid to avoid too much friction between the socks and the tennis.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 102 - Checking for blisters and protecting the feet



As we walk together, we talk about our pains with other pilgrims. Seu Severo has a pain in the sole of his right foot, and I have some pain in both feet. We used to stop for a while to adjust the shoes and continued on the way. Another part of the body suffering was my waist mainly because of the backpack. Perhaps the backpack was not well positioned and it is hurting my waist.

Feeling this pain is a common experience, so everybody feels that in the Camino of Santiago. Eleny reports her difficulties during the Camino. She told me that at a certain moment during the Camino the pain she was feeling was so much that she stopped and ordered a taxi "It was the last 4 kilometers, but I couldn't anymore. So, I said: Call please a taxi". She further mentions how was the general feelings:

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

[...] then the bottom of my feet is destroyed. The whole body is enjoying the experience, my mind, my eyes and ears, I'm enjoying the birds, [...] my nose [...] I love this smell that comes from this forest. But the bottom, of my feet tells me, ahhrh (pain!). (Eleny, Greece)

q) Spiritual Connection

While some pilgrims do not believe in God, neither are looking for a spiritual experience in the Camino de Santiago. Some other pilgrims do search the Camino for religious and spiritual purposes. Such as Alessandra, from Italy, who were having some difficulties in her personal life and was feeling herself way distant from God. So, she engaged in the pilgrimage to feel Good in a different way, and she reported how she found God during her Camino:

It was beautiful [...] because there is... my favorite passage of the Bible is about a meeting between the Prophet Elijah and God, when Elijah - lost and defeated, doesn't know what to do with his life - is in a cave. He goes in a cave and sleeps and he has no purpose and no hope. And God just goes to him and ask: "Elijah, what are you doing here?". He says: "I'm here, defeated with no... I don't know what to do." And God told him: "Stop, come out, and stand in the presence of the Lord." Then a huge fire came, but the Lord was not in the fire. A huge wind came, breaking mountains, destroying everything. But the Lord was not in the wind. An {earthquake} came, but the Lord was not there. In the end, just a very sweet breeze and Elijah recognized God in it. And he stands out of the cave and covered his face in presence of the

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Lord. And God told him what to do, just go there and do this and this and this. That was my favorite passage because Elijah has a very violent and strong nature as a conqueror, or he wanted to... he was a warrior basically. Instead, he discovered a new nature of God, way more sweet, completely different, completely different. And in that day, on the hill I was walking, there was this sweet breeze all day. I was really feeling in the presence of the Lord (Alessandra, Italy).

r) Arriving in Santiago de Compostela

I was very happy to finally arrive in Santiago. I laid down on the floor, looked at the Cathedral, reflected on all these days and remembered the me before the Way, still afraid of what it would be like, not knowing if I had the capacity of overcoming all of it. And the me now, after the Way, feeling so much stronger and more confident that things are possible. There at the main square, in front of the Cathedral, we started to meet friends we made along the Camino. We saw the arrival of other people, and little by little the square grew in number of pilgrims.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 103 - The moment we arrived in the Cathedral



Then we went straight to the place where we can get our certificate. The line there was already quite long. We met with other pilgrims and talked to them in line. The certificate service is a very bureaucratic department. They ask where you started from, ask for your passport to see the stamps, and you pay a fee to print your diploma. And you can also pay for another type of diploma more sophisticated with a specific and very beautiful roll. There, there is also a shop with articles related to the Way. People enter according to the availability of the windows and are served one by one.

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Figure 104 - In the queue to get my certificate



Figure 105 - The souvenir store in the Certificate Department



While I was there in the queue, I met a woman who has already done more than 30 different routes to Santiago. A lady who refuses to stop and wants to continue to venture into the world, especially on the Camino de Santiago. When asked if I could interview her, she told me that she doesn't like interviews, but at least she agreed to talk and take a picture. Proudly, with her various passports, she told me that she

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

had been on the road this time for more than 30 days, and had been accumulating several trips to Santiago de Compostela.

The city of Santiago has wide streets and historic buildings. Historic, millennial churches. We found the place where we stayed, which was a place that Seu Severo found for us. We were welcomed by a lady at her apartment. We stayed there for a while, and then we went out to enjoy the city more. We had lunch and met Júlia and Almir, friends we made at the Camino.

Figure 106 - Veteran in the Camino de Santiago



After that, I continued walking through the city of Santiago de Compostela, which is a highly festive place and full of cultural attractions. I spent some time in the main square watching people arrive slowly, and often found some people I met during the Camino. I was observing that it was common to lay down in the square and observe the cathedral, rest, celebrate that we arrived in Santiago. All sorts of pilgrims arrived in the square, alone, in groups, wearing the same, or even different, clothes. They had a singing group, a person with a wheelchair arriving. Film crews. Anyway, there were many people arriving at the same time. And I was there among

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

them, looking for a contact and asking for an interview. Many arrived and started singing, clapping, and celebrating the fact that they had arrived.

Figure 107 - Friends from the Camino in Santiago de Compostela meeting after the walking



1.2.2.3 Post Pilgrimage

It is exactly after accomplishing the Camino that pilgrims realize they have been walking for days, months. Archangelo shared with me *"I don't know if I cry or if I smile. Yesterday I sit down for a moment. Keep a breath, wow, ok, I arrived. And just this morning I realized what I had done"*.

Pilgrims normally say they are feeling quite happy after the whole experience. Alessandra, for Instance, was feeling lost and almost depressed before coming to Santiago de Compostela. But as she finished her Way, she reports being complete and happy. Pilgrims often conclude the Camino has its power to transform their lives because of the nature, the meaningful encounter with other pilgrims and so on. She says:

[...] I was looking... I don't know exactly what I was looking for, but it's just a sense of the happiness and completeness. I feel very complete now. Yeah, I mean, I already was expecting that the Camino was the right thing, the right choice, just to give me a lot of different experiences and meetings with the

CASE 2 – SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

amazing people all along the way. But I was kind of surprised. First, as I arrived here, I was expecting to feel bad, a little bit sad and melancholic. I wasn't at all, just because I have this feeling, like, what I found, it's not outside, it's inside me, it's inside. I'm going to bring it home. So that was a relief
(Alessandra, Italy)

And the Camino is an opportunity to jump into the self and try to become a better person. Pilgrims often say they have learned something with the pilgrimage and that they want to continue with that transformation when they come back home. Such as what Emma mentions: "*So I've learned, I'm learning to embrace my fear, which I've never really done before*" (Emma, UK).

Juazeiro do Norte

Case 3

1.2.3 Juazeiro do Norte

1.2.3.1 Pre-pilgrimage

1.2.3.1.1 Pilgrims' preparation

Pilgrimage to Juazeiro do Norte requires a considerable planning for pilgrims. As engaging in the pilgrimage is costly, and considering most of them are coming from low-income families, pilgrims need to make a lot of tough decisions regarding their family budget throughout the whole year to save money to the pilgrimage. *"Each pilgrim spends about 2500 reais"*, as explained by Laura, which represents about 400 euros. The costs of a pilgrimage normally involve bus tickets, accommodation, food expenses, leisure. Another important cost during pilgrimage is actually shopping activities (explained in the following subsections).

When interacting with other pilgrims, they also suggested different experiences in terms of the costs of the pilgrimage. Felipe, for instance, mentioned he likes to be cautious with his spending during the pilgrimage. He pays about R\$ 120 (about 20 euros) for bus tickets and accommodation. He also brings food from home, so he can cook in lodging's collective kitchen. And he restricts his restaurant meals to the minimum possible as a way to save money. As he says, at the end of the pilgrimage he spends something about R\$ 300 totals (about 50 euros), considering the gifts and shopping in the city. Therefore, whether spending more or less, pilgrimaging takes considerable financial planning.

Going to the pilgrimage is an important and joyful experience for pilgrims and the ones that are not coming tend to suffer and feel sad about it. In an interview, Laura explained how neighbors react when she shares with them, she is about to go on pilgrimage to Juazeiro do Norte:

"When we share with our neighbors and relatives, we are coming to the pilgrimage in Juazeiro do Norte for a couple of days and

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

they are not coming, they say: you're going to Juazeiro? They hug us and start crying. And we end up crying too. Why? Because we are coming and they want to come too. Then we keep asking Father Cícero to provide conditions for them too so that they can come here to make the pilgrimage with us. (Laura)"

Pilgrims, then, tend to ask Father Cícero, as explained by Laura, to help them to have the appropriate conditions (e.g., time, money, health) to pursue a pilgrimage. Therefore, they engage in saving money and finding the means necessary to go the pilgrimage. If they cannot pursue the pilgrimage after all, pilgrims tend to ask for the ones that are coming for taking with them their most deep requests. Such requests involve the things they are struggling with, such as a mental or physical disease, difficult relationships with relatives and friends, and any turmoil they are passing through at the moment. Moreover, they also ask for gifts from Juazeiro do Norte. Normally, products coming from Juazeiro do Norte gains a sacred and relevant dimension, so pilgrims that are not able to visit the city at least want to have a taste of that by receiving gifts from there.

Motivations to engage in a pilgrimage to Juazeiro do Norte can be very diverse. Pilgrims share they are coming because their parents used to do so and joined their kids into the pilgrim culture. Pilgrims also report about feeling a call to come to the city, and they often believe such a call was from Father Cícero or Our Lady of Sorrows. Yet, a pattern can be observed in the pilgrimage, which is the search for a spiritual experience after passing through a tough major life event, such as the death of a loved one, depression, anxiety, a physical disease, and so on. When dealing with such intricate problems, pilgrims tend to seek for spiritual help to try to help them.

Pilgrims go on pilgrimages when they overcome those issues that once disturbed them, when they experience a healing of a disease, or when they experience a miracle according to their own words. For instance, I talked with a pilgrim that when he was a child, he suffered with polio. The disease totally paralyzed him, and

he used to live "lying in bed", as he said. After asking successive times for God to end up his suffering, a certain day he listened several times a strange voice saying: "Rise up and walk!". And he has done so and started to walk again. Such as this pilgrim, other pilgrims also shared their stories of difficult life events that urged them to seek for spiritual help. Aluísio, another pilgrim, shared how he suffered with measles when younger and how he healed because of the spiritual help from a popular saint called Frei Damião.

Normally, pilgrims ask for Father Cícero and Our Lady of Sorrows to intercede with God for their suffering to be over. They go then to Juazeiro do Norte to thank for what they managed to successfully overcome or to ask in person for those saints to help them. Asking and then thanking involve some rituals and practices that are more explained in the following subsections.

Some of them are pilgrims for more than 30 or 40 years. And they report that would do that again and again until they cannot come anymore. Such as explained by Almir:

This is my 45th pilgrimage. I have 25 years old only. I come normally 4 times in a year. Sometimes 5. I am here for the main pilgrimages of the city [...]. And so, I will be coming. [...] Each pilgrimage that I come here in Juazeiro is a new experience. It is a new mission that I live here on this earth. It is the same thing and at the same time it is not. Every time I come it is a new one, as I can say, it is a new mission that I have: to thank and to ask." (Almir, 25)

1.2.3.1.2 Church preparation

The local church, as an organization, also prepares itself to welcome the pilgrims. The Basilica Sanctuary Our Lady of Sorrows creates a pilgrimage program with

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

activities that follow at least 15 days before the most important day of the pilgrimage. For instance, in the Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Sorrows, which has its final day and most important at September 15th, the program starts normally at the end of August. The program contains processions, novenas, Masses, and involves also the participation of other parishes at the city.

The Basilica also invest in decoration and cultural attractions to add up to the make of a unique experience for pilgrims. The internal side of the Basilica is decorated with flowers, banners and some elements that represent the pilgrim culture, such as the straw hat. I observed also the usage of the state flags from the 09 states composing the Northeastern Brazil. As the higher percentage of participants of the pilgrimage are people coming from these states, the Basilica and some other churches use these state flags in their decoration.

Figure 108 - Basilica of Our Lady of Sorrows



At the outside of the Basilica, they assemble a decoration and structure called "Vila Tabuleiro Grande", which is the former name of the city when it was just a village. In that decorated village, pilgrims are invited to enjoy spectacles and food services.

Figure 109 - Vila Tabuleiro Grande

1.2.3.1.3 Market preparation

Street markets are present in the pilgrimages, and correspond to the great percentage of the shopping experience of the pilgrims. Such street markets are organized right outside of the sanctuary walls in Juazeiro do Norte. I observed there is clear distinction between the sacred space of the sanctuary and the commercial space right outside the sanctuary. They occupy sidewalks and streets of the city center, which is exactly where the sanctuary is.

The street markets are installed right before the beginning of the pilgrimage festivities and are uninstalled right after the pilgrimage is over, meaning the pilgrimage is a vector of consumption for such street vendors and that it is not worth continuing to sell their products in periods without pilgrimage festivities. I observed that at beginning of the pilgrimage there were few street vendors at the surroundings of the sanctuary, but as soon as we approached the final days of the pilgrimage, the streets were almost blocked to cars as street vendors and pilgrims were massively occupying the streets.

As the pilgrimage is the great catalyst for retail in the city, the whole market surrounding the sanctuary prepares to offer services and products to pilgrims during the pilgrimages. Pilgrims also find varied stores in which they can find

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

services and products. Together with street markets, pilgrims find products such as clothing, shoes, household items, and so on.

Figure 110 - Street vendors at the outside of the Basilica



I also went to the Pilgrims Support Center. The support center for pilgrims is a space that was built to better organize street shopping in the city. It was created with the intention of removing merchants from the street, liberating the streets for the best traffic, and really organizing the sector. A considerable number of merchants are installed in this center, but other merchants continue to occupy the streets of the city.

The city center of Juazeiro is made up of two long parallel streets in which several segments of products and services are marketed. The two streets are named, Saint Paul and Saint Peter streets. The perpendicular streets cutting these two main streets are also almost all dedicated to commerce. A big City Market is also widely visited by pilgrims and locals. The whole downtown commercial area prepares itself for the pilgrimage periods during the year.

1.2.3.2 The pilgrimage

1.2.3.2.1 Arriving in Juazeiro do Norte

Only those who have been called by Our Lady of Sorrows can make it to the pilgrimage. Those who have not been invite, they try to arrive, but do not succeed. Somehow, they cannot do it. I am only here because Our Lady called me. When we put our foot on the door frame of our house... there's even that bendito we sing "I put the key in the door, and the foot on the way, we go to Juazeiro do Norte, take the godfather's blessing." (Genildo)

The pilgrimage is a unique journey for pilgrims. They often say they have been called to be there by Our Lady of Sorrows. Such a call is normally translated as someone that out of nothing called that pilgrim to come with her/him to the pilgrimage, or because the pilgrim managed to perfectly and mysteriously organize himself/herself to come to the pilgrimage.

On their way to Juazeiro do Norte, pilgrims come on their buses with about 60 pilgrims. They come playing and singing and having a good time with their friends. It's a pleasure moment that starts with the travel to the pilgrimage site.

Pilgrims report frequently that one of their great emotions is when they start to see the statue of Father Cícero far away when they are on the road, arriving in Juazeiro do Norte. From the bus windows they visualize the statue up in Horto Hills. It is a sign that they are arriving, that the trip was good, and that they are going to meet again Fr. Cícero in Juazeiro do Norte. Arriving in Juazeiro do Norte is also a meaning that they are arriving, as they say, "in heaven". As a pilgrim called Genildo says: "[...]

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

here is a holy land. The ones who live here they don't understand, but this Basilica here is the door to heaven".

Accordingly, pilgrims normally say they are in heaven when they are in Juazeiro do Norte. Such as Maria Julia says:

"Juazeiro do Norte is holy, it's not just the church. It's the holy the city. When we step here, everything is already holy. It is as if Our Lady is pouring rains of blessings on each one of us. It is a peace that we find inside ourselves that we die satisfied." (Maria Julia)

One of the first things pilgrims do when arriving in Juazeiro do Norte is to perform a very common ritual. The buses and cars go to the Franciscan Church. At the center of the church's esplanade, there is a monument to San Francisco, and buses as soon as they arrive and when they leave Juazeiro do Norte make three turns around the monument while honking very loudly. It is a movement of circulation that is quite common.

When pilgrims leave their buses the first thing a lot of them do is head to the Basilica to have their first encounter with Our Lady of Sorrows, such as explained by Margarida:

The thing I like most is to go to the Basilica as the first thing as soon as I arrive in Juazeiro do Norte. I only take off the clothes that I came on the trip after I entered the church. I don't even bathe, and the way I come from the trip, with the dust and everything, I go into the church. Because for me, everything I brought to ask her, I know it's there with me, so I came to deliver it to her, in the hands of the Father Cicero, in the hands of Jesus Christ, so they can

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

*take me home and free from all harm."
(Margarida)*

Pilgrims also enter the church in a different way. They have to enter from the main church door from the church and make their way to the altar on their knees. Many do this because they promise that whenever they arrive in Juazeiro do Norte, they will walk on their knees the first time they arrive at the basilica. So, I witnessed some people doing this.

Figure 111 - Pilgrims arriving in the Basilica on their knees



And pilgrims express such ritual of kneeling to the altar as part of their culture, such as explained by the pilgrim Genildo:

I enter barefoot and kneel at Our Lady's feet. The authentic pilgrim has to enter through the front door. And when we enter, it seems that Our Lady is talking to us. There are pilgrims who do not kneel. But we feel it. You feel the vibration, that faith [...] whoever goes to Juazeiro do Norte and passes through this holy front door of the Basilica, their soul is already saved. [...] When the pilgrims die, they come

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

here. My godfather Cícero said that it was the first trip that the pilgrim would take when he died, he comes to the feet of the mother of God and from here Jesus takes him." (Genildo)

Figure 112 - Pilgrim reaching the altar of the Basilica on her knees



Coming to the pilgrimage is so important and part of their culture, that some pilgrims have a dream of living in Juazeiro do Norte. I found different people that after years coming to the city as pilgrim, decided to move definitely and are quite happy with their choice. Maria, a pilgrim who moved to the city 17 years definitely ago says:

"I decided to live here, and I never want to go back to my homeland. I live here and I come to all the pilgrimages. My family always asks me to come back, but I don't want to. My place is Juazeiro. It's like the older people say: whoever drinks Juazeiro's water, never forgets here. Always remember. I don't feel like living there anymore." (Maria)

I met a group of pilgrims who were arriving. On the bus, an image of Our Lady of Sorrows was right in front, next to the driver. Outside the bus, I saw the passengers who had just got off. Suitcases on the floor and the luggage rack open while other passengers also unpacked. The bus is the main transport used to reach Juazeiro do

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Norte. Some pilgrims come with their vehicles, or even those that come in vans in smaller groups. The numbers of people walking or cycling are much smaller. For instance, Luzia, from the state of Maranhão, said "we come with a van, we left our hometown yesterday at 8 pm and arrived here at 8 am today."

Figure 113 - Group of pilgrims picking up their luggage from the bus



Almost everything in the city is named after Father Cícero: hotels, streets, stores, squares, etc. Father Cícero exercised and still exercises a strong religious and political influence in the city. The development of products and services is also well influenced by the religious figure of Father Cícero. A great example of this is Father Cícero's water, which is a product developed by a local company. The bottle of water is manufactured in the shape of the priest's body, which instantly gains a sacred power to pilgrims.

And pilgrims express great devotion to Father Cícero and Our Lady of Sorrows. I felt when they talk about Father Cícero they express greater connection between them and the figure of the priest. For instance, wherever pilgrims see a statue of Father Cícero, they stop and have at least second of interaction with the statue. During observations, I saw a pilgrim holding the hand of a statue of Father Cícero and staring into the eyes of the statue, she was praying and talking to the saint. In a conversation with her, she told me that pilgrims observe the person of Father Cícero in the statue and treat it with great veneration. Whenever they pass a statue

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

of Father Cícero in the city, they kneel down or make a sign of the cross. They don't just pass by; they stop and worship the image.

Figure 114 - Pilgrims interacting with the statue of Father Cícero



Pilgrims also express such spiritual connection with Father Cícero in an artistic way. They do that by singing the so-called *benditos*. The *benditos* are very faithful portraits of what pilgrims live in the pilgrimage, of the things they do, the way they think, and the things they faith in. The *benditos* are poetries sung in an almost standardized melody. However, each *bendito* has unique verses, but the melodies are almost always similar. An excerpt from a *bendito* called Pilgrims' Visit to Juazeiro, by author Júlio Targino, says:

[...]
My godfather Cicero Romão
He was an adviser
Gave advice to his pilgrims
So, they come to Juazeiro
To visit Our Lady, Queen of the whole world
Watch out, pilgrim
Not to falter
Watch out, pilgrim
Not to falter
Ask Jesus Christ for strength
In this long walk

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Our Lady of Sorrows

She is our protective mother

[...]

Accordingly, when I spoke to pilgrims, they used to mention their relationship with Father Cícero. For instance, Laura affirms the way she is connected with the saint:

"I want to tell you that Father Cícero for me is a saint who lives in my thoughts and in my heart. In every difficult moment of my life, even when I fall down, I immediately say: My godfather Cícero help me. Father Cícero is a holy priest, a priest who welcomed so many pilgrims [...]. I have plenty of faith in my Father Cícero and my Mother of Sorrows. (Laura) "

Another pilgrim, called Genildo, also expressed how he sees Father Cícero and his connection with the spiritual leader:

My Father Cícero is a saint of great power. A lot of miracles are due to him. He lives in the heart of the pilgrims. My father Cícero did not die. He lives in heaven. There is his tomb here [...], but that was just a symbol. [...] When you are in front of his statue, you are not only seeing him, but hearing from him. He is the miraculous saint. He is the saint from the heart of the Northeast. Our Lady of Sorrows is the mother of the pilgrims. So here in Juazeiro this symbol of faith is formed. The owner of the pilgrims is Our Lady of Sorrows. She came from heaven to guide us." (Genildo)

Coming to Juazeiro, then, is coming for an encounter with the sacred. Pilgrims meet Father Cícero and Our Lady of Sorrows who will then intercede for them in

heaven. Some pilgrims also report being in the city is like being in heaven, they forget everything from their ordinary life. Some pilgrimages, such as the Pilgrimage of All Soul's has a specific meaning from pilgrims. Paulo, an assiduous pilgrim, shared the meanings associated with this pilgrimage:

"The pilgrimage of the All Souls' is our New Year's ... which is actually the closest pilgrimage to the end of the year. We come to thank God for all that we prayed for in penance the last year, so we come to thank for all the goodness that happened, but also for the sufferings that make us strong and that make us grow spiritually. It is time to set goals for the next year where, once again, we will return to live all this spirituality. Without forgetting that it is time to tell my godfather Cicero and the Our Lady of Sorrows that we firmly believe in resurrection and in heaven, which is where Father Cícero himself is surrounded by our family members and pilgrims who preceded us in heaven... this is our hope." (Paulo)

1.2.3.2.2 Accommodations

Pilgrims regularly stay in one of the several lodgings dedicated for pilgrims around the Basilica. They can be accommodated in collective or private rooms. They often stay in collective rooms with about 05 other pilgrims. Some accommodations offer only a big salon where pilgrims stay all together in a more rustic and simple way.

I went to check out a lodging that is nearby the Basilica and that used to be very common in Juazeiro do Norte at the beginning of the pilgrimages. But today, there are still some that remain. The accommodation is basically a large hall with thick wooden planks well fixed to the walls at the height of my head, where several

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

hammocks are set up, and these hammocks are where the pilgrims sleep. On the floor, they keep their belongings. In this same inn, they still have private room.

Figure 115 - Collective accommodation services



Pilgrims develop loyalty to accommodation services. They engage in close relationship with accommodation owners and managers, and they like to be hosted in the same places. It is almost like their places are guaranteed, especially those who come every year to the pilgrimage. For instance, Margarida explains such relationship:

On my first pilgrimages, I stayed at the Hotel Guanabara, but I thought it was a bit far from the Basilica. So, for me it was not viable and I thought it was a stewardship. So, once upon a time I met the owner of this accommodation I am right now and [...] he offered me one single-bed room. It's been already 22 years that this room is mine and I don't even call it my room anymore, it's my home. It feels home" (Margarida)

1.2.3.2.3 Spiritual activities in the city

Some spiritual activities are quite present in pilgrims' journey. Such activities are also part of pilgrims' traditions during pilgrimage. They don't need to pay to

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

experience that. Most of them are rituals and practices created by them throughout the years and that are transmitted through generations. Activities includes walking to the top of the Horto Hills, going to the Museum House of Father Cícero, making the circuit along the local churches, following the steps of Father Cícero in the Saint Sepulcher Trail, or even Meeting with Blessed Annete.

a) Going to the grotto and collecting water

When visiting the Franciscans Church, pilgrims engage in some rituals, such as going to the grotto of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception. It is basically an artificial grotto installed in the sanctuary area with an image of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, such as grotto in Lourdes, but in smaller proportions. There is also a small artificial water source, where people usually fill their water bottles. People believe that the water there is holy. There is a pallet structure set up to organize the entry and exit of people who usually line up to access the fountain.

One by one pilgrims get in line and get their water. The source is basically a pipe with some water outlets that is constantly pouring water, and pilgrims arrive with their bottle of water to fill up. They put some water on their hands, splash water over their heads, wash their faces, and fill their little bottles. A security guard organizes the queue and seems to organize the flow of people.

Figure 116 - Searching for blessed water



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

During conversation with pilgrims around this grotto and water source, they shared their feelings about the experience. A pilgrim from the Sergipe state told me that the water is holy, serves as medicine. If the person has an illness, they can drink or pass the water on the body part that hurts. In conversation with another pilgrim, she told me that water is “holy water”. She mentioned this water is good for everything, to throw at home and protect the house, to drink, and so on.

Marinete, another pilgrim from Sergipe state reported that she bought a bottled water a while before, drunk the water, and kept this bottle until the moment she filled it with water from the fountain. She says that this water here is sacred, and she drinks or splashes some water on her head when she has a headache, for instance. In addition, she takes the bottle of water home, and uses it little by little. It is also common to share the water with other people who, who often says: “do you still have that holy water that you brought from Juazeiro do Norte”? And we usually share with one another. She said that the most important thing is to have faith that the water is holy.

Figure 117 - Pilgrim showing her bottle of sacred water



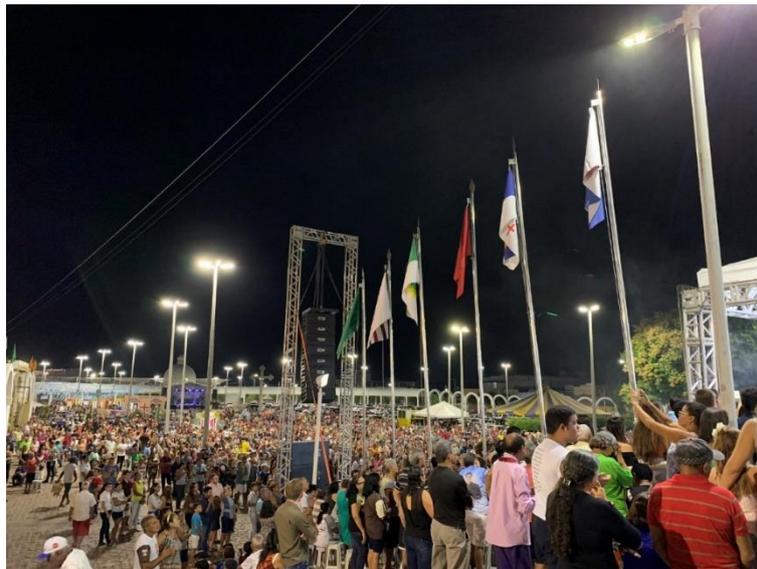
b) Going on a church tour

"After coming to the Basilica, we go to Socorro Chapel, the Franciscans Church, the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, and then take another day just to go to the Horto Hills and the Holy Sepulcher trail."(Genildo)

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Such as expressed by Genildo, pilgrims have this tradition of visiting almost all the churches in Juazeiro do Norte. Apart from the Galindo Basilica of Our Lady of Sorrows, which is where the pilgrimage program mostly take place, pilgrims visit churches in the city as a circuit. In some churches they have specific rituals, such as the water one explained at the previous subsection.

Figure 118 - Pilgrims attending to a mass at the Basilica



c) Reaching the top of the Horto Hills

*Look up there,
At the top of the hill
He is alive
The priest isn't dead*

This excerpt from a famous song in this pilgrimage, expresses the relationship pilgrims have with Father Cícero, especially a statue of his body that is placed at the top of the Horto Hills. The statue with 30 meters high is considered one of the highest statues of the world made out of concrete. Then, visiting the statue is also a spiritual activity to pilgrims.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Reaching the top of the hill can be made by two ways: by walking or with cars/buses. Pilgrims wake up early in the morning to reach the top of the hill together with the first lights of the sun. I woke up at 4:30 am, and went to the street that led to the top of the Horto Hills. Together with me I witnessed other pilgrims. Some of them make their walk barefoot in penance for their sins or also as a way to thank for some blessings.

Figure 119 - Group of pilgrims on the way to the Horto Hill



As we walk the hill, we pass through narrow streets, with unregular sidewalks, so pilgrims need share the street with cars, motorbikes, and other pedestrians. Local residents living in region also uses their sidewalks to put up makeshift tents are selling food and other products. They normally sell coffee, cake, water, hats, etc.

Figure 120 - Pilgrims climbing the Horto Hills



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

As pilgrims climb the hill, they have some traditions such as donating money to people in difficult situations that are on the streets of the hill. Many pilgrims save coins the whole year so that when they are in Juazeiro do Norte, they can make micro donations to the people who need it most. Many use it as a way to thank their blessings.

Climbing is not an easy activity to overcome, yet there is not much preparation from pilgrims to engage in. The pilgrims walk with sandals, there is not an appropriate type of clothing, it is simply the clothes they have. Some pilgrims, facing difficulties to finish the walk up to the top of the hill, may need to use some services such as moto taxis or similar. I witnessed some pilgrims who took the moto taxi to finish their way up.

Figure 121 - Pilgrims walking to the top of the hill



One of the products they sell on the hill is the hat with the classic image of Father Cícero and Our Lady of Sorrows on it. It is a very cultural product and is part of the identity of the pilgrims. Pilgrims most known cultural and religious products are the hat and the rosary. Both of them are ways to express the pilgrim's identity and serve as protection, especially the rosaries. Both products were highly recommended by Father Cícero for pilgrims to use.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 122 - Pilgrims' hat for sale



It took me around 45 minutes to climb the hill. But it can take more or less to pilgrims depending on their level of energy. Normally, there is no rush to reach the top. At the way, they have the via Crucis stations, in which most of the pilgrims stop, say a prayer, and then continue their walk. It can take up to 01h30 to reach the end of the hill and meet with Father Cicero's' statue.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 123 - Special decoration & pilgrims going up to the statue



Figure 124 - Pilgrims line up to the statue



When they reach the top of the hill, pilgrims line up to climb the final stairway steps that lead to the statue. The statue is basically the image of Father Cícero with a hat on one of his hands and a walking stick on the other. Pilgrims then created a ritual that consists of circulating three times this walking stick while making a wish or asking for a blessing. Such as explained by Francisca:

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

"I went to the statue. I passed his staff, and asked him to give me health. I took a photo. I was so pleased to see him." (Francisca)

Pilgrims always take a picture posing with the statue behind them, stretching their arms and positioning their hands as Father Cícero was touching their hands. The Horto Hills administration offers some stairway steps that can provide a better angle for pilgrims' pictures. Margarida explained her experience:

"[...] at 5 am we are already heading to the Horto Hills [...] there is a statue of Father Cícero there [...] and we are happy to go, stretch out the arms and take a picture posing with the statue behind us. And in this picture with the statue is as if he is blessing us. Then we are happy because we are going to take a photo with the Father Cícero blessing us. That's why no one leaves the city without going to the Horto Hill." (Margarida)

d) Going on the Saint Sepulcher trail

The Holy Sepulcher trail is an activity for those pilgrims who seek an experience of spirituality in the pilgrimage. As shared by some pilgrims any place is holy in Juazeiro do Norte, yet the "Holy Sepulcher allows for a greater connection with God", according to Almir.

The Saint Sepulcher Trail has a total distance of 5 km (round trip) and it can take up to 2h30 for completion. According to pilgrims and the sanctuary, Father Cícero himself used to make this same trail when he needed time to reflect and pray. Some of them affirm it was a way Father Cícero found to make practice penance. Then, pilgrims themselves want to follow the steps of Father Cícero and they use this time to have an spiritual moment of connection with God and saints.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 125 - Pilgrims in the Holy Sepulcher trail



Depending on the season, the trail can have more or less dry temperatures. I went there on November, and the weather was very hot and dry. The trees are dry, the ground very light brown. The city lies in the middle of the *sertão* region, known to be mostly dry throughout the year. It turns out that with the first rain drops, which happens between December and March, this region changes completely to be widely green.

As pilgrims move along the trail, they find some small local vendors that sell basically food and other medicinal products, some chapels and finally one of the most important parts of the trail, a massive formation of stones in different sizes and shapes. It is a preserved geological formation declared as so by UNESCO. When walking around it is very common to see pilgrims exploring the spaces around the stones, walking wherever they can, going to the chapels that were built there and everything takes on a ritual tone at that moment.

Inside the chapel, for instance, there are some rituals. Pilgrims first go to the chapel altar and make their prayers, they then like to write their names on the chapel walls, and finally they hang themselves on some wood that supports the roof of the chapel and make three upward movements that promise to cure their back pain. While in the chapel, I saw several pilgrims doing the same thing. Some said that it had to be done for better back pain, others said it was to close the chest and better the back, others said it was for heart pain.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

When they reach the small altar of the chapel, pilgrims have an intimate moment with Father Cícero statue at the altar. Pilgrims touch Father Cícero's statue, then touches their own head, then touch Father Cícero again, and do this a few times.

Another very strong ritual is the movement of passing between the stones. It is through this that they have their sins taken away. According to pilgrims, only those who have faith can pass between the stones, and those who have a lot of sins will have more difficulties to pass too. Whoever cannot pass through the stones is a person without faith or with many sins. One after the other, almost mechanically, they go on and on between the stones.

In conversation with a girl, she tells me that she came to make the way to the Holy Sepulcher because she has a lot of faith and came to find inner peace. Other pilgrims also are looking for other things, such as the cure from a disease, peace, happiness, friendship, and fortune. They come for many reasons.

The whole scenario is composed of several stones, and pilgrims ritualistically pass through each one of them. They have a kind of trajectory to follow. The passage between the stones is almost like a religious amusement park. People do it with a lot of faith, but they are also always happy, playing with each other to see who will make it through. And it has many stones, with different obstacles and difficulty levels.

One of these stones is the largest of all. It is a huge stone that in some points is bigger than the height of people. It has this fissure in the center where people go through. In particular, getting out of the stone is difficult, because there is a big gap at the end where people can get hurt, but there are always other people who help.

Pilgrims then share stories of other pilgrims who got stuck in the stone once. A pilgrim told me a friend of her were accumulating sins, and in the pilgrimage in which this happened, she had brought money for donations to the beggars, but she spent the money for herself, and kept making many jokes with everyone along the Holy Sepulcher trail. So it happened, she got stuck in between the stones and it was required a couple of men to take her out of it.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

At each stone, pilgrims created their own rituals. At some of them they have to pass through, others they have to pass under, they have to lean their backs against one of the final stone, or even they have to pass their fingers on other stones on some engraved sentences they affirm was made by Father Cícero himself. Many do not have a profound reflection on what they are doing, but they do have a spiritual explanation of that and how it can help them in their personal lives and in their physical health.

As the pilgrim Genildo explains, the Holy Sepulcher is a place where pilgrims are following the steps of Father Cícero. He mentions that people do not know who wrote that things in the stones, but he affirms it was Father Cícero. He says:

"In the holy sepulcher you see those stones written, and people have come from abroad to solve the mystery, but it was my Godfather Cícero who wrote those things. There are those stones that we pass through inside. I have already seen, with those eyes that the earth will eat, a very strong and fat old lady, and she passed by. And when the other one went by, she hooked herself. The fireman helped her to leave. The Holy Sepulcher is the place of penances." (Genildo)

As the Holy Sepulcher trail is a very embodied experience, some picture may be more illustrative of the rituals and scenarios in which it takes place. The next pages are dedicated to visually demonstrate the trail and its rituals.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 126 - Pilgrims visiting a chapel in the Holy Sepulcher



Figure 127 - Pilgrims hanging themselves to cure body pains



Figure 128 - Pilgrims stacking stones on a plate



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 129 - Pilgrims writing their names with their fingers as if it were a pen



Figure 130 - Pilgrims making their prayer and touching Father Cícero's statue



Figure 131 - Pilgrims making their prayer and touching Father Cícero's statue



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 132 - Passing between stones to redeem sins

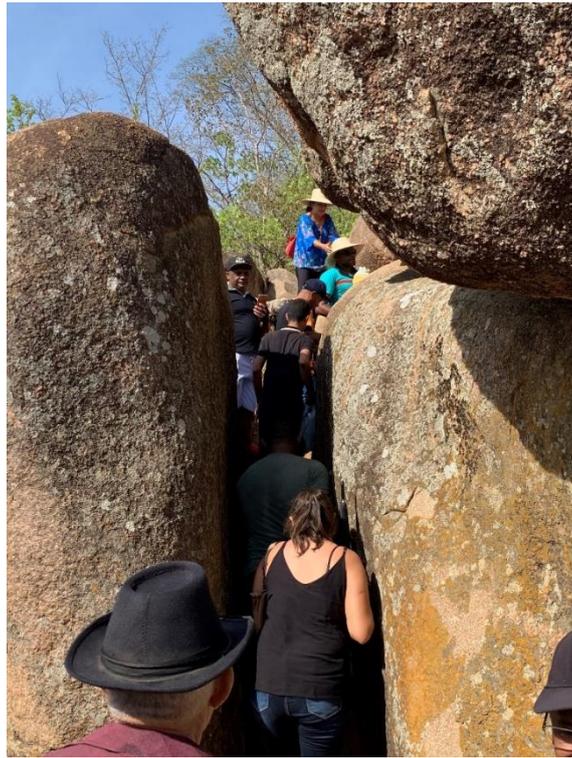
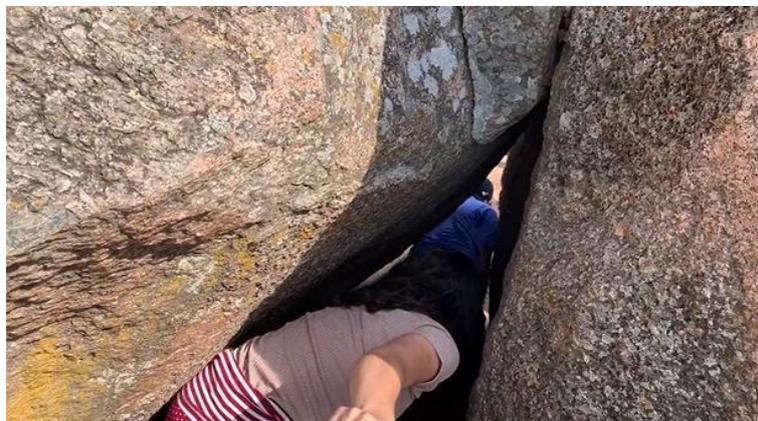


Figure 133 - Passing between stones to redeem sins



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 134 - Pilgrim passing among stones with his family to redeem sins



Figure 135 - Passing between stones to redeem sins



Figure 136 - Passing between stones to redeem sins



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 137 - Pilgrim passing between stones to redeem sins



Figure 138 - The space between a stone



Figure 139 - A stone that pilgrims are required to climb



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 140 - One of the biggest stones that are higher than pilgrims



Figure 141 - Difficult to leave the stone

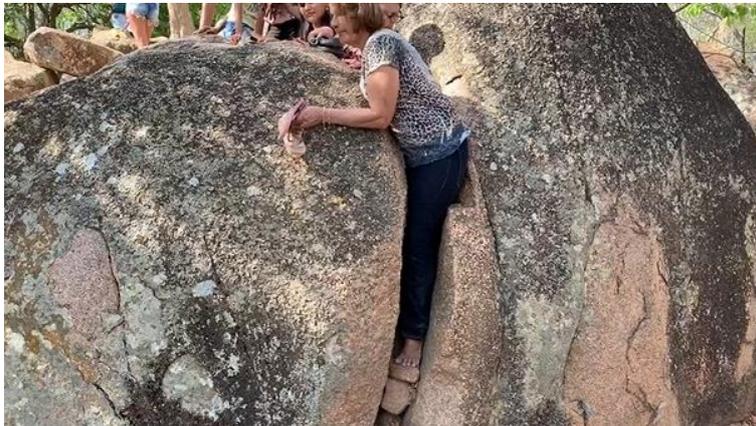
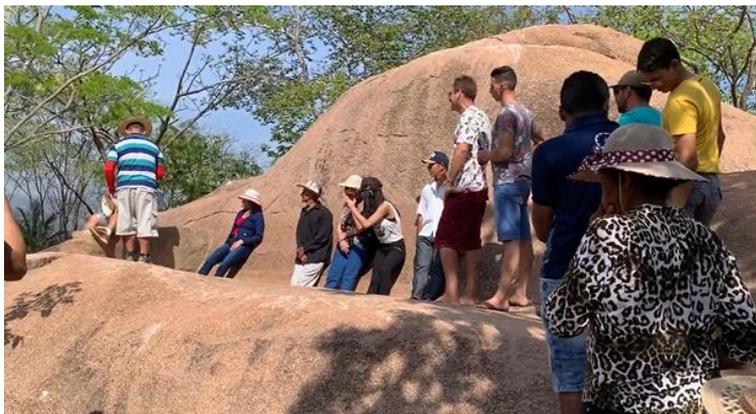


Figure 142 - Pilgrims pass by a stone rubbing against it.



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 143 - Pilgrims have to lean their backs against the final stone



Figure 144 - Pilgrim's re-writing Father Cícero words with their fingers



Figure 145 - Pilgrim's re-writing Father Cícero words with their fingers



e) Going to the House of Father Cícero

Pilgrims traditionally visit the house where Father Cícero lived and that now is a museum in his homage. The house is huge, with several rooms and corridors. And behind there is a huge yard with trees and space for celebrations. The house keeps the with original floor, blue walls, and the furniture and objects that belonged to the priest and now are part of the museum collection. Pilgrims don't pay to enter. And there is not control over the pieces, meaning that people can touch almost anything.

One of the places pilgrims have almost free access to is the bed where Father Cícero slept. The bed is small. It is protected only by a sharp iron structure that makes it difficult for people to lie on the bed. The bedding is covered with plastic. On the bedding there is an inscription that says: "Souvenir of Father Cícero - Juazeiro do Norte - Ceará". And his stamped photo. At the head of the bed is a picture with a photo of Father Cícero. Around the bed, which is well centered in one of the first rooms of the house, there are boxes where people can donate money for the maintenance of the museum and support the activities organized by the diocese.

Pilgrims have a special routine on this bed room, especially with Father Cícero's bed. Pilgrims lay some objects on the bed so that it can be blessed by Father Cícero's power. For instance, I observed two pilgrims lying some papers on the bed and catching them back after a while. They done this with attention and silence, as they also touch the side of the bed and engage in praying. After some conversation, I understood the papers they deposited on the bed were pamphlets with the image of Father Cícero on one side, and on the other a prayer. The pilgrim wanted to bless the pamphlets she bought in Father Cícero's bed, for considering it a sacred place. And her intention is to give the pamphlets to loved ones who are in need. For example, her son who is currently in high-school. She thinks he could put it in his school bag and it will help him to accepted in college. She herself also wants the help of Father Cícero, because she has lost a loved one in the family and is going through a depression, and even with the help of medicines she is in Juazeiro do Norte for the first time to ask for spiritual help.

At the House of Father Cícero pilgrims also develop other healing and spiritual rituals, which are explained in more details in the next subsection.

1.2.3.2.4 Enacting healing rituals

The practice of writing names is usual in Juazeiro. Pilgrims have a peculiar tradition of writing their names and of their relatives in almost all sacred places. One of the places where this happens the most is in the Horto Hill, in the statue of Padre Cícero himself. Which could be at first seen as an act of vandalism, ended up being a cultural practice of pilgrims. In Father Cícero's statue that is all-white, pilgrims write their names at the base of statue. The statue is then regularly painted for maintenance, so the names written there normally are erased paving the way to other future names.

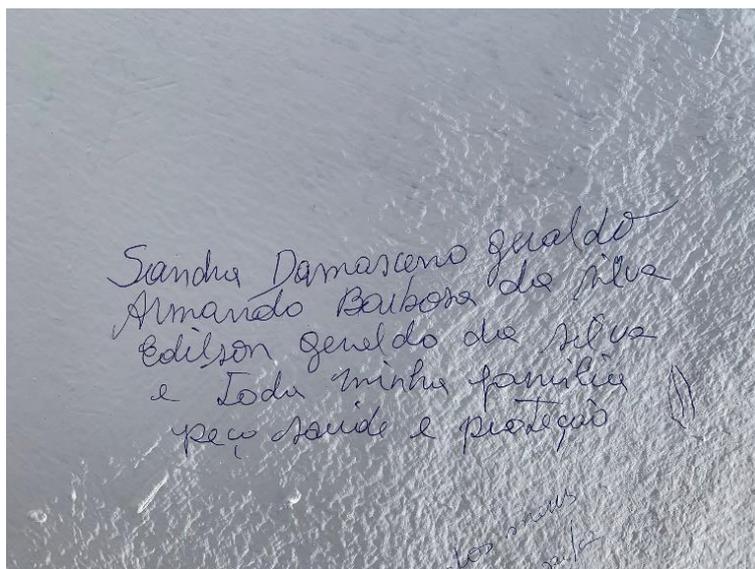
Figure 146 - Pilgrims' rituals (writing names and touching their back in sacred places)



Even at some accommodations, the room doors are written with the names of the pilgrims. In a conversation with one manager of a small inn, he mentioned pilgrims write their name everywhere, on the walls, on the beds, on the doors. He told me used to fight against this practice a lot. He used to paint everything to clear their names and the pilgrims then used to write their name again. So, he gave up and understood that it is part of their culture.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 147 - Pilgrims' names written at Father Cícero's statue



Writing their names can also have different meanings of course. Such as explained by a Nara, a pilgrim from Alagoas state, when she says:

“Writing at the door, it is because many people who stay at the inns and ranches like to leave it as a reminder: “I was here”. And in the statue of Father Cícero it is very different. It is as if we were making a request for him or thanking him for any blessing he gave us, or wanting him to free us out of some difficulty, or asking for someone who stayed at home and said: “put my name there so that he can do this for me”.

Other healing rituals are present in this pilgrimage. For instance, at the house of Father Cícero I witnessed pilgrims on a healing ritual to alleviate pain. They took turns to slide their backs on a piece of wood fixed to the wall at the House of Father Cícero. Talking to one of these people (Mariete, 60 years old, Maceió state), she told me that people believe those who pass their backs there have a miracle of curing their back diseases or any back pain. So, she also does it to achieve this grace that is provided by Father Cícero and Our Lady of Sorrows.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 148 - Pilgrims sliding their backs on a piece of wood fixed to the wall



Maria, another pilgrim that were that at the moment shared: "We do it because we have faith in God and in my godfather Cícero to take the pain out of our backs". Pilgrims engage in such healing rituals once they want the spiritual to free them from their pain and also prevent future undesired issues.

Figure 149 - The wood piece fixed to the wall



Pilgrims also engage in rituals that involve tying Father Cícero's ribbons in different spots, such as in the Father Cícero's statue, during the Saint Sepulcher Way, in the churches, and in more sacred places at the city. Pilgrims do that as a way of making requests for healing or to achieve some grace/blessing. Pilgrims normally buy such ribbons at downtown and perform their rituals along the city.

Figure 150 - Pilgrims tying ribbons at a church's door



Lighting up candles and leaving rosaries and other materials are also part of the healing rituals performed by pilgrims. At the Church of the Franciscans, see Figure below, pilgrims have left candles, rosaries and ribbons as part of their request and thanking rituals.

Figure 151 - Materials left as part of healing rituals



1.2.3.2.5 Paying promises (Asking and Thanking)

To pay a promise is one of the most important healing rituals that compose the pilgrimage experience. As explained Genildo, "every pilgrim who comes here in Juazeiro, comes to pay their promises, they come to thank Our Lady for her miracles". Paying promises is the literal translation of the expression in Portuguese "Pagar Promessas", and it basically means a kind of contract between pilgrims and saints. Pilgrims ask Father Cícero and Our Lady of Sorrows to help them to face difficult life events, such as a disease, the death of a loved one, or any other difficult

moment. Pilgrims promise that if the saints provide them to solve that issue, they will come to Juazeiro do Norte and enact rituals to thank the saints.

Paying Promises does not involve paying money to the church or to a specific institution, but it involves the consumption of products and other materials that facilitate the enacting of the rituals to thank for the blessing achieved. To thank or to pay the promise, pilgrims engage in the consumption of the experience, once they need to come to the pilgrimage, and they normally have to consume special outfits, they buy candles, fireworks, and other materials.

The Promise Payment cycle starts with the bad news of a difficult life event, such as explained by Genildo about the story of birth of his son. He shows how pilgrims have faith that Father Cícero can help them in such difficult moments. He also demonstrates a way that his family found to thank Father Cícero for the blessing of having his son safe and sound.

Father Cícero is a saint that we proclaim in the Northeastern Brazil. When we ask Our Lady of Sorrows and my godfather Cícero, they help us. [...] I received a blessing from my godfather Cícero, that I have a son whose name is Cícero. When my wife was seven months pregnant, she started to feel very bad. She was hospitalized 40 days at hospital. Then there was a miracle from Father Cícero. We fought we were going to lose our baby. But he came to life. So, when he was one year old, that first cloth he was rolled up, my wife brought it to Juazeiro do Norte and put him at the bottom of Father Cícero's tomb."

Such relationship with the spiritual to solve issues is part of pilgrims' lifestyle. A pilgrim from Alagoas state, called Josefa Maria, she says that whenever she feels bad, or has any issue, she engages in a conversation with God and saints and says:

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

"If things get better, I will go to Juazeiro do Norte, and I will take someone with me". This is her way to ask and pay for her promises.

The issues with which pilgrims are dealing can be diversified. For instance, Francisca a pilgrim from Ceará state, coming to Juazeiro do Norte for the first time, shared how she is dealing with depression. She relies in medical treatments, yet she needs spiritual support to deal better with the situation. In her words:

"[...] I take a lot of depression medication, because of the death of my son who died in a motorcycle accident recently. Then I became very depressed. With faith I have in Padre Cícero, I want to get well and better soon."
(Francisca)

Beyond seeking help for her own issues, Francisca also says that she is at the pilgrimage site to ask spiritual help to his son who is studying for the college admission tests. Moreover, despite her engagement in the pilgrimage site, she relies in other spiritual products and services to help her, such as she says: *"I am also a member of the Bloody Hands of Jesus. I normally seek help from São Expedito, São Francisco, Padre Cícero and Our Lady of Sorrows. And I'm a partner at Rede Viva and at the 21st Century (both religious TV Channels)."* As she lives close to another pilgrimage site in the city of Canindé - Ceará state, so she has gone several times to this other pilgrimage site also.

The spiritual experience of pilgrims can have deeper meanings. Such as expressed by Maria José, a pilgrim from Sergipe state, when she said that *"to ask for something you gotta have faith, and that when I ask for something, I asks with so much force that I feel heat in my body"*. In other words, for some pilgrims it could also true that seeking for spiritual help can have physical consequences in their bodies and that is achieved by the ones that expressed great faith and longing.

Their relationship with God and saints has a hierarchy that somehow impacts the way they address to them at the hour of their suffering. For instance, pilgrims often say that God comes first, and then Our Lady of Sorrow and Father Cícero come after.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

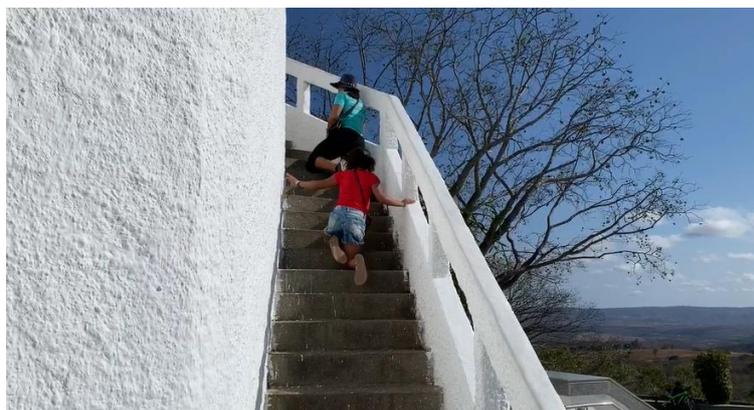
Which means that God is the real responsible for their blessings, but with the help from the saints they could be better heard by God. Pilgrims say that the Father Cícero listens to them, that he cares, protects, frees them from the harm that could happen. For instance, during informal interviews a pilgrims mentioned about an accident with their bus that happened on the road towards Juazeiro do Norte, and nothing worse happened because of Our Lady and Father Cícero's intercession.

Pilgrims like to share their stories of difficulties and then the blessing that they got from the God and saints and the promise they are accomplishing in Juazeiro do Norte. They that "testimony", or the sharing of their stories/blessings.

Pilgrims pay their promises in different ways such as Valdenora, from Sergipe state, who pays her promise walking the "path of souls". The path of souls is a walkway that surrounds the Franciscans square. It is the roof of the arches that circulates the church, and it is where the pilgrims pass as a ritual to pay promises or just as a tradition on their pilgrimage. Another pilgrim, Arlindo, mentioned during informal interviews that demon left his body and he never had any problems again. And for that reason, he still pays a promise. In every pilgrimage, he spreads copies of a conservative religious text that says that men and women have to get married and have children, and that they cannot be separated. And men and women cannot dress in a provocative way.

During observation, I followed pilgrims on their arrival to the statue of Father Cícero. Some pilgrims go up the stairs of the statue on their knees and they do it as part of their paying promises ritual.

Figure 152 - Pilgrims reaching the statue on their knees



Other pilgrims come to Juazeiro do Norte dressed in special outfits, which they call shrouds. During informal interviews, I listened to the story of a pilgrim who suffered from a severe illness. One that let her paralyzed on a bed. Her daughter then made a promise, that if she survived, she would come for the pilgrimage. As she survived in the end, she came to Juazeiro dressed in black the first year, and then came dressed in blue. And then she always comes dressed in black and white. Black for being the color that Father Cícero used, and white for being a color of peace. And blue is the color of Our Lady of Sorrows, or the color in which she is usually represented. Therefore, pilgrims dress with these colors as a way to thank directly the saint responsible for their blessing. In the case of this pilgrims, she thanked all the saints from Juazeiro do Norte.

Figure 153 - Shrouds left at the base of the Father Cícero's statue



Reaching the top of the Horto Hill is also undertaken as a ritual for paying promises. Pilgrims walk in penance to the top of the hill wearing colorful shrouds. In the following picture, pilgrims are returning from the Horto Hill and wearing black and brown shrouds. The brown color is linked with St Francis. Then, pilgrims who are thanking or asking St Francis to help them, they normally dress themselves in brown.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 154 - Pilgrims paying pilgrims with shrouds



A pilgrim from Paraíba state, called Martins, pays promise every year because he has a devotion to Father Cícero. He has been coming to Juazeiro do Norte for 30 years to thank for his health, he has had an accident, had a pre-infarction, has been hospitalized, but always manages to recover and for that he is grateful. He comes and returns from the pilgrimage in this black shroud in honor of Father Cícero and with a huge straw hat, which is part of pilgrim's identity.

Figure 155 - Pilgrim paying a promise by using a black shroud



Not so often, pilgrims pay their promises by walking to Juazeiro do Norte from their hometowns, or even coming by bicycle. I interviewed a group of cyclists who traveled 600km from Alagoas state to Juazeiro. This group come normally once in a year to the pilgrimage to pay their promises. In conversation with one of these cyclists, called José, he shared he had an accident falling off his house's roof, and had serious complications in some parts of his body. He says he went through a lot of difficulties, and the doctor said that he would only get better if he had surgery.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

He said a prayer to Father Cícero that if he helped him, he would come to Juazeiro for 3 years. He came by bicycle for three years. It took about 03 days to get to the pilgrimage. However, instead of 03 years, he is coming for almost 10 years already.

During observations and informal interviews, pilgrims shared that sometimes they can take some years to pay their promises. And they feel like they are in debt with the saints. Some pilgrims mentioned they only could come to the pilgrims after 06 or more years after achieving their blessing. They only feel fulfilled when they pay their promises. Is like making up with the saint that helped them. Several constraints may disturb pilgrims from paying their promises, such as pilgrims that shared that she had already paid her promise in Juazeiro do Norte, however her grandson has not yet come because his mother is protestant and does not allow her grandson to go on a Catholic pilgrimage.

I interviewed a person from the church staff who works in the Miracle Room. She is responsible for recording the miracles of pilgrims. She says that pilgrims have their holy intercessors: Father Cícero, St Francis, and Our Lady of Sorrows. In the Miracle Room lies all the materials that pilgrims bring to Juazeiro do Norte as part of their paying promise ritual. The staff member collects some pictures from pilgrims that she was organizing at the moment and she disclosure a story of a grandmother who made a promise to her grandson who was born with congenital feet and the son achieved the miracle of having his feet issue cured. As part of the paying promise ritual, the grandmother brought some pictures from the before and after to express to other pilgrims the cure happened.

Figure 156 - Staff member at the Miracle Room



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Beyond this Miracle Rooms, pilgrims can also deliver their ex-votos in other places of the city, such as the chapel that is placed inside the Basilica Our Lady of Sorrows. It is the chapel of promises. Former confessional that was turned into a box for depositing ex-votos. Pilgrims left there their pictures, shrouds, flowers, saint images and statues, and other artefacts connected to their promises.

Figure 157 - Chapel of Promises

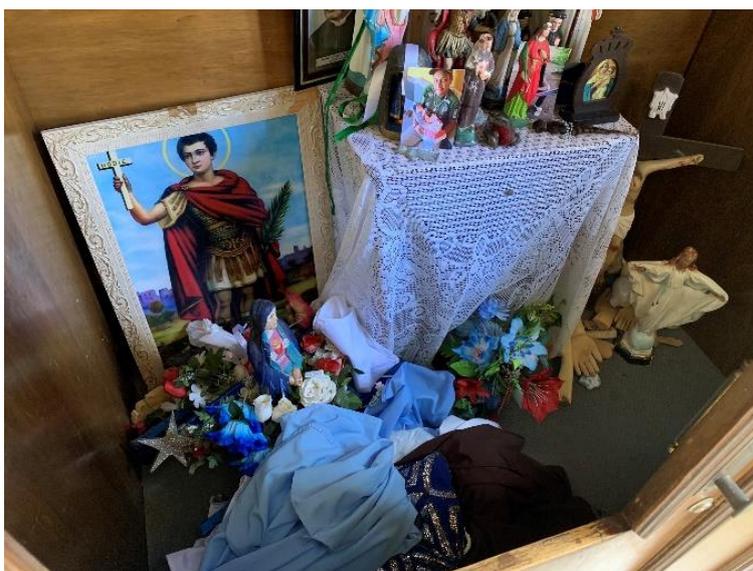


Figure 158 - Chapel of Promises



Pilgrims can also perform dance movements as a way to pay their promises. I observed some pilgrims from Bahia state were dancing for São Gonçalo and Padre

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Cícero. The dance is a kind of *ciranda*, in which people dance in circle and people are connected through a rope / cable. The tradition consists of setting up an altar where the saint is placed and doing the dance in front of the altar. Pilgrims were all dressing a t-shirt with information from their hometown and the images of São Gonçalo and Father Cícero.

Figure 159 - Pilgrims dancing as a way to pay promises



Paying my Promise

During my fieldwork, I was surprised with the diagnosis of an incurable disease. I was very scared, desperate, and I didn't really know what to do. I have done new exams to prove the disease, and from that moment on I started to pray and ask a lot for God, Father Cícero, Our Lady of Nazaré, Lourdes and Santiago de Compostela. I asked these saints, because I was doing fieldwork in the pilgrimage sites in which they are most present. As it is a contagious disease, I was also praying that if I was really sick, that I had not contaminated anyone. A day later, when looking for the test result, nothing else was there. The doctors asked for a new blood collection to do a new test and the result was still negative. I was very happy, and grateful to God and the saints who helped me. And in my moment of despair, I asked with great force and made promises that if I got out of this well, I would go up the Horto Hill and help people who need it most. A week later I took another test at another location to be sure of the result. At that moment, before taking the exam, I went to the church of Our Lady of Health, which was in front of the place where I was going to take the exam, and I asked with all my strength to not being sick. Before leaving home, I also drank some water from Lourdes that I have got with

me. One more negative exam. At that moment, I returned to the church after having the result in hand and thanked and cried a lot. Some might say that it was simply a switched exam or false-positive exam that resulted in this whole situation. From that moment on, I started to have even more faith. I believe in the power of healing and miracles and the power you have when you believe and ask for something with faith. A friend took pity on the story, and even though she was a practitioner of another religion, she promised that if I left this one, she would pay me and my boyfriend a promise in Aparecida do Norte, another pilgrimage site in São Paulo. And so, we did, we went to Aparecida to thank this blessing. There, we lit candles, made our thanks and then wrote a letter of thanks which we deposited in a message box.

1.2.3.2.6 Spiritual products and services

As I navigated through the spiritual and commercial, I observed as both of these dimensions are connected to provide pilgrims' transformation and well-being. Pilgrims for instance buy different spiritual products and services in the market to protect themselves, to provide healing, relief and well-being through difficult life events.

The consumption of such products and services are reinforced by their culture, tradition and by the recommendation of spiritual leader or peers. Pilgrims can also create their own narratives of decision making and usage. For instance, a pilgrim from Sergipe state, called Marinete, told me that she bought and always wears a cross on her neck, because a pilgrim in Juazeiro do Norte once said to her that “there would come a time when everyone would have to use that cross to protect themselves because there would be many criminals in the Marinete streets and they would attack everywhere, including schools, so even children would need to walk with a cross on their necks”. She uses the rosary to be able to close her body for all problems, yet it is not enough only wearing it but praying three times a day. Also, rosaries are part of pilgrim's identity. Finally, she mentioned she uses also the straw hat “because the time will come when the sun will be very hot and it will not be possible to walk without a straw hat”.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

The image of Father Cícero seems to be well commercialized across the city through products and services. For instance, in many squares that lie in downtown and that have Father Cícero's name, a company uses a life-size Father Cícero's statue so people can pose beside and take pictures. Pilgrims need to pay for the service obviously. They offer developed photos and also charge when pilgrims want to take pictures with their own cameras. The life-size statue of Father Cícero is sitting on a bench in the square and pilgrims like this kind of service since the observations made in the site.

The practice of taking pictures with Fr. Cícero is quite common in the city. Whether in the statue up in the Horto Hill, or through these creative services is quite common. In the old days, in Padre Cícero Square, there were even tents that were set up with different scenarios just to take photographs that were instantly developed and delivered to people. In these tents there were also animals in real size, like horses and oxen, in which people took pictures mounted or next to them. In this photo I took above with Father Cícero there are two small horses where people can take pictures, in this case they are more aimed at children. But it has all sizes.

Walking around downtown, especially during pilgrimages it is quite usual to see the sale of religious products, such as T-shirts with colorful prints and religious appeal to the saints of the Catholic Church. In a store, in particular, I saw mannequins with printed t-shirts with images of Our Lady of Graças, Padre Cícero, Our Lady Aparecida, and so on. Rosaries of different colors and sizes hung on the necks of the mannequins. There were still bags and other products with a religious appeal in the window. Each t-shirt cost about R\$ 25.00 (about 04 euros). The store seems to sell religious products and jewelry. And in this case, it had a clear appeal to pilgrims because it is quite common to see them with printed T-shirts of this type and rosary around their necks.

I visited some stores selling spiritual products. Most of them sell saints' images or little statues. One of the products with huge evidence right at the entrance to their stores is the rubber images. According to the sellers, in the old days the images were more of plaster. But they were also delicate and easy to break. Then pilgrims needed to buy plaster images every year, once they always broke their previous

ones. In contrast, the rubber images are more durable, easier to transport. Some pilgrims, on the other hand, think that they appear to be toys and that this is a lack of respect with the saint.

Figure 160 - Images of Saint made of rubber



A seller also mentioned that when those rubber images appeared in the local market, they used to demonstrate how unbreakable the product was by throwing it on the floor, and it was common to see pilgrims despairing, trembling, for seeing that scene. It is another sign of how much they actually develop a relationship of respect and uniqueness with the product, even when it was not purchased yet.

In terms of prices, it ranges depending on the materials. For instance, plaster images cost about R\$ 5,00, rubber images cost about R\$ 20,00. Accordingly, resin images, which are very detailed and well produced, are normally a lot more expensive, they cost about R\$ 50,00. Other spiritual products such as rosaries cost about R\$ 7,00 or candles R\$ 2,00. Such prices are not fixed, and bargaining can also be observed during the buying process.

Pilgrims can buy any type of images depending on their willingness to pay more or less, the relationship with the saint, the level of details of the image, and so on. According to sellers, at the time of purchase, it is common for pilgrims to say that the same miracle that the resin image does, the plaster image also does. Contradictorily, I also have heard some fervent pilgrims tell me that they have a preference for the beauty of images, so they give preference to images that can represent the saint with more aesthetic beauty.

Another concern regarding the materials composing the images is the consequences of each one. So, while the plaster ones could be broken easily, some pilgrims may also alert to the danger of the rubber one. Such as explained by Almir, when he says: "a neighbor of mine lit a candle close to a rubber image it melted the whole image and destroyed the wooden table in which they were at".

Finally, those stores also sell medicinal products. Some of these medicinal products comes with the picture of Father Cícero on the packaging. There is one well-known product that is called Father Cícero's massage gel. It is a massaging gel for the body that has the picture and name of Father Cícero on its packaging. She comments that they have faith in the product that will help them get better due to the fact that Father Cícero's image is linked to packaging. By discussing with sellers, I observed there are various local and natural substances composing these products, such as: *pequi* and *copaíba* oils that are fruits of the region, products for pain, soaps.

Figure 161 - Father Cícero's massage gel



An interesting thing is the origin of the production of these products. Many are produced in São Paulo, which is almost 2 thousand kilometers distance, or even in China. And there is a rich variety of representations of Father Cícero in different products, such as table images, souvenirs, keychains, and so on. Some photos of distinct Father Cícero's products are shown below.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 162 - Father Cícero represented in market offerings



Figure 163 - Father Cícero represented in market offerings



Figure 164 - Father Cícero represented in market offerings



Some products seem to be quite bizarre, such as “the vulture powder”. A product developed to make people decrease alcoholism, or even cure alcoholism. One should put the powder in the person's drink without her/him knowing it. Sellers told me that they have hear pilgrims' reports thanking and saying that their relatives, who were in alcoholism, stopped drinking. This specific product does not

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

have the image of Father Cícero, but just because it is a product bought in Juazeiro do Norte, they have the faith that the product is miraculous. In addition to the power, there is also the "blood of the vulture" which is the same thing. So, you can choose what type you want, powder or liquid.

Figure 165 - Seller demonstrating the vulture powder.



The pilgrims demonstrate a great faith towards the city of Juazeiro do Norte as well. In conversation with some of them, it is common for them to say that the city is a gateway to heaven, that the basilica is the gateway to heaven. That if godfather Cícero choose Juazeiro to stay and die it is because it is a holy place. That God said that to Father Cícero. So, everything they buy in Juazeiro has another sacred character. And the city is associated with an image of prosperity, of the sacred, and well-being. Accordingly, whenever they are there, they feel good, it is a unique moment.

Medicinal products are used to cure symptoms of various diseases, and generally the product information is written in a very colloquial way and close to the language of pilgrims. For example, there is the "copaiba oil", which is used for "bad cough, pain, osteoporosis, bursitis, fever, cramping and pain in the spine. Another example is the Catuaba Juice from the Araripe Mountains. In its packaging it says that:

"It strengthens the nerves, cures rheumatism, liver, kidneys, wild cough, inflammation of uterus and ovaries. Suggested to woman,

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

man and kids. HOW TO USE: 2 tablespoons 3 times a day”.

There is also the "BALSAMO WONDERFUL" which is indicated for "Headache, Allergy, Cuts and Insect Bites". The balm has the image of Father Cícero on its label. Or even the "PERUANA MADEIRA" which is indicated for headaches, warmth and broken bones. Some are to be taken, others to be applied to the skin. Some are massage oils with refreshing substances for muscle pain. I also saw body cream, "pain-removing ointment" and various types of gels and ointments with the same purpose of easing body pain. Some photos of such products are shown right below:

Figure 166 - Healing products in the pilgrimage site



Figure 167 - Healing products in the pilgrimage site



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 168 - Healing products in the pilgrimage site



One specific ritual marks this pilgrimage: the blessing of purchased products. Pilgrims buy products and then go to priests or sacred places where they can bless their spiritual and non-spiritual shopping items. One of the main places where pilgrims practice this ritual is the Father Cícero's tomb. Pilgrims gather around the tomb, and ask staff members to lay their items for a couple of second and then return that to them. A lot of items are blessed in this spot (e.g., bags, water bottles, etc.). For instance, blessing the water bottle serves so that the person can later bless, drink, and cure ailments. The blessing of the bottle makes the water blessed.

Figure 169 - Pilgrims blessing products at Father Cícero's tomb



CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

During conversations, a pilgrim called Armando told me that he has faith in such blessing rituals and that it helps pilgrims to navigate through difficult moments in life. In his words:

"By our belief, our faith, we believe that this water will have a purification and will allow our health, our integrity, our mind, to be blessed and we can purify ourselves to become better because of it. With the intercession of Father Cicero and the help of God, they make this water blessed and protect us." (Armando)

By interacting with Laura, she mentioned why pilgrims want to bless their products. She especially makes a point to report the process of blessing saint images. She says:

"When we buy those images, our main desire is to be with her in our arms and wait for the moment when the priest says: whoever brought holy objects, lift it up and I will bless them! Then you see everyone raising their arms and the saints and we are very happy, because we see that the saint we bought, we are going to take him home already blessed by the priest. And we have a thought that Father Cicero also blessed them. We think that our Mother of Sorrows and Jesus Christ were also there and they blessed them as well. They were the ones who gave the idea to the priest to call us to bless the objects. So, for us it is a joy."
(Laura)

Laura also mentioned another way pilgrims bless their products and other objects, and it at the end of some Masses, when priests invite pilgrims to raise their objects

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

in order to receive the blessing. The priest asks them to raise the images of saints, holy water, drivers' keys, keys to the house, and everything that will be blessed. And the bishop says that this blessing is already to bless everything, it is not to come and ask for the blessing later. It is at this moment that I see people lifting traditional water bottles and water bottles in the shape of Our Lady and Father Cícero. I also see them raising rosaries, bags that you can't tell what's inside, pictures with the image of a saint, keys, bags, etc. There are many things, practically everyone is building something to be blessed.

Figure 170 - Blessing of products



The bishop then says: “God, who revealed his glory to us in Christ, grant them to shape their lives together with these signs, these images, the image of Jesus Christ so that you can contemplate them face to face. Amen! Bless you, these images, that they take us to you. May the saints reinvigorate their lives with their examples, that the crosses and the rosaries make them followers of the Lord, that this water will purify you, keep you, and remind you that you are also living water who approach the Lord. In the name of the father, the son, and the holy spirit.”

1.2.3.2.7 Profane products and services

Pilgrimages to Juazeiro do Norte are also very commercial moments for pilgrims. They take advantage of being in the city to also buy things there were longing for long

While interacting with some pilgrims, they also talked a lot about consumption. The reasons related to consumption during the pilgrimage, whether being it religious products or not. An interesting thing is that the pilgrimage place, historically also served as a place of consumption of products, because it was a place where people had access to certain categories of products that were not available in their hometown, especially the ones from smaller cities. In a specific interview, a pilgrim told me that pilgrims return home without a penny, because they spend everything on the pilgrimage. For instance, Laura says that each pilgrim spends about R\$ 2500,00 (about 400 euros). Laura also observes a kind of consumerism in the pilgrimage, as she says:

"Yes! They spend a lot because everything they see here, they want to buy, so they end up going home broken, but happy because they made their dreams come true. Our bus normally returns home full of goods." (Laura)

Pilgrims buy a wide range of non-spiritual products at the city, such as local and traditional food (e.g., rapadura), chairs, pots, pressure cookers, souvenirs for the family and friends. During the pilgrimage times, it is very common to see pilgrims leaving the region of the basilica and doing their shopping in the commercial center. According to a study by the Tourism and Pilgrimage Department (Setur) of Juazeiro do Norte, each pilgrim spent an average of R\$ 754.00, including food, transportation, accommodation and extra costs.

Street commerce during pilgrimages is very present. The merchants install their products on the sidewalks and facades of the houses that are close to the basilica. I recorded the sale of bath towels with American cartoon characters that were for sale and displayed on the wall of a house on the back street of the basilica. And in the streets nearby, it is very common to find tables and other sales structures on the street. Tents also take part of the street in some places.

Figure 171 - Street market



Street shopping is very strong during the pilgrimage. The city of Juazeiro actually has a good part of its GDP concentrated in the commerce and tourism generated by the pilgrimages. When walking through the downtown streets, there are several stalls set up on the streets, and shops as well. People walk the streets, which makes it difficult for cars to move. Everything is being sold, such as clothes, jewelry, religious products, food, pots, bedding, bath and tableware, household utensils. And the products are sold as a popular retail sales area, with promotions, music, and so on. As we pass by the stalls, we are invited by the sellers to buy their products: for instance, *It's 3 for R\$ 10.00! It's promotion today! Enter the store here, my lord, my lady!* These are examples of approaches to consumers.

Figure 172 - Street market



Figure 173 - Street market



For some pilgrims I talked to, the trip to Juazeiro is also a shopping trip. They collect money all year round and take advantage of coming to Juazeiro to do the shopping of the year. They buy gifts for the family; they take things for themselves too. They take tours across the city. The pilgrims say that buying these things here in Juazeiro is much cheaper than buying them in their city, so they make every effort to save money during the year and buy these things during the pilgrimage. So, the pilgrimage experience has two very clear dimensions, the spiritual and the commercial.

One of the products most sought after by pilgrims is rapadura. During the pilgrimages the demand and sale of the product increases considerably. According to a report in the *Diário do Nordeste*, during the pilgrimages, their production and sale increases by around 40%.

One of the most well-known shopping places in the city's commercial center is the Central Market. The central market has an old structure and no apparent reforms. Several boxes sell technological products, clothes, jewelry, toys, regional handicrafts and others. I made my observations in the Central Market and it is common to see the pilgrims also visiting the place. One of the things I notice that pilgrims like to buy in Juazeiro is bed linen, hammocks, and that also is easily found in the Central Market.

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Figure 174 - Juazeiro do Norte's Central Market



During pilgrimages, the city center also organizes a fair of handicrafts and food. The structure is set up especially during the pilgrimage season in an attempt to involve pilgrims in the consumption of local artisanal products. Right there next to the tents, an area has been completely revitalized to become a leisure center with bars and restaurants. At that time, tables are arranged on the sidewalk and on the street to serve people.

Figure 175 - Fair in downtown



Figure 176 - Revitalized area in downtown



Some entertainment services are also very common, such as the “Train of Joy” or *Trenzinho da Alegria* (in Portuguese). Basically, children and teenagers pay to take a stroll through the streets of the city in this "train" with neon lights and animated by pop songs and professional animators who are dressed in costumes and perform choreographies on the streets.

Figure 177 - Trenzinho da Alegria



1.2.3.2.8 Community

The pilgrims are known as the pilgrim nation. Apart being from different states of the northeastern Brazil, they also have this collective identity that bond them together. Such communal experience of the pilgrimage is reinforced by different

moments. One of those moments is the "Meeting with Sister Annete". This meeting is the time for the pilgrim friends to meet up. Usually, they make friends with pilgrims from other places, and take advantage of the pilgrimage to meet again. The meeting with Sister Annete is an excellent opportunity for them to see each other. Sister Anete herself is also a person that the pilgrims are keen to meet again. She won a lot of admiration and respect from the pilgrims for her tireless work and the care and affection that she has with them.

1.2.3.3 Leaving the pilgrimage (post-pilgrimage syndrome)

"Our Lady of Sorrows is with us, when we arrive here at the basilica, she sees us. When we leave, she goes with us." (Genildo)

The last day of the pilgrimage starts with the Hat Mass. It happens normally mid-day and pilgrims are invited to join the celebration wearing their straw hats. It is a visually beautiful moment in which pilgrims wave their hats in the air over their heads forming a kind hat wave on the church. At the end of the mass, the pilgrims sing the bendito "Goodbye Maria". It is a very emotional moment for pilgrims too. Everyone looks at the image of the Mother of Sorrows at the top of the church's altar and cries. They once again raise their hats and sing:

[..]

Oh, Sorrowful Mother
heard our cries
Oh, kind virgin

Goodbye, Goodbye, Goodbye Mary
Goodbye, Goodbye, Goodbye Mary

Far away
We are leaving
And the Mother of God
Will follow us
Goodbye, Goodbye, Goodbye Mary

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

Goodbye, Goodbye, Goodbye Mary

[...]

It is a moment of strong emotion in which many pilgrims suffer in having to return to their reality, leaving the land where they feel so good. In their countenances I can see joy, sadness, crying, adoration of Mary, and total surrender to that moment. Few people have their cell phones up, instead they all have their hats up and waving in the air.

Figure 178 - Straw Hat Mass



It is during this mass that the number of pilgrims by state who are visiting the pilgrimage is revealed. In all pilgrimages, drivers of buses and trucks, or representatives of pilgrims are invited to inform how many people are coming in pilgrimage in that period. Numbers are analyzed and informed during this Mass. The pilgrims even have a certain competition between the states. Each state has its own identity, and at that moment everyone wants to know who won, or who came in the greatest amount. The church is announcing the number of pilgrims that came from the final to the first place. There are 09 states in northeastern Brazil, and they usually inform the results to all of them, as long as there is a pilgrim coming from such a location. Even pilgrims who come from other part of Brazil and elsewhere are also informed at this moment.

Yet, the final celebration of the pilgrimage happens at the evening. It is also a special moment for pilgrims. There are a lot of people on the street. There are already buses that are leaving with the pilgrims back to their lands. In the square of the basilica, a crowd of pilgrims participate of this final Mass. It is difficult to see

the end of the crowd. It's the last day of the party. Certainly, many residents of Juazeiro do Norte are also there.

Figure 179 - Pilgrims at the final Mass



At the end of this Mass there is a countdown, the pilgrims wait the fireworks, which is very characteristic of the end of the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. From the top of the basilica, fireworks begin to fire. Everyone sings once again: “Goodbye, Goodbye, Mary”. At this level, what I see most is people filming the moment, all I see in the crowd are the flashes of their phones pointed towards the fireworks.

Leaving the pilgrimage site can be difficult to pilgrims, especially considering the great moments they tend to live on the pilgrimage. In sum, they do not want to leave the site. Such as the words of Isabel:

"When we return home, our heart returns broken. There was a case that happened with me, in which the bus was almost departing, and I was here at the basilica, at the feet of Our Lady. And my son shouting: Mom, the bus is already leaving. [laughs] And I was praying without wanting to leave Our Lady's feet. I came out crying, my eyes filled with tears. We really cry, because you have those heavy

CASE 3 – JUAZEIRO DO NORTE

family issues happening back at home [...] such as betrayals, falsehoods, humiliation, and when we are here Our Lady gives us that comfort so we forget everything. And we come back with a blessed mind." (Isabel)

To sum up, driven by this feeling of longing, pilgrims may organize themselves to return to the pilgrimage. A lot of pilgrims mention they are coming for 40, 50, 60 years, once they are doing that since they are children, and they wish to do that again until the day they cannot come anymore or die. Moreover, forced by their need to find spiritual comfort in moments of difficulties, pilgrims are constantly coming back to ask or pay other promises for blessings achieved in the meantime.

Cirio de Nazare

Case 4

1.2.4 Círio de Nazaré

1.2.4.1 Pre-pilgrimage

1.2.4.1.1 Pilgrims' preparation

"You feel on the streets, you feel in the supermarket, you feel in the pharmacy [...] everyone is anxious, everyone is waiting, everyone is wanting this moment to connect with Our Lady and I think that it is transformational in a city." (Naiana)

Such as observed by the Naiana, a citizen from Belém city and that now lives in in another Brazilian state. Naiana tries to come to the Círio de Nazaré every year, and even when she is not in the city, she celebrates this moment at her house. The Círio de Nazaré is what people call "the Christmas of the Para state". As the analogy speaks for itself, the Círio gained a high-level significance for its participants. It is the time to gather the family together, to have a huge feast with local cuisine dishes. It is basically the highest moment of the year, the moment for which they expect the most. And for the one they prepare the most also.

When trying to express the feelings of this season, they say that when October starts what they scent is the smell of the *maniçoba* and other typical foods they have got as part of their diverse gastronomy. For instance, the cooking process of *maniçoba* takes one week. So, days before the Círio de Nazaré's main procession, people in the city starts to cook the *maniçoba*. Local entrepreneurs pre-cook for half the time needed in order to sell it to the families, who then need to finish the cooking themselves until the big day of celebration. All this preparing is a considerable part of the moments that precedes the Círio de Nazaré.

They reported also that they feel the Círio is coming because the emotional atmosphere of the city changes drastically. One of the main characteristics observed is that people suddenly be more helpful to each other, and charity,

empathy and compassion are strong feelings during this period. For instance, people start to make big and small donations, in money or food and other groceries to Charity Associations, or to help to welcome the pilgrims that come walking.

Another feeling present in this month of festivities is the drastic reduction of crimes. The city of Belém is one of the most violent cities in Brazil. Yet, some participants reported they feel the city is more enjoyable, they do not feel the danger around the corner such as in the rest of the year, and the number of crimes drop throughout the Círio festivities. Interestingly, I saw in the news while I was in the city that the prisoners of their main state prison were given a temporary exit during the pilgrimage as prisons normally do in holidays, such as the Mother and Father's Day or Christmas.

Contradictorily, I also observed and interacted with people who warned me that I should be very careful with my cell phone and other valued things, because during the processions there are many thieves infiltrated on the crowds. And the thieves in the middle of the procession may steal participants. So, you have to be careful. Even in the middle of the religious ritual there are people who take advantage of it. Therefore, the pilgrimage site safety can also have other perspectives.

Families get ready for this moment. The families that hosted me, were in the preparations for that moment. From what I understand, the abundance is always very great. There is plenty of food and animation. They were talking about buying bigger pots to prepare food, because the pots they have at home are not enough to prepare food for this amount of people. They also talking about drinks. Some people will bring dessert or another dish. And they will make a bingo to play and enjoy this festivity.

Happy Círio! This is the expression that people in Pará use to wish each other a good Círio de Nazaré when the festivities are getting close or during the main day of celebration. I found it very symbolic to use an expression like that. Generally, we use the expression Happy ... "something" on holidays, Christmas, New Year, most important holidays. It is possible to see the importance that people give to this festivity here through the use of this expression.

1.2.4.1.2 Church preparation

The Basilica Our Lady of Nazaré is responsible for organizing and setting up the program for the pilgrimage. Together with the help of the companies and state and city government the Círio de Nazaré receives about R\$ 4 million (about 600 thousand euros) in order to be organized.

The program takes about 20 days. In 2019, it started on October 8 and ran until October 28. The program includes masses, processions, religious shows, among others. The most important day is the day of the Círio de Nazaré procession, which normally happens the second Sunday of the month.

The Basilica itself is also decorated for the festivities. A special decoration had been placed with some yellow bands with information about the basilica, and the official coat of arms of the basilica. The yellow color goes well with the golden details that are characteristic at the front structure of the church. In the railing that protects the entrance to the church many ribbons are tied there. It is a gesture that people make to make requests something to Our Lady of Nazareth.

The yellow and white decoration is also present in the square that is right in front of the basilica. At that time, a structure was being set up with speakers and a large screen for transmitting the activities that take place inside the basilica for those who will be outside.

The great number of participants also require massive participation of officials, such as policemen, firefighters and others. During processions, especially, it is common to see a large number of policemen, firefighters and other professionals from the Red Cross who facilitate the smooth running of the procession.

Special observations were made by me for the altar of the basilica of N. S. de Nazaré, which is where the image of the Our Lady of Nazaré is. I found it simple and at the same time it brings very rich details. It consists of a cloud of angels around the image that is enclosed in a glass case. The angels seem to hold the image that receives a special orange illumination. This light is cast and also illuminates the

back of the angels' structure. This gives a beautiful impression and further highlights the angels and the image. Behind it all a half oval structure, full of lines of different sizes in golden color gives a special finishing touch. The gold still helps to reflect the orange color that illuminates the whole thing. Two larger angels are positioned just below. I found one of the most beautiful altars I have ever seen during my research.

1.2.4.1.3 Market preparation

Local and national companies active in the state of Pará patronize the Círio de Nazaré annually. Being a sponsor for the festivities is actually a key marketing strategy for companies. For instance, one of the first things I realized when I was hosted in one of the houses in Belém is that TV commercials inspired by the festivities are widely present across TV schedule. For instance, we were at home watching television and the first commercial I observed was one from the Municipality of Belém about the Círio. The commercial has as a soundtrack a song about Our Lady of Nazaré. The song has the following lyrics, which are not here in full:

[...]
*To be close to you
Find your lap
Your blessing
Thank and ask you
Look out for us, Oh Mother
With this love
That comes from you [...]*

This commercial also shows striking images of Círio. The *berlinda* lit up and decorated with flowers, the crowd of people walking barefoot holding the rope following the procession, people walking in the procession and holding the image of Our Lady of Nazareth, symbols of the Círio like the rosary, the ribbons, the ex-votos, people crying and emotional, among others. The images appeal to people's

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

affective memories and to the traditions and symbols that mark this festivity. The commercial ends with the following expression: HAPPY CIRIO! Belém City Hall.

After this commercial from the public sector, I realized that many companies in Belém launch commercials with the theme of Círio during this period of the year. One of them was from Hapvida, a health and dental insurance company. The commercial also used the appeal of Círio's affective memory and traditions. With images that are even similar to Círio when compared to the commercial from the Municipality of Belém. Companies rely on the strong relationship that people have with Círio to associate their images with the festivity and, consequently, maintain or gain new consumers.

One thing that is very typical of this season is the use of the image of Our Lady of Nazaré to embellish the hall of the buildings, stores' showcases, streets and etc. Everywhere you go you see the little statue of Our Lady of Nazaré surrounded by flowers and decoration. I went to cosmetic stores, supermarkets, shopping malls, and others, and they normally had a special decoration with the theme Círio de Nazaré and an image of Our Lady is typically present at the entrance of the showcase of the stores. Even inside commercial spaces it is possible to see the image of the saint, or decorations alluding to the saint.

In one of the photos below, I registered the presence of a *berlinda* with the image of Our Lady of Nazaré inside *Ver-o-Peso*, an important food and spice market in the city, a tourist and commercial spot.

Figure 180 - Decorated berlinda at Ver-o-Peso



In stores, you can find a range of products with the theme of Círio de Nazaré 2019. I saw paintings, watches, towels, and other products with the image of the Our Lady. Many of these products emblazoned with the official image of that year. It is worth mentioning here that every year the official image of the saint changes. What basically changes is the mantle that dresses the saint. Each year, a contest chooses the designer who will develop the mantle. Generally, the colors, the fabric and the materials that make up the clothing have a meaning.

Figure 181 - Themed products in a store in downtown Belém



As Círio is also the moment when people feel more comfortable and excited to prepare the typical foods of the region, supermarkets get ready to provide ingredients and the materials necessary for such festivities. In addition, local government also release part of the 13th salary of workers at this time of the year in order to boost and facilitate consumption.

1.2.4.1.4 City preparation

People say the city starts to change as soon as the Círio de Nazaré is around the corner. And actually, the city visually starts to change once the city hall and local companies invest in curb painting, resurfacing the asphalt, embellishing squares and assembling the structure to receive millions of pilgrims.

On the way to the Cathedral, I saw people doing some pretty graffiti and decorating sidings. In fact, it seems that people, the streets, the stores, get ready for this time of year. I also saw on Instagram that these graffiti are being done in various parts of the city of Belém to decorate the city especially on the streets in which processions will be passing.

Figure 182 - Graffiti and paintings decorating the streets



The buildings are also decorated for this time of the year. According to some participants, the building on the corner of Avenue Presidente Vargas and Avenue

Our Lady of Nazaré is one of the most iconic. There is a strategic point to view the Círio once it is the corner in which the procession will pass. Residents decorate their balconies. Some public-private offices also decorate their buildings along the streets that receive the processions.

Figure 183 - Balconies decorated



1.2.4.2 The Pilgrimage

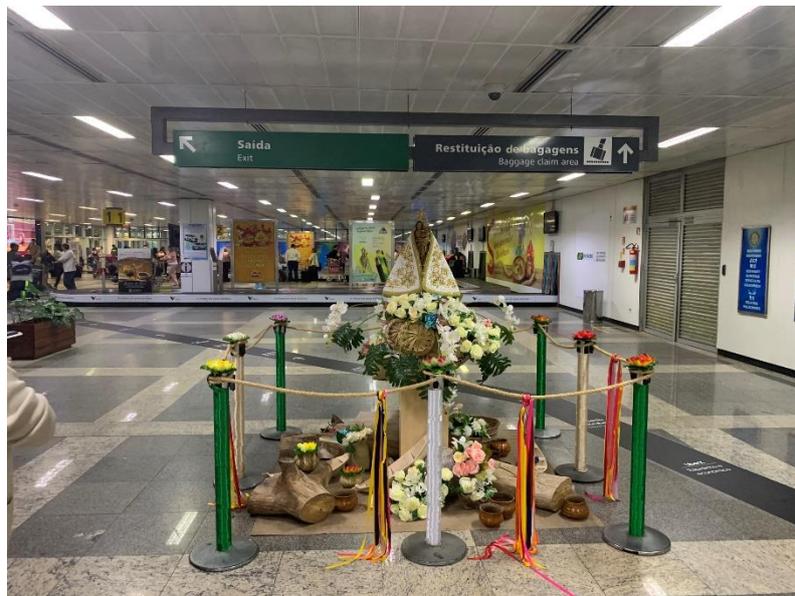
1.2.4.2.1 Arriving

Despite other pilgrimage sites, the Círio de Nazaré is a religious festivity that receives primarily people that lives in the city. Of course, there are people coming from other parts of Para state, and even from other regions of Brazil. But the majority of people is already in the city. The ones that are coming from other states of Brazil normally comes by airflights that land in the international airport at the city. The others closer to the city, can come by car or bus. But one of the main forms of coming to the pilgrimage is by walking (explained in the following subsections).

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

As I was in based in São Paulo before the pilgrimage, placed in the Southern Brazil (around 3 thousand kilometers away from Belém), I took a direct flight to Belém which costed around R\$ 800 (around 120 euros). The flights for Belém are quite busy and expensive, a large percentage of passengers on the flight are people from Belém that are currently living elsewhere and that returns to the city to be close to their families during the pilgrimage. Once participants of the pilgrimage have very different ways to reach to the city, costs of travelling can vary considerably. Moreover, to the ones that live in the city, such costs are not quite relevant. The airport is a place that is decorated especially for this season, we see an altar dedicated to Our Lady right after the baggage claim and a decoration that is all around, on the walls, floor and doors.

Figure 184 - Image of Our Lady of Nazaré at Belém Airport



Those who live outside Belém suffer for not being able to come to pilgrimage at this time of year. A participant told me that several friends of her who are currently living in São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro suffer because they cannot live this experience in person, so they only have the chance to watch it on television, since it is live broadcasted.

1.2.4.2.2 Accommodation

It is common for people who do not live in Belém to stay in the apartments / houses of their relatives, as well as hosted in hotels. For the purpose of this study, I was hosted by two families. Right at the entrance of these houses there is a room in which the image of Our Lady of Nazaré is placed. It is what is called the table of saint. The image is accompanied by some flower decorations, and frames with family photos.

In both houses I was surrounded by the feelings of the festivity that could be experienced during family meals around the table, watching television, or just talking. Family members also took me on city tours to explain the streets where the procession will take place, the historical parts of the city, and so on.

1.2.4.2.3 Market (Products and services)

During the festivities of Círio de Nazaré, participants find a plethora of consumption spaces mainly around the basilica. There is a space right beside the basilica in which vendors of sacred and profane products are well-organized. In this same space, there is an amusement park and food trucks. Participants of the festivities consider this space as a tradition of Círio de Nazaré.

There are many stalls that sell a variety of products in this space right beside the basilica. I saw, for example, a stall that sold a variety of products, from toys to jewelry, and a sign that said: "*I buy gold.*". It is common to see a trade of gold pieces in almost all the pilgrimages that I have been so far. Other stalls were selling clothes, jewelry, accessories, religious products, T-shirts with different prints from Círio. I stopped at one of the stores and asked the price of Círio's t-shirt: it costs about R\$ 20.00. Some t-shirts are more elaborated with stones and more details that cost R \$ 30 and R \$ 50. Children's t-shirts cost R \$ 10.00. In other tents I saw hundreds of images of N. S. de Nazaré in different formats and different streams.

Figure 185 - Religious products



I followed some pilgrims to the shopping area to buy a t-shirt of the Círio. The pilgrims were already dressed in the t-shirt with the image of Our Lady of Nazaré, but they wanted another one, the new one, with images from that year. We still spent a while choosing a t-shirt that please them. Every year, t-shirts and other products are renovated with the new image of Our Lady of Nazaré with the new mantle, information about the current year and slogan of the festivity.

In this same shopping area, there is a food sector that had different types of food, such as pizza, pastries, hamburgers, and typical products of the region as well. And still in that same space is an amusement park. According to some reports from participants, the park brings many good childhood memories of them at Círio.

The Basilica itself also has their official store. Sometimes during Masses, priests can also work as sellers or influencers of Basilica's products. For instance, at the end of the Mass, at the altar, I observed a priest selling some products from the basilica shop. In particular, he introduced a new product called Drops of Patience. He gave the characteristics of the product, said it was good, and told the participants to go and buy it at the Basilica's Official Store, which is right next to the basilica. Apparently, the basilica developed a whole launching strategy that involves media like television, billboards in the church space, and the use of "celebrities" like the priest himself.

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

Accordingly, the Basilica and other local churches are responsible for selling a key sacred product: the ex-votos. A particular thing on this pilgrimage spiritual marketplace is the consumption of ex-votos. At the Basilica, I found a small shop of ex-votos. In the shop you can find different types of ex-votos in the shape of head, foot, hand, and even in the shape of internal organs, such as uterus, intestine, kidney, heart, brain. Beside each type, I also saw the value in reais that each cost. Ex-votos in the form of: House: R\$ 20.00, Large Head: 20.00, Small Head: R \$ 10.00, Intestine: R \$ 10.00, Brain: R \$ 10.00, Stomach: R \$ 15.00. There are different prices for each type of ex-votos.

Figure 186 - Shop selling different types of ex-votos



Ex-votos are these materials made of wax in the shape of the body part or organ that has been healed by spiritual intercession. Pilgrims then buy these body parts at the pilgrimage site and then bring them to the processions and deliver the object in one of the collector cars that follow the procession or even deliver that at the basilica in the end of the procession.

I observed another stall selling ex-votos close to the Cathedral. It was more improvised. It was basically a blue tent with a table in which some ex-votos were displayed. There were some big boxes with several pieces of ex-votos inside. At the moment I was approaching the tent, apparently, the seller was looking for an ex-voto chosen by the consumer within these boxes. Some pieces were like “samples”, hanging from the roof of the tent: a baby ex-voto, a small child, a leg and an arm.

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

Anyone who does not understand anything about this religious practice would find it bizarre to see these pieces hanging.

There is also a certain personalization of these ex-votos. When I was passing by the stall, there was a consumer asking: "do you have a belly?" And the saleswoman replied: "Yes, we've got one. Female or male belly?" He replied: "male, please".

Figure 187 - Improvised store for ex-votos



I had the chance to talk with one consumer of these ex-votos, and she shared that she was buying a puppy ex-voto to thank for a good surgery of her daughter's puppy. She told me the small-sized dog ex-voto costs R\$ 12 and bigger one costs R\$ 15. She mentioned about a promise that her daughter is paying (see Paying Promises subsection below):

"It (ex-voto) is to my daughter-in-law because she made a promise to her dog. The dog had a kidney issue, had surgery and she made a promise. And then she asked me to come here to buy the dog (a dog-shaped wax ex-vow). She will take on the ex-voto to the Saturday's procession. (Bernadete, Para-Brazil)"

Participants on the Círio de Nazaré have also spiritual services that they can consume. One of these services is the Círio Fluvial. It comprehends accompanying

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

the transfer of Our Lady of Nazaré's image on the river. Belém is a city on the banks of Guajará Bay, formed by the meeting by the mouth union of the Guamá River and the Acará River. The image of Our Lady of Nazaré navigates on a boat through Guajará Bay and thousands of people follow this path in boats that accompany the river procession. There, a market for spiritual experience was created. As advertised on the card, the ticket costs R \$ 200.00 which can be paid in cash or in installments. The ticket includes breakfast and an exclusive t-shirt from Círio. I saw an outdoor announcing one of these boats and their differential were that the boat would have the special presence of a priest called Fr. Aluizio from Canção Nova Channel (an important Catholic television station) and Ziza Fernandes, who I don't particularly know, but who must be someone known to the people who attend the Círio.

During the Círio de Nazaré festivities participants have some craft fairs with some religious products, such as the mantle of Our Lady of Nazareth. The mantle that dresses the image of the saint has gained a lot of notoriety in Belém. There are several people who developed this art of embroidering, and sew robes with many details in stones, textures, among others. The robes have several models and depend on who creates them. Some points of sale at a craft fair I visited had robes ready for sale, in addition to other related products, such as the images of Our Lady of Nazaré in varying sizes.

Figure 188 - Craft fair stand



Restaurants and similar services like this gain considerable importance during the Círio. I followed a family in a local restaurant. Their choice of dishes was entirely traditional local cuisine. There we had *tacacá*, we ate *maniçoba* and we also had ice cream produced here, which are very typical too, many of them made with fruits from the region. It was also a moment when we talked about Círio's experience, about the beginning of the party, about typical foods. Food is really one of the great expressions of the culture of Pará, and it is at this time of year that it is highly disseminated by people here. You can see how locals are proud of the richness of their gastronomy. Here there is a huge diversity of spices, flavors, and types of food preparation. Many end up being quite exotic for the taste of the rest of the country. I feel lucky to have the chance to try these foods here.

1.2.4.2.4 Rituals

One of the first rituals I observed is the tying of colored ribbons to the church's gate. According to a participant, this ritual was not very famous in the city until recently, but soon it integrated the traditions here. On the ribbon, which is produced in various colors, the following phrase is inscribed: "Remembering Círio Of Our Lady of Nazaré - Patroness of The Paraenses". And at the end of the ribbon there is still a miniature of the saint in the shape of a triangle that imitates the shape of the mantle with the rounded upper point imitating her crown.

During some Masses and other spiritual moments, a particular behavior was salient in my observation. For instance, while the Blessed Sacrament passed through the corridors of the church in the end of a Mass, it was common to observe people touch the digital photo of someone displayed in their smartphone in the Blessed Sacrament. The ritual shows the intention of individuals to bless closed ones that are in need by touching their photos in the Blessed Sacrament, which is the representation of Jesus Christ. It was one of the things that most caught my attention the use of a digital photo to touch or at least position it towards the Blessed Sacrament.

1.2.4.2.5 Pilgrims

As stated earlier only few percentages of participants on the Círio de Nazaré comes from outside the city of Belém. Those one that comes walking are called by residents of the city as "pilgrims".

"[...] I think it requires surreal strength and determination and a gigantic faith for you to come to the pilgrimage walking [...] but every pilgrim I talked to told me the opposite, they told me it was easy. [...] just follow, just think of Mary, singing, thanking [...] usually they come in groups, so that makes it much easier. One gives support to the other. [...] I think that this requires a faith and an inner strength, which only Mary can help." (Naiana)

Pilgrims come mainly from Para state. They march towards the city of Belém. Some of them are closer and others more distant, and they normally walk constantly until reaching the Basilica of Our Lady of Nazaré. During the festivities, it is very common to see people walking and suffering on the roads until they arrive in Belém. There are some support points that offer help to pilgrims by donating water, rest and food. These are crucial points for those who have been walking long distances.

I stayed at the Basilica square and waited for pilgrims to arrive. During 01 hour and a half, I observed dozens of pilgrims arriving. They come in groups, which means they organize themselves to leave at the same time and they march all the way to Belém together. I have already seen several pilgrims walking under strong sun heat and slow pace.

These pilgrims were dressed in different ways. Some were wearing leggings for exercise, others with shorts. On their feet, something interesting: they were not wearing running and walking shoes, they were wearing flip flops and socks. Some were wearing sneakers, and others without socks and only with sandals.

Pilgrims arrive at the basilica limping due to a lot of pain and blisters on their feet. Some support cars follow right behind them to provide any assistance to those in more delicate situations, such as the ones who suffer to the point of not being able to walk. The car also is stocked with supplies to support pilgrims, such as food and water.

To facilitate their mobility, a part of the one of the main avenues that gives access the Belém downtown was dedicated to them. Pilgrims do a kind of procession in the streets as they are walking. They enact the procession of the Círio de Nazaré (explained later), in which they follow the *berlinda* of Our Lady of Nazaré. The *berlinda* is attached on a car, and to that car is attached a rope, on which the pilgrims were holding and walking and following *berlinda*. The *berlinda* is well decorated with flowers from the top to the bottom, similar to what happens in the processions of the Círio de Nazaré.

Figure 189 - Pilgrims walking to the Basilica



I interviewed some of those pilgrims as they arrived at the Basilica. One of them was Francisco Adriano, 41, who came from Castanhal to Belém on foot. Castanhal is about 70 km from Belém. Francisco starts talking about how difficult it was to get here today. He reports on the difficulties of walking for a long time. He soon had blisters on his feet and had to start walking in a crooked way that ended up causing other pains to him.

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

Interesting that while he was talking about the pain, he was smiling. He told me that the strategy they used was: first they start walking with sneakers, but then they change to sandals. He also says that he is making the pilgrimage to pay a promise that his wife made. He doesn't know what it is, he's only doing it because his wife asked him to. Even without knowing what it was, he came. He did it because he believes it is a good thing, the wife would not have asked for it if it were not a good thing.

Francisco also reports that for all paraenses, Círio is a huge event and whoever participates knows the emotion that it is. They spend the whole year thanking and receiving blessings, so they come here to thank us. With a smile on his face, he says that getting here is the biggest emotion. When he arrives here in front of the basilica, he is very moved.

He is currently experiencing more pain in his ankles. It took 25 hours of walking, with some stops. They stopped for the first time for 30 minutes, then stopped for a meal that lasted around 1:30 am, then stopped at SESI for another 30 minutes, then stopped for dinner for another 1:30 am. Some stops are to receive a massage, get hydrated, rest and travel. In this group about 300 people came together. Some have arrived here at the Basilica and the others are here.

Figure 190 - Pilgrims arriving at the Basilica



Another pilgrim, called Clarissa, 36 years old, says that it is been 06 years since she came for the first time to Belém and that returning to the pilgrimage was wonderful. She said that she makes about 5 stops during the trip and each one has

between 30 minutes and 1h30, which are the moments to rest and eat. This journey for her means a great victory, an achievement, a promise. When I asked her to share her promise, she said that she couldn't speak about it. It was too personal.

She also says that her entire family is devoted to Our Lady of Nazaré. Her family and her husband's family too. So, once a month there is a novena in the house. Then, the whole family developed that devotion and love for the saint. She says that Our Lady of Nazaré has always responded to her requests. We started the conversation lying on the floor resting, and soon after she sits down. She was so tired that she was lying on the street floor that is right in front of the basilica.

Most of the pilgrims in this group come with a yellow and white T-shirt that has an image of Our Lady of Nazaré on the front. On the t-shirt is inscribed "*Pilgrimage Castanhal > Belém 2019*" and the number 40. An announcer who organizes the coming of the pilgrims speaks through a microphone: "*Guys, let's concentrate on the stairs to take the official photo. Let's thank you for another year, it's been 40 years that we are coming to Belém. Let's thank. 79 km from Castanhal to here. Thank you, pilgrims!*"

The image of Our Lady of Nazaré that came with the group leaves the Berlinda and people start to position themselves around it. With their cell phones they try to film and photograph the moment. The image goes to the staircase where the pilgrims of the group that just arrived are. They will take the official photo of the pilgrimage. There are also people holding a big rosary that was also carried by the pilgrims the whole way. They organize themselves for the official photo. Someone in the crowd shouts: Long live Our Lady of Nazareth! Everyone screams: Hurray!

1.2.4.2.6 Casa de Plácido

Casa de Plácido is a place where pilgrims are welcomed after arriving in Belém. The house is placed right next to the basilica. Inside the house the mood is complete joy, many people talking, music playing, and people arriving and leaving. The pilgrims that arrive are registered in a list. Upon arrival, they are greeted with a song:

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

*"You who are arriving,
Welcome, welcome!
I was just missing you here
I was just missing you, brother
I was just missing you here
Welcome to Casa de Plácido "*

The noise and movement are intense. People receive a whole spa day. They will have their feet washed, massage, medical first aid if necessary, and they can drink water, eat something and sleep.

Pilgrims in the Casa de Plácido also share their stories with the volunteers that are offering their care service. A pilgrim told me, for instance, he bought his own house and that was a grace/blessing to him. He shared that he did not know if he would be able to make it to Belém, so he made a deal with himself to walk up to his limit and then stop. Yet, in the end, he was happy because he managed to get to Belém.

As a big group of pilgrims arrived, they were greeted with the reception music. Then they prayed an Ave Maria. The spokesperson said some words on the microphone thanking Casa da Plácido and offering a donation in the name of all pilgrims:

"Long live Our Lady of Nazaré! It's been 40 years since our first pilgrimage. We made 79 km, 26 hours of walking, 07 stops. We left our city with 700 people and at night we were already 1000 people. This is Mary's intercession. And the Casa of Plácido is also the Mary's intercession. Here you all welcome us wonderfully. It is very important to us. We want to thank Casa de Plácido, so we brought a donation to the house."

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

Figure 191 - Pilgrims arriving at the center of the Casa de Plácido



One of the most symbolic moments for pilgrims at the Casa de Plácido is the washing feet part. A large sink is placed and several volunteers wash the feet of the pilgrims. There are 12 volunteers strategically selected as an allusion to the 12 apostles. Their mission is to take care of pilgrims' feet, who have traveled from far way.

Figure 192 - Volunteers washing pilgrims' feet



The pilgrims arrive at the washing feet moment, sit down and extend their legs over the sink borders. Volunteers use gloves, soap, and towels to wash and dry the feet of pilgrims. After being cared for in this area, the pilgrims head to other areas of the Casa de Plácido. Everything functions pretty well. The kitchen serves meals continually. The health area also does not stop: with massages, first aid and others.

Volunteers are happy to be in this position. Helping these people is also a way of paying their promises and simply showing solidarity with the pilgrims. It is very

common to see volunteers dancing, smiling, and happy with what they are doing. They mentioned that it feels good to be doing it, and also good for those who are receiving it. They also shared that they see pilgrims are also very happy by being treated so well.

A volunteer reported that they are part the story pilgrims. So, their role is to give a grand finale to this story through affection and care. It is by taking care of the pilgrims' feet, that they talk, try to understand their history a little, give them a massage, take care, clean, love.

In a conversation with the director of Casa de Plácido. She mentioned how difficult it is to make that happen. There are many volunteers involved in different segments. Each has an activity. They take turns in shifts, because the house is open for 15 days, 24 hours, and everything has to be impeccable to receive the pilgrims: cleaning, food, and all sectors that support the pilgrims. The house lives through donations, and the main objective is to treat well and welcome those who are arriving from a long walk.

1.2.4.2.7 Mini-Círio

In parallel to the main festivity that takes place at the basilica, there are smaller festivities that are called "the Mini-Círio", which takes place in the other neighborhoods of the city. It consists on transfer of the image of Our Lady of Nazaré by the houses of the neighborhood and that ends up with the transfer of the image to the church of the neighborhood. I had the chance to accompany this pilgrimage, once the family that hosted me was one of the families in this pilgrimage.

The Mini-Círio is part of a community tradition that is well related to the main Círio, but that happens far from the festivities' spotlight. The neighborhood is which I was is called Marco, placed on the suburbs of Belém. The mini Círio basically happens with the active participation of the residents of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is divided into smaller regions and each micro-region will be responsible for receiving an image of Our Lady of Nazaré that will move through the houses of that micro-region during 09 days. At the end, all the images from

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

each micro-region go to the São Francisco Xavier Parish, which is in the same neighborhood. This moment of going to the parish represents the end of the novena and precedes the festivities of the great Círio de Nazaré.

I followed the journey of the image to the Parish. The group of residents were residents on the same street for many years, there is already a community of friends who support each other at certain times and have stronger ties.

The image was transferred to the Parish by one family, and the other participants also were at the Parish for a final celebration. After some days of meetings in the homes of each resident, they make this meeting in the parish with all the families in the neighborhood. Every day the image goes to a house, there is a fraternization, the rosary is said, and in the image goes to the parish. According to Cristina, one of the residents, it is a moment of prayer, of evangelization, and the image will be donated to one family by luck.

All the churches in Belém receive images to be delivered to groups in the neighborhoods. At that time, all the parishes will be meeting to make this celebration. It is a way that the church finds to extend the mission of evangelization outside the church, through the neighborhoods and micro-neighborhoods. It is a way to actively engage people in prayer and sharing activities with their communities and for the sake of the church and its faith.

Figure 193 - Person showing the image at her house



The image of Our Lady is ornamented. It is in a simple basket of brown color and ornamented with artificial flowers in beige and pink colors. Each group ornament

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

the image as it suits them. Everyone uses the artifice of flowers as a form of decoration. It is a way of showing respect and admiration for the images. When we arrived at the church, the image went directly to the altar, where there were already 12 images of 12 other groups of residents.

Figure 194 - Family delivering the image at the Parish



To start the mass, the residents took the images and made a special entrance all together holding the images in their hands. The entrance had as background music the music of Our Lady of Nazareth:

*O virgin loving mother
Source of love and faith
Give us the blessing, kind
Lady of Nazareth
Give us the blessing, kind
Lady of Nazareth*

Figure 195 - Families' entrance with the images



I also had the opportunity to talk to one of the residents, a 55-year-old man. He said that Our Lady of Nazaré is responsible to bring faith to all homes. He says that people believe in it. He comments that the pilgrimage in the neighborhood is an attempt to bring faith to the families of Belém. The image was in his house. He confirms that in his prayer group there were 17 people, and during all nights of the Nazarene court, the image passed through different houses. In addition, each family can make a contribution in cash and in prayers to help the parish function. He concludes by saying that Our Lady of Nazareth is our intercessor, the one who gave the first "yes" to God.

1.2.4.2.8 Transport of Cars

A participant explained to me the meaning of this procession. According to Rafael, the cars will be taken to the CDP located in the Docas region. And with this movement, all the people are already getting into the atmosphere of Círio. People are already starting to sing, praise, and thank God. He says that some people stay on the ground pulling cars, and children go on top of cars.

The cars of the car procession are not conventional cars. They are mobile structures such as carriages. On the Sunday in which takes place the Círio de Nazaré procession, these cars will come back to the Basilica along with the procession and will be responsible for collecting the ex-votos from participants. Many people accompanying the procession deposit their ex-vows during the procession in these

cars. The cars have different decoration and formats. Most of them are in the shape of boats.

After some preparing, the procession kick-off and people start to walk in a kind of front squad. And then the cars start to pass. Above, children sit, and adults pull the car on the floor.

Figure 196 - Car and participants at the Car Procession



1.2.4.2.9 Designing Unique Experiences

The basilica promotes unique moments during the festivities to participants. For instance, inside the basilica, before one of the main festivities' processions, the basilica organized a spiritual moment with special lights and a singer singing Ave Maria. I found the creation of this experience well thought out. The church was full, the atmosphere was welcoming and really created a different, magical atmosphere. Many people were recording the moment on their cell phones. The lighting highlighted the image of Our Lady of Nazaré at the top of the altar.

Figure 197 - Designing unique experiences



Figure 198 - Participants living unique moments in the pilgrimage



1.2.4.2.10 Mantle presentation

The mantle dressing the image of Our Lady of Nazaré is one of the symbols of this pilgrimage. Every year, the mantle is developed by a stylist and has unique colors, shapes and textures revealing a specific meaning tied to that year's pilgrimage theme. During the festivities, a ceremony is normally set up to present the mantle to the city.

I took participation in the ceremony. It normally happens at the Basilica of Our Lady of Nazaré. Inside the church, the temperature was very high. As the weather in the city is hot, inside the church it was almost unbearable due the quantity of people

at that moment. To help alleviate the heat it is very common to see some cardboard fans that are made with the theme of Círio. So, they are distributed by the church and by sponsoring companies.

Before the mantle presentation ceremony begins, the moderator begins to announce the festivities sponsors and other supporters. Many companies participate in the Círio de Nazaré by investing money to organize the festivities. Large and medium-sized companies were sponsors and supporters that year.

The money needed to prepare the mantle is a voluntary and anonymous donation from a devoted family of Our Lady Nazaré. The stylist responsible for creating the mantle is named Kátia, a citizen from Belém. The creation of the piece had the contribution of other people. All donated their time and work to create the mantle.

A whole launching atmosphere was created for this event. After announcing the entire organization behind the mantle, the moderator asks for the lights to be turned off and for the mantle to be presented. The lights are turned off. People raise their cell phones to register the mantle of the Círio de Nazaré 2019. Then green lights go on. The sounds of birds begin to be heard inside the church. People film the moment. A piano sound starts to play. Whisper. People are facing the entrance to the church as if they already know that the image will come from the entrance of the church. A voice begins to sing the song Ave-Maria. Gradually someone enters the church with the image of Our Lady of Nazaré in his raised hands. The image is dressing its new mantle. On her head a crown. At that moment, the image is illuminated by a cannon of strong light that follows it as it moves. The image turns from side to side as if looking at people. The crowd clap and scream. The sound of the piano stands out. The image continues on its way to the church altar. The image arrives at the altar and is presented to everyone. The priests and members of the clergy place the image on a structure on top of the altar.

Figure 199 - Mantle Presentation



The ceremony is followed by people inside the church, at the outside area through the big screen placed on the front square and at their homes as the ceremony is also transmitted live on the internet and local TV channels. The basilica also organized a pamphlet with the history of the mantle, its production and meanings. A flyer in colors, with sturdy and beautiful paper. On the cover, the image of Our Lady of Nazaré with the front part of mantle. The side of the mantle is on the back cover.

Figure 200 - Image of the mantle pamphlet



1.2.4.2.11 Transfer to Ananindeua (Highway Pilgrimage)

There are two images of Our Lady of Nazaré on the spotlight during the festivities. The original image is always in the basilica, it's the image that was found at first and that created all around after. The second image is called the pilgrim image that is the one that makes the processions and move along the city. Formerly it was only one pilgrimage trajectory that the pilgrim image used to do, but nowadays it has several processions: fluvial pilgrimage, moto pilgrimage, children's Círio, youth Círio and so on. Altogether, there are 12 official pilgrimages, which started on Friday 11 October, with the transfer to Ananindeua. The last procession will be the Recírio, which in 2019 will be on the 28th October.

The Transfer to Ananindeua should always happen on a Friday. It is the Nonindium longest of the 12 processions and the one that opens the Círio festivity. The transfer route is 50 kilometers long and starts at Praça Santuário, ending at the Church of Our Lady of Graças, in Ananindeua, city in the metropolitan region of Belém. The journey takes normally 10 hours.

1.2.4.2.12 Círio Fluvial

On Saturday, the image of Our Lady of Nazaré goes to another city in the metropolitan area, Icoaraci city. from where it leaves for the River Pilgrimage. From the Icoaraci pier the image is taken on a Navy ship to the Estação das Docas. The Círio Fluvial is made in boats that accompany the image of Our Lady of Nazaré by the waters of Guajará Bay. Approximately 400 vessels were expected to participate in this river procession, which lasts approximately 2 hours.

The Círio Fluvial starts early in the morning at 6am. Yet, other parts of the city are also getting ready to the festivities. Several things happen at the same time or one after the other. While the Círio Fluvial is happening, people are already preparing for the Motorcycle pilgrimage. And there is also the Pavulagem parade, which is an artistic expression of a group of singers and dancers. Both Motorcycle pilgrimage and the Pavulagem Parade are waiting to kick-off exactly where the image of Our Lady of Sorry will get off the ship.

Fluvial Círio is very symbolic, because this region of Brazil is covered by the Amazon Forest, with a lot of rain throughout the year, and wide and extensive rivers that cut through the forest. Two of them have their mouths here in Belém. The image of Our Lady of Nazaré is also considered the Queen of the Amazon. So, I think it is very symbolic for it to make a procession by the river, having a strong connection with nature, with the rivers, and with the local culture.

1.2.4.2.13 Motorcycle pilgrimage

As a moto-boy, I already went through several dangerous situation. For me, Our Lady of Nazaré is helping and saving me while I am working as a moto-boy. (David)

As the pilgrim mention in the above quotation, moto-boys and other bikers organize the Motorcycle Pilgrimage as part of the festivities of the Cirio de Nazaré. It is the moment in which they pay homage to Our Lady of Nazaré. As the image of Our Lady of Nazaré arrives at the Docks Station, the bikers turn on their motorcycles to follow the image through the main streets of downtown Belém to Colégio Gentil Bittencourt, where the bikers' blessing takes place.

Thousands of bikers in their motorcycles wait for the image to arrive from the Fluvial Cirio. Everyone was wearing a red cap sponsored and distributed by Bradesco Bank, a national bank. Bikers arrive early around 6 am to guarantee a good place in the procession. They save their spots by parking their motorcycles on the street. And there they stay until the moment the Image arrives from the fluvial pilgrimage.

Figure 201 - Motorcycle Pilgrimage 2019



Thousands of bikers participate, some are moto-boys, others are sport and leisure bikers. This pilgrimage has already become a tradition during the Círio. For some it is a cultural event, fun and unique, as it happens only once a year. I found a group with standardized shirts made especially for this day. And I also met people who came just to thank and ask for protection to O. L. of Nazareth because they are people who work every day on a motorcycle and attribute the fact that they are alive and healthy at the intersection of Our Lady of Nazareth.

Figure 202 - Group of bikers before the procession



In this photo above these women were waiting for the motoromaria to leave. Some were coming for the first time, others for the second. Two of them had been repeating this pilgrimage for 14 years. They ride their own motorcycles and report on the faith that is associated with this pilgrimage. They always renew their faith in this pilgrimage according to them.

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

An app called "KD a Berlinda" (transl.: Where is the *berlinda*?) shows the exact localization of the image of Our Lady of Nazaré. Through the app, I could follow the image's movement through the river until the point where I was with the other pilgrims in the motorcycle pilgrimage.

Figure 203 - KD a Berlinda app print screen



While we waited, we saw teams of the Red Cross several times coming to the rescue of people who were ill. This happens due to the high temperatures, as there were thousands of people there, who did not have much preparation ended up fainting. I was super worried because I didn't want to pass out. I wanted to follow everything that was happening.

We also witnessed the arrival of the police team because several cases of robbery were taking place at the scene. But the bandits were mostly captured. As there were a lot of people, we were able to observe where an assault or a person had passed out through the shouting of people in the crowd.

After a long time, the image arrived. First, several boats passed by and we felt that the saint was arriving. She arrived on the navy boat, and people started to applaud,

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

cry, and get emotional. When I looked around, I noticed people very emotional and applauding the arrival of the saint. It's amazing how the image has that power in people. The image was removed from the boat and was brought close to the people. A grid system prevented people from getting closer, but the local bishop took the image and brought it close to the people. At that moment more crying and more emotion. People are very happy to be able to get closer to the saint. Around it, you can see people climbing trees or any higher place to be able to observe the arrival of the saint.

Officials from the army, navy, police, fire department and red cross was set up to welcome guard the image through the different processions on water and land.

Figure 204 - Image of Our Lady gets off the navy boat



The image is then placed in the *berlinda* and leaves the region towards the Basilica area. At that moment we began to hear the motorcycle engines starting and the noise, smell and pollution of the smoke in the air. The bikers honking all the way behind the *berlinda*. There were about 15 thousand motorcycles. It took at least 10 minutes or more for all the bikers to follow the procession of the motorcycle pilgrimage.

At the same moment, we started to hear a noise coming from a nearby location. It was the Pavulagem parade. The first thing we saw is an almost life-size boat sailing over the head of a group of people. Nearby, several small boats fixed on rods move in the air. With colorful ribbons glued and straw hats on people's heads they form a beautiful image to behold.

1.2.4.2.14 Profane program

Pavulagem is a dance and cultural parade plenty in colors and energy. They have a strong connection with the *bumba-meu-boi* festivities characteristic of some regions in Pará. Participants on the Pavulagem parade told me that it is one of the main activities they like during the Círio de Nazaré. The parade does not have an exact appeal to religion, it is more of a popular cultural celebration of indigenous origin. At Círio, the procession is a tribute to Our Lady of Nazaré and a tribute to the Amazon.

In the pavulagem parade, dozens of participants walk on the streets of Belém on stilts or not, dancing and singing. They were colorful clothes. I found the hat so beautiful that I bought it to use elsewhere and to use as a decoration in my apartment. The straw hat has a fabric collage on its top and colorful ribbons in different colors are glued to the sides that move as it winds or you dance.

They set up an arena in which they performed the main performance of the day. They formed a circle under a roof made out of red umbrellas that contrasted with their colorful costumes. Dancing and singing amazon songs and rhythms participants provide a spectacle to the audience around.

Figure 205 - Participants enjoying the Pavulagem Parade on the background



Together with the Pavulagem there are also other profane activities that takes place in the city. For instance, plays, parties and spectacles. During the Círio de

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

Nazaré, I went to a play performed by a local group of actors. The play was started by a Leona Vingativa, an artist from Belém who became very famous in the early 2000s for making videos with humor skits that went viral on the internet. Leona shows the reality of a black artist, a transvestite, who lives on the outskirts of a city in Brazil. Since then, the artist has been working on music and other ways of making art, and she had a play right at the time I was in Belém.

I think this combination of sacred and profane activities that invades the city at this time of year is interesting. For instance, Leona Vingativa herself made a parody of the song Get Lucky from the musical group Daft Punk in which she sings about the Círio de Nazaré festivities and reports various rituals and traditions of the party, such as *“Going on the rope”* (explained the following subsections). The video is at the same time a criticism of the religious persecution that LGBTQIA + people suffer for being who they are, and a tribute to Círio and the festivities that take place in the city of Belém. The video brings this message that LGBTQIA + people also have rights, they deserve respect, and have the right to have their own faith and religiosity as well.

Another sacred and profane activity is called the Auto do Círio, an artistic presentation (itinerant play / carnival parade). Basically, a group of actors with hundreds of people dress up and go out on the streets of Belém dancing by the rhythm of samba drums as if it were an off-season carnival. Along the way, some stops are strategically arranged with stages in which actors engage in the acting. The parade appeared in 1993 at the Federal University of Pará produced and directed by the Institute of Sciences of the Arts at its School of Theater and Dance, with the objective of creating a show in which the artists of Belém could pay homage to Our Lady of Nazaré.

More than 500 artists get together and the public can exceed 15 thousand spectators, the Auto was even registered by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute in 2004 as an immaterial asset of Brazilian Culture. The auto is a mixture of drama, faith and carnival. In the streets, what I could feel was a lot of excitement from people, celebrating this traditional party in their city, with a lot of beer sold at 3 for R \$ 10.00 and meeting friends, dancing and flirting.

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

The costumes participants wear was diverse. Some dressed up as animals of the Brazilian fauna, others dressed up as an indigenous, as gods from afro-religions, and some costumes with a critical background such as one that caught my attention called “Amazonia Bleeds”. The costume was a critique on the many fires that ravaged the Amazon Forest.

Figure 206 - Costumes in "Auto do Círio"



Figure 207 - Costumes



*1.2.4.2.15 Transportation/Trasladação**

The Transportation, together with the Círio de Nazaré procession are the two most important processions in the Círio de Nazaré festivities. The Transportation procession happens the Saturday evening and the Círio de Nazaré the Sunday morning.

A mass is held at Colégio Gentil Saturday afternoon as the first event that starts the Transportation Procession. The Transportation has a 3,7 km route and finishes at the Cathedral of Belém. The estimated number of pilgrims of this pilgrimage is 1,4 million people.

On my way to the procession, I observed many pilgrims arriving at the same time. The ones who will pay a promise, especially if it is on the rope, go to the procession barefoot and dress light clothes to better handle the high temperatures.

Some pilgrims enact the payment of their promises on their way to the procession. For instance, I observed a woman dressed in a blue T-shirt with the image of Our Lady of Nazaré on the front of her t-shirt. She was walking on her knees before the beginning of the procession. Normally, pilgrims walk the whole procession on their knees. In her hands she carried a rosary, a banana and a glass of water. She was wearing dark jeans and barefoot. It didn't seem to have anything protecting her knees. She was being accompanied by three men. The three were right next to her, and they were barefoot as well. They had taped feet that seemed to be preventing the feet from rubbing against the floor.

Figure 208 - Pilgrim paying a promise



I also saw a young couple in light clothes and barefoot and decided to talk to them for a while. They were going on the rope, but according to the woman they were not paying a specific promise. In fact, she started going on the rope about 5 years ago when she made a promise to a cousin. She saw that her cousin really wanted to start medical school and did not pass. So, she made a promise that she would go on the rope if her cousin passed, and in the same year the cousin passed. This year the cousin is almost graduating and she keeps going on the rope because she wants to thank the many graces that Our Lady of Nazaré gives her and the family.

As I approached the basilica, it was no longer possible to pass through the main street. The street was completely crowded. The Mass was happening at that moment, and thousands of people were still arriving and joining the crowd.

Figure 209 - Crowd warming up for the procession



CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

I managed to stay in front of the procession, in one of the first stations of the rope. We were able to see the station still on the ground and the promisers, the ones that go on the rope, ready for the procession. An unofficial convention has been created that whoever is on the rope cannot go with any type of footwear, because as there are many people the chance of getting hurt is greater. Next to the station are also the men of the Guard of Our Lady of Nazaré (normally using a dark blue t-shirt) who are responsible for organizing the flow of the procession and protecting the image and its *berlinda*.

Figure 210 - The first station of the rope



The people of the Red Cross are always moving among the people to help those who pass out. The police, Our Lady's Guard and the traffic department organize the flow of cars and people. Even the army works during the processions to assist pilgrims and safety of the festivities.

Even before the procession kick-off, we begin to see several people unconscious. The heat is so great, they are so close to each other that they lose air. However, Red Cross personnel are highly prepared to deal with the situation.

To alleviate the heat, people following the procession throw water on whoever goes on the rope. I was talking to Samuel who was on my side. He has already paid a promise on the rope. He said that sometimes people even throw too much water on the promisers. There are times when they don't even want to cool off anymore

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

and people keep throwing. He also said that as there is only one rope that connects the stations, walking around and holding the rope is very difficult due to the number of people, so people will kind of take turns on the rope. Some people get off the rope, or pass out, and other people get in their place. So, it is quite common to see people the ones who go on the rope, and others who are very close only waiting for who is going out to be able to enter.

The procession has just started and it's been at least 20 people passing out passed out in the care of the red cross. The main people who pass out are women, because they are usually shorter and lose their breath when they are near taller people. Samuel told me that people are taken care of and as soon as they regain consciousness, they run back to the rope again. There are people who pass out 5 times during the procession.

Figure 211 - Transportation Procession



There are so many people that it is not even possible to see the rope. Everything happens all the time. Many people everywhere. People pass us as if they were waves of the sea, in droves. At our side, another person passes out. We call the attention of the Red Cross that soon comes to us. She is a girl who must be under 18 years old.

In less than 2 minutes I saw another young girl pass out next to me. A group of people from the Red Cross composed of 08 people come to the assistance of the young woman. They minimally observe her vital signs, place her on a stretcher, and, through a specific protocol, lift her up at their shoulders and go out with her to seek

care in one of the ambulances that are installed in the streets perpendicular to the procession's trajectory.

Figure 212 - Red Cross saving fainting pilgrim



Everything happens very fast. And as the image of the saint arrives, more people will occupy one square meter. And it is more difficult to stay still. And I start to move with the crowd along the procession.

Some people pass with ex-votos in their hands. They also pay their promise, but they are not directly holding the rope. While the rope goes in the center of the street, these people are walking on the sides of the street, or even on the sidewalks.

Samuel also told me that the rope remains the same until the Ver-o-Peso region, which is close to the final destination of the procession. When the it gets there, the rope goes to the ground and people start cutting the. Everyone wants a piece of the rope. They even take sharp objects with them to do this when that time comes. It is a big mess according to Samuel, because the idea would be to at least arrive at the end of the procession to do so. Pilgrims say that many cut the rope because they want to sell the rope to make money. Pilgrims argue that this is a bad practice because it ends up untying one string from the other and slowing down the procession.

Promisers also often shout: Long live Our Lady of Nazareth! several times and jump at the same time.

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

After passing the rope, there comes to Berlinda with Our Lady of Nazaré. Berlinda is well lit and has a beautiful decoration of flowers. Each year the decoration changes, as does the mantle. Dozens of guards are right next to the Berlinda. It is a super protected image.

Figure 213 - The berlinda coming



When the image passes by us, several fireworks color the sky. People scream a lot in the buildings around us. People clap. It's a party. Around me, people raise their hands towards the saint and say their prayers. Many people are filming this moment as well.

Figure 214 - The berlinda



As soon as the *berlinda* passed, we went after it. Many people are with us. It seems that the number of people is infinite. Throughout the procession schools, companies and offices pay homage. The first was a school that honored Our Lady

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

Nazaré with some children singing traditional songs. And the people who follow in the procession sing along with the children.

Figure 215 - Pilgrims in procession



We were walking along with the crowd as very unique experience. That human warmth, people singing together, following the image of Our Lady of Nazaré. It brings peace of mind as if we were in another dimension.

In contrast, walking near the rope is difficult, because the rope has a life of its own. It runs with the movement of people. Sometimes people go to one side of the street or the other. And whoever is not on the rope is simply thrown out of the street towards the sidewalk. And the strength is very great because there are several people moving around in the street as if it were a sea with very strong waves.

Not to mention that it is very hot to be near the rope. Many people are very close to each other. They are glued together. The heat is too much. We clearly feel the difference between going along with the procession in comparison to when we are out of the procession. There I felt that it is more difficult to walk in the procession also because there is always someone passing out and we need to make room for the red cross to pass with these people. But the feeling is very good if you keep close to the procession, because you see the strength and the faith that makes people to be there paying their promises.

Who goes in the procession paying a promise on their knees has a greater support. Usually, this person is accompanied by close friends, but an NGO from Belém, called

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

Friends from Belém, is also on hand to help these people. I recorded videos of people walking on their knees. They go after the procession and take much longer to follow the same procession path. To help them, the Friends from Belém create a circle around the person while they walk, and cardboard is systematically placed on the floor as the person walks to soften the impact of the knee with the floor. The use of bandages around the knees and feet also helps to lessen the impact and prevent further damage.

Figure 216 - Pilgrim walking on his knees



Going on your knees was a way of paying promises that involves greater penance in this pilgrimage. The person needs to be very prepared and with a lot of faith to handle it. In one of my records, I see a man who is practically crawling in suffer. He has cloths around his elbows and wrists, in addition to his knees and feet that help him move around with less friction with the floor, in addition to a special rug placed by the people he is helping.

Helping other people to pay their promises, be it on the rope, or the ones that are walking on their knees is also a way of paying their promises. There is also the support of other religions that at the time of Círio help pilgrims a lot with water, food and support. Protestants tend to make this support.

One of the highlights of the procession is the arrival of the crowd in the region of Ver-o-Peso. I positioned myself strategically on the corner and saw people passing by. Millions of people, down Avenue Presidente Vargas. No one could see the rope, only people coming down. They were still full of energy, singing, shouting. Visually

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

they were swamped with. As they went down, it became more and more difficult to stay in the same place, because they arrived as if it were water invading all spaces.

Figure 217 - Pilgrims in the procession



In the end, people barefoot, the floor very wet, people well drained, a lot of garbage on the floor generated mainly by plastic cups that are discarded on the floor. I was even concerned with the amount of garbage that is generated by the passage of these millions of people during the procession. If each person drinks a glass of water, there are already at 1.4 million glasses of water on the floor, and apparently people drink at least five glasses of water.

One of the final moments when the image passes by us. Fireworks cover the sky. People raise their hands towards the *berlinda* and people sing the song of Our Lady of Nazaré. Pilgrims around me were crying; People's emotion is very strong at that moment. People sing the chorus out loud:

*The holy virgin
Your people sing
Our Lady of Nazareth
You are queen
And you have in the mantle
The colors of açai*

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

Figure 218 - Transportation close to its end



In the end of the procession a team of garbage collectors pass after the procession picking up all the trash, and a cleaning truck is right behind them cleaning the street with soap and water. Within a few hours, these streets will be crowded again, but in the opposite direction, from the Cathedral to the Basilica in the so called Círio de Nazaré.

Figure 219 - Trash all around



Figure 220 - Garbage collectors cleaning the streets



1.2.4.2.16 Círio de Nazaré

Roseli: Because we have a devotion to her, we pray for her, and we ask for the family, for everyone in reality. For all Brazilians, for all. That's it.

The second Sunday of October has a special meaning for the people of the Para State. It is the day in which the main procession takes place, the Círio de Nazaré procession. It actually is so important that gave name the whole festivities. A mass opens the day's celebrations and the procession begins shortly thereafter. The pilgrimage leaves the Cathedral, where the image was delivery the night before, and continues until the Basilica of Our Lady of Nazaré. Data from Dieese, the department of statistics and studies of Para's state, indicated that 2 million people should accompany the Círio this year.

The official Instagram account of the Círio de Nazaré, called "Círio Oficial", posted a picture with the *berlinda* decorated for the procession. It is a different decoration from the one of the Transportation processions. And pilgrims told me that they feel kind of curious to know how the *Berlinda* will be decorated. The Instagram post explain the decoration:

For the great procession this Sunday, the Berlinda comes all red, representing Jesus'

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

blood, the Cross, and Mary, who suffered when seeing the blood of her son spilled on the cross: Jesus, died on the cross to save all humanity. The flowers are red carnations and orchids from the Amazon. The carnations came from São Paulo and the orchids from regional producers.

Figure 221 - Print from Círio Oficial Instagram Account



Photo: Gabriel Pinheiro

To observe the passage of the procession, I strategically stayed at the corner of Av Nazaré and Presidente Vargas). As I had observed yesterday, it is a very strategic region for those who want to see the *berlinda* passing by. When I was arriving at this region, I observed many people walking on the streets parallel to the procession, we saw people in bars and restaurants. It really felt like a holiday. As I got closer, I saw street vendors selling food, Círio t-shirts, handcraft souvenirs, religious products and so on.

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

As many people follow the procession, many others just stand by at a certain point and watch the procession passing by. And this place where I initially positioned myself were crowded. It is close to a main park in the city and people tend to watch the procession from that point as well.

Figure 222 - Círio de Nazaré Procession



I noticed the same movement as yesterday, of people passing on passed out stretchers. That same stirring of water glasses that splash water upwards to cool people on the rope is also present in this procession.

At a certain point, the narrator and animator asked the promisers on the rope to lift the rope. And it is an interesting scene to see. They lift the rope and finally we can see one of the most characteristic scenes of Círio: the rope and the promisers shouting and praising Our Lady of Nazareth. These animators are very important because they make people move faster and somehow animate and alleviate the suffering of the people going on the rope. They pull prayers, or songs, and that cheers people up and keeps them walking in the procession until they arrive at the basilica.

I interviewed a promiser who brought a house miniature to thank. A Styrofoam house that she herself made with the colors and characteristics of her original house. She told me about how much buying a house has always been a big dream in her life. And she reports that she only achieved this because of Maria's intersection, but also because of her own effort to achieve that dream. So, a way to thank Our Lady of Nazaré, was to build a replica of her house in Styrofoam and bring

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

it to Círio. And she got her home many years ago, and only at that time she came to Círio. I find this kind of debt that people feel they owe to the saint interesting, and that at some point in their lives they will need to keep the promise they made.

Figure 223 - Pilgrim with the miniature house



This same pilgrim also told me about the emotion of doing this pilgrimage, she mentions about how satisfying it is to achieve her dream, to create this miniature and come to the pilgrimage to thank God and Our Lady of Nazaré. She says:

The emotion is indescribable. Even in the process of making the miniature house, because I made it myself. It has the same color as my house, with the real number, my puppies in front of it. It is very exciting to make and make with our own hands. From the time you started making it up to here, understand? And when I see the image passing by, I don't even know how to tell you ... but I'm going to cry, because it is very real. Nowadays I have a good home ... Thank God! Firstly, God, and secondly, Our Lady. With a lot of struggles and a lot of work, because I've worked a lot with my

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

own hands so I can have my home, and I'm here, thank God. (Cassia)

Pilgrims that bring any material artefacts to represent their blessings are invited to deliver them during the procession in one of the collector cars that pass along with the procession or at the end of the procession in the Basilica.

The glass of mineral water is an artifact in abundance in this experience. Thousands of glasses of water are distributed to people who go to the rope and to the procession. In the photo below is one of the moments when a person is carrying a bucket with several glasses of water and a group of people takes a bundle of glasses of water and start to distribute it among themselves. They take the water and throw it over their heads to cool off and drink some of the water too. They also throw the water up and to the sides.

Figure 224 - Pilgrims refreshing themselves



Due to the large amount of water, the shredded paper that falls on the floor, and the dirt on the street, after a certain time the floor becomes a bit muddy.

Figure 225 - Floor during the procession



As the image of Our Lady of Nazaré approached I observed how beautiful that green tunnel that covers the avenue is. The image comes, the queen of the Amazon, with the *Berlinda* full of red flowers and all her representation of mother, woman, with the baby Jesus in her arms, taking care of everyone. All around, people are singing and with their hands directed at the image. The animators pray and sing songs and invite people to shout, pray and sing together.

Figure 226 - The berlinda coming



I noticed that it is difficult to just watch the procession pass by. This is because when people in the rope passes, for example, it is possible to remain standing at the corner, but when the image arrives the number of people increases a lot, because

everyone wants to go near her. Then, you are practically driven out of your place and pushed back.

When the image was passing by me, I asked for my health, for the health of my family and for my thesis to be all right. I preferred not to record the moment of the image's passing, but to live that moment in full introspectively and collectively. Putting myself as a participant in the experience. Aware of what was going on around me, letting my emotions speak for themselves. And my connection with the moment was more noticeable, in the cognitive sense. I saw the image go by and I believed that it can help me with something that I need in my life. That's what everyone is doing here, thanking and asking. Being devout and faithful. Making this festivity real.

After the image passed, I took a parallel street to reach the Basilica. On my way to the Basilica, there were many more street vendors of food, barbecue, and religious products (e.g., rosaries and others).

Figure 227 - Commerce in parallel streets



As I arrived at the Basilica, I observed people holding a piece of the rope. The ropes that had already arrived were being cut by the promisers and generating also some fights. They fight a lot. I even tried to ask for some of the rope or even talk to them, and many didn't even want to talk, just ran out to make sure they had taken the rope and were going to take it home. With some of them I also managed to talk

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

and a promiser told me that every year they come to the procession because they have already been blessed to conquer things due to Our Lady of Nazaré.

Figure 228 - Promisers fighting for a piece of the rope



Figure 229 - Promiser showing his piece of the rope



I approached one of the promisers who came out with the rope in his hand and he ran and almost didn't want to talk to me. Usually, they are afraid of someone wanting to take their rope. He even hid the rope in his shorts so I wouldn't see it. I realize that the rope is almost a reward for having gone through the entire procession holding it. He tells me that it feels good to pay what we ask. Health, happiness, work for everyone. And that every year he comes.

Figure 230 - Promisers posing for a selfie with their ropes



Taking the rope also has a tone of conquest and ostentation. A group of promisers made the whole journey and at the end of the procession they posed for a selfie in which they show the rope in their hands.

I also spoke to a woman who had the rope wrapping her fingers around her hand. She says that the force to overcome the whole procession is the rope itself and Our Lady of Nazaré. She told me that she comes every year. She normally asks Our Lady of Nazaré for her family every year.

In addition, I also saw many believers arriving to leave their ex-votos in the basilica. They set up a structure to receive ex-votes. It was a structure without much planning. People passed the ex-votos over a grid that it was very difficult for the church volunteers to get these ex-votos on the other side of the grid. Either way, it was a good place to observe this handing over of ex-votos.

Figure 231 - Church volunteers catching the ex-votos



One of the promises was Alexandra de Santarém. She came from Santarém by plane. She came to pay the promise for her nephew who was born sick. This is the fifth year that she comes and she leaves a baby-shaped ex-voto that has a picture of her nephew inside. She told me that he was born sick, but today he is much better.

Figure 232 - Promiser with an ex-voto



For people the Círio is a renewal of their faith, renewal of hope, renewing everything that they want for their family, for friends, for the enemies too. They also said that they were there to thank for their achievements, or to ask in times of health difficulties, for example. The people from the Para state have a strong identification with the image of Our Lady of Nazaré, as a mother, a queen. They affectionately call her Nazinha, the diminutive of Nazaré for them.

There I also talked with some people, especially a young man who was a promiser and went to the rope and had a piece of the rope. After talking to me, he kindly gave me a piece of the rope he had. And he said something like: "the rope is only valid when it is shared". Here I was deeply touched, because once again I had contact with Círio's generosity and solidarity. It also represented yet another moment of profound exchanges between me and the participants in that experience.

Figure 233 - The researcher posing with a piece of the rope



In the end of the procession, the image leaves the *Berlinda* and is placed in the square that is right in front of the Basilica. The image is deposited inside a glass box in a space accessible to everyone. Therefore, even after the Círio, this square becomes a place of great visitation of the faithful in search to have a closer experience with the saint.

1.2.4.2.17 Paying Promises

*Our Lady of Nazaré provides good things for us. Everything we ask for in faith, we achieve.
(Fernanda)*

I followed a family in one of their spiritual ceremonies. They are going to different religious celebrations to ask for protection in a difficult time they are facing. We went to a mass in a Catholic church. Together they were there for the purpose of praying for protection. And they have been visiting other spiritual and religious ceremonies. Such as this family, when people are facing any difficulty in life, they rely on the spiritual to find some relief.

In Belém, Our Lady of Nazaré is required when people are suffering. I interviewed a man who was helped by Our Lady of Nazaré in a moment of very delicate health for his son. He told his son was diagnosed with an uncured disease and that he asked God and Our Lady of Nazaré to save his son and he promised to go on the rope during the processions until the day he could no more. He told that at the following exams, his son was cured and he started to pay his promise.

He mentioned how difficult it is to go on the rope. It is a bodily experience, but with Our Lady of Nazaré everything is possible. I noticed how much to report about this experience touches him. Interestingly, he reported that he goes in two processions: the transportation and the Círio. The two processions take place one after the other. With a small interval between the two, only a few hours. In each one he must be very exhausted, because each one must last about 06 hours. However, he was very strong and determined to do this while he has the energy. And he said that it has been 15 years since his son was healed.

People demonstrate high level of engagement and commitment with the religious figure. It seems that there is a kind of contract that cannot be broken between the promiser and the saint.

Another way of paying promises for blessings achieved through Our Lady's intercession is to go on pilgrimage to Belém, walking from their cities to the Basilica of Our Lady of Nazaré, during the processions. For instance, I interviewed some pilgrims who walked for 24 hours to arrive at the Basilica. Elo, a pilgrim from Castanhal, shared her story:

The first time I came was to thank for a job I was accepted to, and today I keep working in this same public department. [...] And I made this promise that if I got accepted, I would come for five years walking in pilgrimage to thank. But I am coming for more than 05 years already. Today I just thank Our Lady of Nazaré. And now I ask for other situations that

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

appear in relatives' lives, throughout the years. Over the months and years, health issues appear with friends, with family, and we make other promises again. [...] This year it was difficult. I already arrived in tears. Because I have a purpose. And it is a very strong purpose this year. I have friends, I have children who are going through problems. So, we put the person's life at that moment, for her, for Our Lady to go ahead and save us. (Elo)

People can pay their promises by helping someone else. For instance, I interviewed people that are currently working on the Red Cross and do that because has been receiving a lot from Our Lady of Nazaré, so they want to give back by helping other people. Another way to pay promises is by giving water to people that is paying their promises on the rope. Some people buy thousands of cups of mineral water to donate during the processions. They place the cups on the sidewalks and invite volunteers to help to distribute the water during the procession.

Figure 234 - Water to be distributed during the processions



Such rituals of promises involve suffering, such as walking on knees or holding on the rope the whole procession. Some people think such demonstrations are not necessary. They think promisers should be focused on doing something in favor of

people in need, instead of focusing their attention on their own suffering. Promisers rely on tradition to express their gratitude to Our Lady of Nazaré and they find happiness and fulfilment in doing so. The Church itself strongly discourages the expression of such types of penance.

The gratitude to Our Lady of Nazaré normally happens when pilgrims are heard in difficult life events. Such as what happened with Rafael, 26 years old. He shared that since he was a child he suffered from asthma, he always asked for the help of Our Lady of Nazaré to cure him from his asthma. And he got his grace, today he no longer has asthma. According to him, he was healed by Our Lady's intercession. And to this day, to thank her, he accompanies the Círio barefoot. And he feels no pain and no tiredness. Just being there at Círio, for him it is already wonderful, and it thrills him.

Even having all stories of gratitude for their blessings, pilgrims have unique spiritual experiences. For instance, Monica suffered from breast cancer that she discovered during her pregnancy. It was very desperate for her to hear this news, but she says she went to Our Lady of Nazaré to help her overcome it. She told me that it was her who gave her the strength to fight, to follow the treatment and to heal. For her, the fight against breast cancer was marked in her history. She even kept an amulet with her that is a symbol of the fight against breast cancer.

The rope is a symbol of the Círio. Historically, the rope was first used to move the *berlinda* with the image of Our Lady of Nazaré along the procession. Nowadays, the rope gained a more symbolic meaning, the act of paying promises. Through the act of pulling the rope, people pay their promise and have a moment of strong spiritual and physical connection.

The rope is renovated every year. 400 meters of rope were used in the pilgrimage of 2019. The rope is thick and resistant. After the processions, promoters take pieces of the rope and take it back home. They use it as amulets and to give as gifts to their families and friends.

Figure 235 - The rope that was used in 2019



1.2.4.2.18 Círio's Feast

It is the union of the family. It is a fraternization. When Mom was alive, all the children went there. We had the Círio's Feast at her home. It is all about our typical foods, such as maniçoba, which is a local dish, and duck in tucupi. These are the most typical. It unites the family and it's pure celebration and mess.

October is special in Para's culture. It is a time when families come together. One main tradition is observed and it takes places right after the Círio de Nazaré procession on Sunday: the Círio's Feast. Families gather together around typical food and they have music, dance, and a lot of food. In some families each member brings different dishes to compose the feast, in some others they cook it all together.

I had the chance to visit three family feasts right after the processions. The first one is a family that lives in an apartment right in front of the Basilica. I went to their apartment which has a privileged view. There we could see the arrival of the saint,

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

the movement of the faithful and we could still feel a little of the spirit of Círio in a house with the food that is prepared and the atmosphere of sharing and unity.

Figure 236 - The view from the window of the first feast visited



Their home table was full with food prepared by themselves, and had everything that is typical of the local cuisine. We sat and ate with them, exchanged a little of the experience we had in the procession, and we still had the chance to see the arrival of the saint from above. It was a very happy moment, of communion with this lively family. They danced, celebrated and included me in their celebration. We were at their Christmas, as Círio has this connotation.

Figure 237 - The first family feast



CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

At the second home I had the chance to experience the feast, the maniçoba has been on cooking process for days. The maniçoba was purchased pre-cooked, which saves total cooking time (normally 07 days). The grandmother has been cooking it and as the day was arriving, she put the final ingredients to finish the preparation. It takes several days of cooking, as people say, one of the main ingredients (the maniva) has toxins that if not well cooked can remain on the plate and lead to death those who eat it. So, 07 days is the time needed to prepare this dish. It is the dish that has the best spot on the table of the people of Pará families on Círio's day.

The celebration at this second house included music and animation and people shouting and having fun. Lots of typical food too and the family's union with the party going on until the night. The family also organized a bingo involving gifts and money as prizes. This moment is very important for the family. The whole family was there. Everyone gathered in the backyard and had the bingo. The animation is very present in the family from the beginning to the end of the party.

For final feast I arrived a bit late, but not for the dessert time. I arrived after lunch where everyone was resting. And we sat at the table to eat sweets specially prepared for the party. It had a lot of different desserts. As I already had food in two different feasts, it was very difficult to eat there too. But the most interesting thing is that we were able to sit at the table and talk about my research, about Círio, about their life, and it was a very interesting exchange moment that we lived. One of the most interesting moments was when the host mother gave me a piece of the rope that she got in Círio's procession and I was very happy.

Figure 238 - Dessert moment at the final feast



1.2.4.2.19 Communication tools

The Basilica own some communication tools to broadcast and promote its main activities:

(i) Rede Nazaré TV and Radio Channels: Masses and other religious activities are broadcasted by this TV and Radio channel. During the Círio de Nazaré, the program is broadcasted by Rede Nazaré TV Channel, as well as by Rede Vida (a national TV channel), and also by social networks.

(ii) Social networks: The basilica disposes of accounts on social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. It is through these main accounts that people can watch as well as interact with basilica. The Basilica also has a website where it keeps records, Círio history, Symbols and other information.

Figure 239 - Nazaré Network (Radio and TV)



Figure 240 - Basilica's Facebook Account

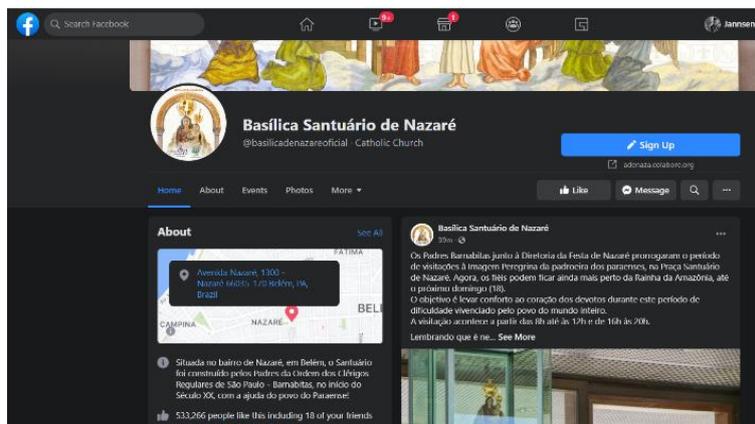
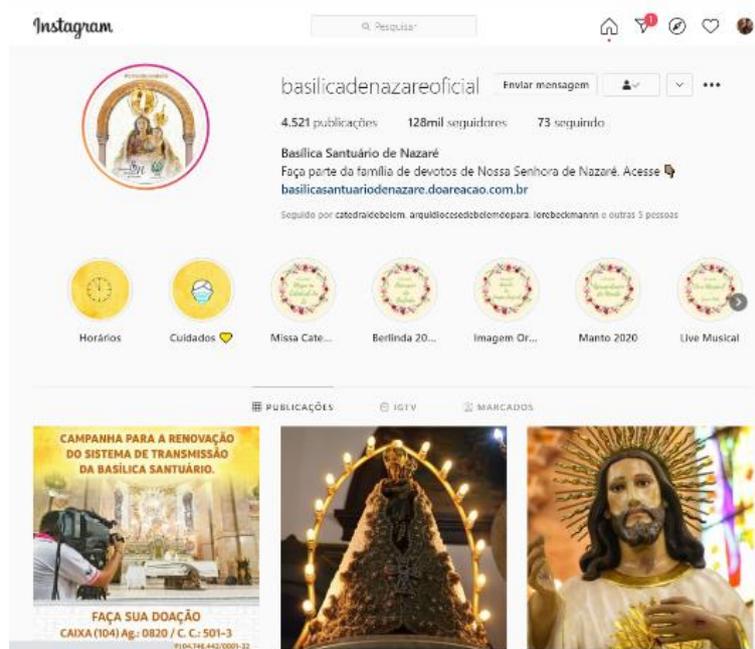


Figure 241 - Basilica's Instagram Account



(iii) Apps: One of the technologies they use for communication is an application called “KD a Berlinda. Technology to Find”. The application is a partnership between Claro (a telecommunication enterprise) and the Government of the State of Pará. Basically, the application says where Berlinda is and shows its displacement in real time. The device can be downloaded for use on the mobile phone, either through the App Store or Google Play.

(iv) Other social networks: Other accounts on Instagram, YouTube and Facebook broadcast the Círio de Nazaré. For instance, the Government of the State of Pará has its own social networks, as well as the City Hall. Their posts and stories on Instagram are often very colorful and there are always references to the colors or traditions of Círio as visual resources. For example, it is common to see the use of animated figures of typical foods or even the rope in their stories.

1.2.4.2.20 Community

Look how crazy the way everyone is to connect through an image, regardless of whether you believe it or not. Because this is what happens

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

here, this is the Círio of Nazaré. It is all about we are able to do together. (Naiana)

The feeling of community and union in Belém is clear through the crowds, the moments where pilgrims sing along, when they are walking together towards Belém, or volunteers who donate time to others during this time of the year.

During the Círio, many people like to serve and help the people who need it most. That's why people can volunteer at the Red Cross, in the church, at Casa de Plácido. There are many ways to help. It is also possible to give water to the promisers that go on the rope on the day of the procession, or even to donate food and water and hygiene and cleaning materials to Casa de Plácido. So, it is a month in which solidarity and empathy are strong feelings in people's hearts. In addition to the feeling of family reunion, which evokes affective memories and the construction of new moments. Elizabete mentioned how is the feeling of being a volunteer:

In the experience at Casa de Plácido, we see that there are several ways for you to show love, humility, welcoming [...] the house has its doors open for the pilgrim. [...] also, the volunteering is very important for us to look at ourselves, to learn, and to renew. Each year that passes is a different job. (Elizete)

I had the chance to talk to Wallace, 36 years old. And he has participated in the Red Cross for 15 years. He says that the Red Cross takes care of people during the Círio and throughout the year. The main support they give is during the Círio. They are prepared to provide help to people who are ill during the candle. He is an “affective volunteer”. To be at that moment at Círio, they have a preparation that lasts all year. They have a course on first aid and nursing. Naiana, as well, says what it means to her the volunteering:

I think the biggest feeling I had when I was volunteering was gratitude. It seems silly to say that, but it is because it is very good to be

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

grateful to be here to help create a good environment for the pilgrims who arrive [...] a pleasant environment, a clean environment, an environment where they can rest. So, I was grateful to be able to be there and to be able to promote something very good for them. (Naiana)

Naiana also explains how easy it is to volunteer during the Círio de Nazaré festivities:

We have the opportunity to engage in what we want. We don't need to participate in any group. You do not need to be at the red cross, you do not need to be at the church, you can simply ask for donations of water for your friends and family. And that is already a great commitment, you do not need to be part of a group, to fit into something to be able to help. At Círio, just helping someone, giving someone a thing, they need, wishing Happy Círio, encouraging people in some way, praying over that person, I think it is already a very valid form of engagement. If not the most valid, that is your personal intention. (Naiana)

According to my observations and conversations with people here, the Círio creates an atmosphere that runs through the whole month of October. It invites people to solidarity. One of the most iconic images of this expression of solidarity is donation. In front of the basilica there is a big basket on the sidewalk and people just need to go there and deposit their donation. I saw that the basket was full of different items, such as hygiene and food materials, basic food, water and etc. It is the volunteers who work at Círio who help to collect these donations and take them to the appropriate places.

Figure 242 - Donation basket



1.2.4.2.21 Syncretism

It was recurrent the idea of syncretism during the Círio de Nazaré. Some people told me how it is incredible to see how the protestant church donates water to pilgrims during the festivities, even though they do not believe in any sacred images such as Our Lady of Nazaré. Maria shared with me her perception on this topic when I interviewed her:

When pilgrims are coming walking to Belém, there are several points in which they can stop and rest, have some water and food. Those reception points are not necessarily Catholic, they are also from other religions that help. And that's how it should be, right? (Márcia)

The Círio is also attended by people from different religions, beyond the Catholics. Marcia is spiritist and traditionally comes to the Círio. She explains the background:

For me faith is the believing in something that you cannot see, but you know that it exists, because you feel that. Before I was a Catholic,

CASE 4 – CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

so I always believed and accompanied Grandma in novenas, especially during the Círio time. Now, I am a spiritist, but spiritism does not prevent you from sharing other experiences. And I still feel that same emotion, because [...] there are still those that say: “ahh, it's just an image that you worship”. I see that the human being is very materialistic, so they need something material to cling to in order to feel that stronger. So, this is how I see the images. Representations of saints. It is something that brings you closer to what you believe, only that you can't see it yet. (Márcia)

1.3 Analysis

The analysis is conducted in two levels: at the level of each pilgrimage (intra-case), and between pilgrimages (inter-case). The idea is to "make the field speak by itself" and catch the core phenomena and its related behaviors. Thematic as well as semiology analysis helped to emerge 12 axial themes.

1.3.1 Intra-case analysis

This section, presented through each unity of analysis (each case or field of study), focuses on the learnings from the observations of the commercial and spiritual journey of the pilgrimage experience. The objective is to identify the themes achieved through inductive reasoning from the experience of pilgrims, analyzing the core influencing factors (cultural, commercial, collective, individual, and so on) as well as the social dynamics among the interactions between actors.

1.3.1.1 Lourdes

1.3.1.1.1 Individual and collective aspects of the experience

Pilgrims get ready to their pilgrimage individually and collectively. A pilgrimage is an activity that despite being often associated with a personal/individual willingness to live a spiritual experience, is also collectively experienced. With the support from their Diocese or a Touristic Agency pilgrims organize their pilgrimage. The schedule of activities, transport, accommodations, and other practical points are organized by such institutions. Fewer tourists also pilgrimage by themselves, meaning that all planning must be done by them.

The pilgrimage experience is also a communal (or collective) experience. Pilgrims have communal moments (i) when they are coming to Lourdes, as they normally come together in buses, trains or airplanes; (ii) in the accommodations, once they are often accommodated in the same hotel; and (iii) when they are gathered along

the streets, in the sanctuary, during processions and posing for the official picture of the pilgrimage with all pilgrims from their group. Pilgrims display high patriotism also, especially those from European countries, and they wave their flags during processions and have some inscriptions on their clothes mentioning the place they are coming from. Living the experience collectively is indeed relevant for them.

1.3.1.1.2 Interchange between the spiritual and the commercial

The Sanctuary and the local Market, on the other side, also get ready to receive pilgrims. The sanctuary set up a unique experience for pilgrims by (i) the construction of a site that connects nature and religion; (ii) huge structure with a range of activities that looks like a Disneyland Park occasionally; and (iii) structure to welcome pilgrims with distinct international backgrounds. Local market as well is organized to attend pilgrims and tourists with stores offering sacred and profane products and services, restaurants, bars and a huge hospitality structure.

The sanctuary, the city and the market are adapted to receive all kinds of pilgrims, especially disable ones. Trains are adapted to pilgrims in chair wheels and beds, sanctuary volunteers help pilgrims to move from the airport and train stations to get to their hotels, red lines in the streets' floor are dedicated to pilgrims in chair wheels, and also disable and older pilgrims are offered a chair wheel so they can move along the city.

Spiritual and commercial dimensions seem to be divided physically and in terms of logics: the spiritual and commercial logic. The sanctuary is divided by the rest of the city by their grids and gates. Meanwhile, right outside the gates is the local market with plenty of offerings (goods and services). As soon as the pilgrims move in an out of the sanctuary they are immersed totally in the spiritual or commercial realm.

Contradictorily, both realms are so strong that they cross such grids and gates. The commercial logic is somehow integrated into the sanctuary with a different label, such as the exchange of candles that happens inside the sanctuary to which the sanctuary does not call it selling and buying, but rather "*offrandes*" or offerings

under some prefixed "prices" that will be used to help on the sanctuary projects. In addition, the commercial logic on the spiritual domain can be seen through marketing promotion of the Lourdes experience, experience design with kiosks and self-service services inside the sanctuary, and so on.

On the other hand, the influence of the spiritual on the commercial is clear. Local market is widely transformed to attend the spiritual consumer by offering spiritual products and services that are designed to attend their demand. The spiritual logic on the commercial domain can be observed mainly through the blessing products, bottle of water in the shape of our lady of Lourdes, and the whole plethora of products with the Image of the saint.

Commercial logic is used in favor of the spiritual as well as the spiritual logic is used in favor of the commercial. Spiritual and commercial offerings, then, co-exist and are part of the pilgrimage experience. Spiritual offerings (e.g., water, candle, images, religious souvenirs, rosaries, others) and profane ones (e.g., tourism on the city, bars and restaurants, megastores, perfumes, bracelets, souvenirs, bags and accessories, etc.) are available in the local market and consumed by pilgrims.

1.3.1.1.3 Ritualized and marketized spiritual experience

The Pilgrims' Way is hugely enacted/ritualized by pilgrims in Lourdes. It is basically a series of bodily interactive activities between the pilgrims and physical materiality of Lourdes, especially the grotto and the water coming from local sources. Pilgrims pass through 05 spiritual activities: (i) going to grotto; (ii) reflecting in Silence; (iii) making a gesture with the water; and (iv) leaving and lighting a candle. Such rituals are reinforced by the sanctuary and some of them facilitated by local market offerings.

For those spiritual rituals to take place, the market is important. Pilgrims buy products that will facilitate the enactment of such rituals. For instance, buying empty bottles outside the sanctuary in order to collect water inside the sanctuary and bring it back home. Water is used as solace in difficult moments through drinking, passing on the skin, or taking a bath with the water. Accordingly, pilgrims

engage in gift-giving practices, when they give flowers and other gifts to Our Lady of Lourdes to thank and ask for their blessings. Finally, buying candles to light up is also a key activity in their sacred rituals.

The main sacred rituals taking place in Lourdes are also a reenactment of the historical teachings from Bernadette and passed through Our Lady of Lourdes in several apparitions. At each apparition, Our Lady invited Bernadette to drink the water of the grotto, pray, do penitence, light up a candle, and so on. Those teachings were then translated to the visitors of the city in a ritualistic way.

Finally, the spiritual connection pilgrims display to Our Lady of Lourdes is easily observable during the pilgrimage. They thank and ask their blessings to her, they bring gifts, pray her rosary and gather around her image in the grotto to reflect in silence. Pilgrims in Lourdes actually follow the spiritual learnings from Our Lady of Lourdes passed through Bernadette. Therefore, there is this spiritual leader agency that guide pilgrims' behaviors during the pilgrimage.

1.3.1.1.4 Searching for blessings in the spiritual site

Pilgrims in Lourdes are primarily visiting the pilgrimage site for spiritual purposes. Pilgrims refers to the spiritual and religious motivation that are behind their decision to engage in the site. They are motivated to search for spiritual support especially when they have difficulties to deal with life challenging moments: e.g., the death of a loved one, depression, the discovery and treatment of a physical disease, and so on. Lourdes is also well-known by the massive number of disable people that want to live Lourdes experience in search to better deal with their conditions.

Pilgrims search for Lourdes motivated to achieve their miracles and blessings. Rituals such as taking the bath at piscines with the miraculous water from Lourdes are widely undertaken to achieve their wishes. In the piscines, pilgrims have a lifetime and intimate experience in which they deliver their wishes for change, blessing, healing, cure, or protection of themselves or somebody else. The bath is a

symbolic ritual in which pilgrims are immersed in the waters of Lourdes and then leave it renewed or transformed (mentally or physically).

Yet, some pilgrims and tourists are quite critical to the miracles. Some say, attracting disable people to the city could be considered a way to lie to them of something obvious: they would not change their physical condition in the pilgrimage site. Other pilgrims say that the mystery of Lourdes maybe is not the miracle of providing a physical healing, but rather a mental healing that will help people suffering, or disable people to better live and accept their condition in life.

1.3.1.1.5 The cocreation of care systems

There is a Care System in action in Lourdes and one that is well developed. For instance, pilgrims, especially disable individuals, are offered wheel chairs to better move along the city/sanctuary, dozens of volunteers offer their time and care to pilgrims, and the market is adapted to received people with different disabilities. Volunteers and hospitaliers (the ones taking care of a disable person during the whole pilgrimage) are responsible for providing a unique experience of care to pilgrims. By being delicate, careful, and respectful to pilgrims, volunteers and hospitaliers are trained to provide care, attention, and love to pilgrims. Volunteers in Lourdes are organized, invited or self-invited to help people. A system of care is then settled In Lourdes and that is one of the key factors of success for the reason why there are many disable people coming back and back to the city.

1.3.1.2 Camino de Santiago

1.3.1.2.1 Non-ordinary characteristics and the need to prepare for it

The Camino de Santiago is an experience that put individuals in very unique and non-ordinary situations, at least for those not used to trekking or walking long distances. It can take high loads of preparing for some pilgrims and, less for others. Resources such as book guides, learning from veterans, Internet forums, videos, movies, among others are used as a way to get ready. Preparing also involves

decision of which way to engage in, arranging how many days to engage in the experience, buying products and services necessary to the experience (e.g., travel tickets, materials and so on).

Anna shared that she needed to arrange with her boss dates to take her vacation and do the Camino and that, according to her, was quite easy to get. She managed to arrange things in a couple of days and jump right into the experience with not so much preparing. However, my own experience with the Camino was a bit different, as I took around two months to get ready. Therefore, preparing depends on how well experienced a pilgrim is, their aversion to risk, as well as how much time and resources they have available to engage in the experience.

1.3.1.2.2 Shared knowledge to navigate the experience

Sharing of knowledge on the experience among participants (novices and veterans) is intense. Pilgrims share tips and recommendations on which stores to go to, or which products and services to buy. It facilitates the experience of others, as well as, creating a sense of community of those that are interested in the Camino. Forums, YouTube Channels, Instagram profiles and other digital platforms are used as a repository and active channel of communication among people interested in doing the Camino.

The uncertainty of doing the Camino is certainly eased by this shared knowledge. The information found in these community platforms of support prevents peers from difficulties associated with the Camino, such as providing the means to better deal with pain, lack of knowledge about the distances between cities and where to stop and rest. Contradictorily, some pilgrims say: 'the Camino is all about less preparing (like we do in normal life) and more enjoying!'. This last group of pilgrims believe that there is value in taking a more relaxed and not-planned Camino, in which serendipity and the chance of living unexpected situations can bring positive results to the pilgrim.

1.3.1.2.3 The role of materiality to actualize the spiritual experience

When it comes to materiality, there are key objects that are symbolic in expressing pilgrims' identity in the Camino: the pilgrims' Compostela (or the pilgrims' shell), the trekking clothes, the backpack, and the boots, are the material things that most represent pilgrims. When people are seen walking in the ancient European routes, small villages or city centers, alone or in groups, and dressing the materials above mentioned they are easily decodified as pilgrims of the Camino on their Way.

1.3.1.2.4 The organization of the pilgrimage experience

The organizers of the Camino are the church, as well the local auberges and accommodations. Pilgrims are offered with a structured touristic market composed by support in the many touristic departments along the Way, a diverse hospitality structure with accommodations and other related services (e.g., restaurants and bars), and the arrows along the way with which they can guide themselves. In special, the arrows are an ancient and efficient way to orientate pilgrims and they are also a key symbol in the experience.

1.3.1.2.5 The interchange between the spiritual and the commercial

There is a connection among the market structure that is along the way (e.g., cafés, bars, restaurants, accommodations). The market is connected once services share space, information, and know-how with each other for the benefit of the pilgrims and their own. For instance, while pilgrims are staying in Albergue X they can find information, with the host or in the info board, about the next auberge or private accommodations in the next city they are planning to stop. They can also search for recommended products and services available around that are recommended by each other. Such connection is observed in different service providers along the way, constituting a touristic system connected.

The connection between service providers is more analog than digital, despite the digital presence of some in social networks. Pilgrims have a rustic/analog and

efficient touristic structure that informs them about the name of the next cities, available accommodations and other services, with telephone numbers and more information available on folders, posters, outdoors and word of mouth.

1.3.1.2.6 Searching for simplicity and frugality (as a value)

The Camino is an "experience of the simple". Pilgrims normally live an experience that is more rustic, close to nature, local culture, and to themselves (at the individual level) and others (at the collective level). Pilgrims have different market offerings to pick and choose, such as more rustic and simpler auberges, or local restaurants. In this experience of simplicity, some market providers also offer "unique experiences" to pilgrims. For instance, private accommodation owners (the ones receiving less pilgrims at the same time than auberges) offer special gifts for hosted pilgrims, such as a glass of wine or a dinner. Finally, there are pilgrims that are not really interested in such simplicity and may prefer to book more comfortable and fancy hotels, or maybe pay for services such as backpack transfer and others that will turn their experience more easy and less difficult.

The simplicity experience also means that the Camino is an experience that invite pilgrims to slow down the rhythm of life with less connection to the stressful aspects such as intense work routines, pace of life in big centers or hyper internet connection and over digital content consumption. Pilgrims try to connect instead to the present, to themselves, to others and to the world around them. A pilgrim from Italy mentioned he was not posting nothing on his social networks during the Camino once he felt there is no need to post a thing that is highly personal and that people that are not living it would not understand and call him crazy due to his decision to engage in.

The Camino also invites pilgrims to a less consumerism immersion, with a logic of less accumulations, living the simple life, and living on day at a time. The experience offers some metaphors such as 'there is need to bring a lot of stuff in your backpack, only the essential', and 'you do not need to run, instead you should be walking at a normal pace'. Such metaphors are then converted into learnings that pilgrims seek

to bring to their life outside the Camino also. Pilgrims normally mention they learned a lot and that would be great to stick to this new style of life.

The less consumerism aspect and the simplicity background should not be confused with the Camino being an accessible experience to all. Actually, the Camino is not a cheap experience. Pilgrims willing to engage in the Camino need to have flexibility and time to leave their ordinary life and spend weeks and, some of them, month(s) walking, as well buying airplane, train and/or bus tickets that can rise the final price of the whole experience. Indeed, eating and accommodations tends to be not so expensive to pilgrims, mainly for the ones searching for simplicity, but buying the appropriate clothes and materials is expensive, turning the experience more exclusively for a certain group of people.

1.3.1.2.7 The cosmopolitan profile of the pilgrim

When it comes to the profile of pilgrims, in general, they are an international community, with people from all over the world. Open-minded individuals in general, normally with different backgrounds and experiences. The contact of such contrasting and rich experiences has great potential for teaching and learning from each other, creating meaningful encounters.

Motivations to engage in the Camino are diverse. Pilgrims engage in the Way for religious or spiritual purposes of finding or reencountering God or even themselves, as an adventure, for their vacations, or when they want to live a life-time experience out of their comfort zone. Mental disorders such as depression, difficulties to cope with issues in their life such as important decisions, or also when they are tired of their office ordinary life-style they also find in the Camino the solution for such situations.

1.3.1.2.8 Geographical self-orientation during the experience

To move along the Way, pilgrims have analogical and digital tools that can facilitate the walking. For instance, when it comes to their geographical orientation, they can rely on the digital help of smartphone apps or in the analogical tools such as printed

maps or similar tools. Sometimes they can be both used according to the situation. Using to the yellow arrows is definitely the one of the first and simpler things pilgrims do to keep going on their way to Santiago de Compostela.

1.3.1.2.9 Authenticity in pilgrimage practices

The Camino has some authenticity requirements. Pilgrims first need to have the pilgrim passport with which they will collect ritually stamps in the auberges and restaurants they have been along the Way. At the end of the journey pilgrims can show the number of kilometers they walked based on the stamps they have and receive a certificate of accomplishment of the journey. The pilgrims need to overcome at least 100 km up to Santiago de Compostela in order to receive their certificate.

1.3.1.2.10 Escaping routines and engaging in new routines

While running away from the everyday routine, pilgrims engage in the routine of the Camino. The routine starts around 06 am, when pilgrims wake up and start getting ready to leave their accommodations. Pilgrims start walking up to the moment they think it's fine, tired, or accomplishment their goal for the day (e.g., reaching the amount of walked kilometers they initially thought). Despite being an experience to relax, pilgrims tend to wake up in a hurry to leave the accommodations and some pilgrims can enter in self-competitions to arrive faster at the destination planned, especially in the first days when they are yet getting used to a less hurry style of living.

1.3.1.2.11 Individual and collective aspects of the experience

The communal aspect of the Camino is one of the most reported things when pilgrims try to recover their experience. Pilgrims find important sources of transformation and learning through collective moments and friendship made during the Camino. According to some pilgrims, meeting people with different backgrounds (different nationalities or age) and exchanging meaningful and deep

conversations and experiences with each other provides life-changing learnings and create friendships beyond the Camino. In addition, communal moments are meaningful, such as accommodation with other people, sharing stories, and moments together, singing together, meals, (cooking together), walking together.

Individuality is also important for some pilgrims who prefer to walk alone. Yet the collective aspect of the Camino is widely present. Collective moments can take place while walking, but mostly in the auberges where they can have these table talks, dinner together, and share a lot of each other's experiences and anecdotes. Connection is made almost instantly between people and this is extremely important for pilgrims. Individual and collective dimensions are complementary. One fuels the other. Pilgrims are doing the Camino for individual purposes, but collectively they construct a unique experience.

1.3.1.2.12 The cocreation of care systems.

Caring is a spontaneous and empathetic practice during the Camino. For instance, beyond sharing knowledge on how to deal with pain, pilgrims also take care of each other when pain comes. Pilgrims share their own medicines, or ointments when see other pilgrims suffering, they give some recommendations, mental support, and offer practical tips on how to avoid pain with bandages and others suggestions. Therefore, caring is part of this communal experience, and eventually creates emotional bonds between pilgrims.

Such caring systems can also be observed coming from the market itself, with auberges' owners providing gifts for the pilgrims, sharing conversations and anecdotes. To pilgrims such encounters are meaningful and unique, creating long lasting memories in pilgrims' memories.

1.3.1.2.13 The centrality of the embodied experience

The body is a protagonist in the spontaneous Camino. Pilgrims experience a deep self-awareness of their bodies throughout their journey. They have the chance to understand their body limits, observe and sense the way they are walking, the pain

they are feeling, or sensing the space around them (e.g., seeing, scenting, touching, listening, and tasting). The experience enables connection with yourself, with your body through the physical efforts needed, and with your mind, through the emotions and feelings that rise on the almost constant thinking that the Camino allows pilgrims to.

Suffering, in special, is almost an inevitable feeling of the Camino. Your body will feel pain, you will eventually walk several kilometers per day, especially when is something unusual to the pilgrim. But pilgrims, while dealing with pain, tend to incorporate learnings from their pain. Pain connects pilgrims to their bodies and distract them from thinking in their bad things in life, pain make them careful with themselves, or even provide meditation possibilities. Blisters are the most avoided, but often present, bondages and other techniques are learnt to minimize pain, as well as medication, ointments and other strategies to alleviate pain.

1.3.1.2.14 Re-enacting the Camino as a ritualistic and culture experience

Rituals are widely present in the experience. Walking the Camino could be considered itself a ritual that is vastly re-enacted by pilgrims for thousands of years. In addition, pilgrims mimic ancient practices along the way such as stacking stones, tying ribbons everywhere (at crosses, stones and other objects), stacking and leaving objects such as shells, stones, and other objects. Rituals then are translated as the interactions between pilgrims, the Camino space (e.g., routes, accommodations, restaurants, etc.) and objects. Most rituals are intended to register their passage in the Camino, be it by leaving an object on the way or writing their names on stones. There is a ritualistic way to say: "I was here".

The pilgrimage is consumed also as a cultural experience. Pilgrims engage themselves in local culture, through participation in local festivities, town touristic activities, and etc. A gastronomical experience is also present, in which pilgrims can taste the local cuisines in different countries. During the Camino, I experienced food from Portugal and Spain, especially from the North of Portugal to the Galicia region in Spain.

1.3.1.2.15 The accomplishment of the journey and the emotional apotheosis

Reaching the final destination of the Camino, which is the square in front of Santiago de Compostella's Cathedral is rewarding and completes the whole journey. During their Camino, pilgrims, especially the newbies, keep thinking how is it going to be at the moment they arrive in this square? And what would they do after it is over? They constantly refer they feel worried about the ending of it, because they wish the Camino would never end, so they could continue to feel such good feelings and not need to come back to their ordinary lifestyle.

When they arrive in the final destination, they experience an emotional apotheosis. Crying, happiness, and relieve are part of the emotions they feel in this square. Arriving at this stage is a sign they survived to all these days walking and resisting to pain, their own fears, and so on. It took some time to realize they arrived and that the Camino is over, so they seat down or lay down on the floor and enter in a reflection mood (e.g., praying, meditating, thinking on all they came through). Pilgrims encounter friends they have done along the Way in a moment of exuberant joy, share a hug and their emotions. They also come back to the same square just to watch other pilgrims arriving as a way to celebrate this moment and to wait for other possible friends made along the Way.

Pilgrims tend to arrive at the city and also stay for a couples of days. It is an extension of the emotion apotheosis, when pilgrims try to explore the city attractions, such as going to the churches, assisting to some Masses and other ceremonies, visiting museums and other historical buildings in downtown, etc.

1.3.1.2.16 Never-ending search for the experience

The feeling of repetition is present among a great part of pilgrims. Re-doing another(s) route(s) toward Santiago de Compostela, or even the same one is desired by them. They share they felt good by doing it and that they want to continue coming in search of such positive mood. Some pilgrims have done the Camino for more than 10, 20 or 30 times. No matter their age, they keep coming, and they

mention that communal moments as well as nature/culture are the main remarkable things of the Camino.

Transformation is, then, a concept that is part of their empirical experience. The Camino provides a transformative nature to pilgrims through individual and collective means. For instance, pilgrims refer to the learnings that the situations they overcome can have for their lives. They also mention about several metaphors that can be translated from the Camino to their lives as a way for them to improve themselves. Finally, when they finish their Camino, they share their stories of acceptance of some difficult situations they were passing through before the Camino, or even radical and soft changes in attitudes that the Way allowed them to observe better.

1.3.1.3 Juazeiro do Norte

1.3.1.3.1 The profile of the pilgrim and the difficulties to reach the pilgrimage site

Pilgrims' profile in the pilgrimages to Juazeiro do Norte is varied in terms of age, once there are normally people ranging from kids to elderly (with retired individuals being the majority observed in site), and gender, once men and women participate of the spiritual experience. Yet, pilgrims are similar in one aspect, they are often coming from low-income families and they are mostly coming from Northeastern Brazil.

Getting ready to the pilgrimage takes time and money. Pilgrims refer especially to constant family budget restrictions as something that disturbs their planning to engage in the experience. As a solution, they take a whole year to save money (every penny count) to go on pilgrimage.

Main costs of the pilgrimage are bus tickets, accommodations, food expenses and leisure. Undeniably, costs depend on pilgrims' resources and planning and they have different approaches to their spending. At one hand, some pilgrims avoid over-spending because of their restricted financial conditions, so they bring their own food and cook in their lodgings and do other strategies to not spend a lot of

money. In the other hand, there are pilgrims that see the pilgrimage as a period for consumption and save money for this purpose of spiritual and commercial consumption.

Therefore, a financial organization to go on pilgrimage is needed. Pilgrims used to bring cash at the 'old times' (as referred by them), so they had a certain amount and only of money to spend during the pilgrimage days. But today, they have got credit cards and the possibility to pay the bill in installments, which is bringing other realities of consumption beyond the expected by pilgrims. Some of them mention they are at the edge to get indebted after the pilgrimage is over.

1.3.1.3.2 The consumerist pilgrim

Shopping is an activity deeply related to the pilgrimage, somehow institutionalized by the pilgrims but not necessarily reinforced by the local church, except in certain situations. Pilgrims save money to come to the pilgrimage, but also to shop in the city, because they often mention they do not find good prices in their hometowns. Therefore, in Juazeiro do Norte they can find a wide range of products that is not accessible or are scarce to them.

A certain level of consumerism is observed. Pilgrims normally return back home with their several luggage, plenty of products they buy in Juazeiro do Norte. The consumption journey of profane and sacred products and services are connected. As soon as pilgrims leave the basilica area, they are faced with the local street market. Then, consuming the spiritual or the commercial happens in a mixed way, one after the other.

1.3.1.3.3 The interchange between the spiritual and the commercial

Despite the clear division between the basilica (spiritual area) and the market outside basilicas' gates (commercial area), the two logics interchange. Sometimes the commercial logic invades the spiritual logic, such as the church using online and offline marketing tools to get closer and recruit pilgrims to the pilgrimages. The church also develops partnerships with some local entrepreneurs and

companies to offer and recommend their products in exchange of a percentage of their profit, often treated as tithing or offering. On the other side, the spiritual logic permeates the commercial, with the development of products and services that are tied to the main spiritual leaders of the pilgrimage site.

In site, pilgrims overcome a series of spiritual activities and rituals, such as visiting the most sacred places at the city. A rich pattern of spiritual rituals is present in these spiritual activities. For instance, rituals involving water are key to their experience. Pilgrims collect water in a source placed in one of Juazeiro do Norte's church. In order to collect such water, they buy a regular bottled water in the city, drink it, and then fill the bottle again with the water from the sacred site. The water is then considered sacred and pilgrims take it back to their houses and use it in purifying rituals.

In order to take place, rituals often need the support from market offerings. The previous example of the water ritual showed how pilgrims first need a repository to collect the water, so they buy it. It is an example of market as a practical support for spiritual rituals.

Some products from the local market can be added into existing rituals. For instance, the case of a local company that designed a plastic bottled water in the shape of Father Cícero. Pilgrims, then, rapidly engaged in buying this bottled water but not for drinking the inside content, but for using it in their purifying rituals. In addition, pilgrims do not throw away the empty bottled water once it has a strong spiritual appeal, they rather fill the water again and bless it in spiritual events, such as online (radio, television and social networks) and offline (at the church) masses. In the end, the products gained a certain sustainable character that extends the life of the product materiality under the owner's possession.

Such as the case mentioned in the previous paragraph, pilgrims demonstrate a certain vulnerability. They tend to absorb any market offering that is inspired in Father Cícero's image with not so much critical thinking. Some pilgrims and church staff members mentioned that could be a threat as pilgrims are often vulnerable to such marketing offerings, that are often commercialized with higher prices that

regular products of the same category. They argue the market wants to take advantage of people's face for their own profit.

Sometimes, pilgrims also engage in less consumption in the doing of their rituals. For instance, when they are walking up to top of the Horto Hill, they often take their shoes or sandals off and walk barefoot. They do this ritual as penitence and barefoot walking in a way to make the experience more painful and difficult. So, they prefer to live this experience without the facilities designed by marketing offerings such as footwear.

The commercial also helps the pilgrims to express their identity. Pilgrims find in the local market some products that are part of their pilgrim identity. The most relevant ones are the pilgrim straw hat and the rosary. They use everywhere when they are in Juazeiro do Norte, and even at their houses because they mention that being pilgrim is something that follows them beyond the pilgrimage site. The straw hat has function of protecting them from the sun, but is also a product recommended by Father Cícero himself to pilgrims to buy and to support local entrepreneurs. The rosary has a spiritual function of protection from negative things that may disturb the pilgrims and they use it and pray with it ritualistically as also recommended by Father Cícero himself when alive.

1.3.1.3.4 Spiritual and emotional attachment to the pilgrimage

The pilgrimage is a spiritual moment profoundly expected by pilgrims. It is a joyful moment of spiritual encounter between them and spiritual leaders at the pilgrimage (Father Cícero, Our Lady of Sorrows and God). Those who are not coming to the pilgrimage ask pilgrims that are coming to take with them their wishes. They even ask for gifts from Juazeiro do Norte as way to grab a bit of the sacred site in their houses.

They express emotional attachment to the pilgrimage site. They consider it as a sacred site, like Jerusalem is. Being in Juazeiro do Norte is like being in heaven, and that not only the church is sacred, but the whole city. That is why not going to the pilgrimage is a sad reality for a lot of them. This emotional attachment also can be

observed when they first see the huge statue of Father Cícero on the landscape when they are approaching the pilgrimage site from their bus seat. Pilgrims refer that they feel happy and emotive at this moment because they are grateful that the trip has went well and that they are soon arriving in the sacred land.

Leaving the pilgrimage is then naturally very difficult to them. They cry, miss It a lot, and have this constant wish to come back sooner. They return several times.

The belief that the site is sacred is so relevant to pilgrims that moving to Juazeiro do Norte is a dream for most of them. Some of them actually says that moving to the site would be like living in heaven, and pilgrims that are currently living confirm their satisfaction. Yet, other pilgrims believe that moving to the site would completely break the spell or the idea of the city as sacred as they would start to live the city as a local, and not as a pilgrim.

1.3.1.3.5 Motivations and entrance in the pilgrimage site

Divergent motivations are behind of their choice to engage in the experience. They come because it is a tradition passed through generations in their family. They also come because they are suffering to deal with some major life events and the spiritual site is the place where they go to ask or to thank for their blessings. Finally, there are also people coming to the pilgrimage following other pilgrims' invitation, but that are not necessarily looking for a spiritual experience rather a touristic one. This last one, by the way, create some distinctions and tensions between 'pilgrims', the ones coming to live a meaningful spiritual experience, and the 'religious tourists', coming for curiosity and to travel.

But before engaging in the experience, one thing is clearly important to pilgrims, that is to receive 'the call' from Our Lady of Sorrows or Father Cícero. The call from the sacred is a type of passport or stamp that guarantee free access to the pilgrimage site. Such call is often translated as a dream they had on the pilgrimage, their intuition, or even the actual call from someone close to them to go the pilgrimage. They interpret things around them as the waited call. Not receiving the call is a message that the pilgrim should not even try to come to the pilgrimage,

once any attempt will be certainly interrupted by higher forces. Basically, that was not your turn to go on pilgrimage.

1.3.1.3.6 The spiritual as a source of support

The spiritual represents an unlimited source of support for them. So, they like to ask for spiritual help when they are suffering. The spiritual is a way to better cope with their difficulties, be it a disease, the death of a loved one. They even ask to Father Cícero to have the appropriate conditions to go to the pilgrimage.

Such spiritual support can be lived such as the following. Pilgrims find themselves around difficult live events. They seek for spiritual help by asking to a spiritual leader (Father Cícero, Our Lady of Sorrow, or God) for their intercession to overcome such difficulty. They can ask for this help at their home or in the pilgrimage site. Once the spiritual does intercede for the pilgrim, so she/he goes in pilgrimage to thank for the blessing received. Thanking involves specific rituals that are widely observed in site.

The spiritual leaders, especially Father Cícero, are seeing as advisers that will provide answers, solutions and healings. Therefore, pilgrims rely on the spiritual in difficult moments and for every minor issue they may found on their lives. They also feel protected by the saints, such as Our Lady of Sorrows, from who they feel protected and blocked to the arrival of potential issues. In addition, pilgrims feel very close to these spiritual leaders, they are the intercessors of their pains to God. So, pilgrims believe that God is the first responsible for their healing, but that Father Cícero and Our Lady of Sorrows were also important for that to happen. Finally, believing that these spiritual leaders are sacred and in the sacredness of the site is also part of the process of relying on them in the process to achieve their blessing.

1.3.1.3.7 Never-ending search for the spiritual

Repetition is, then, desired and lived by pilgrims. Pilgrims come to Juazeiro do Norte several times in their lives, some of them coming once in a year and others coming 02 or more is not that difficult to find. Pilgrims at younger and older ages

are both attached to the spiritual site at the level of coming back several times during their life. Coming back is important because pilgrims are searching for the peaceful and unique moments that have in the pilgrimage, away from the issues in their ordinary life. The problems are also coming constantly and they use the spiritual as a source of support, so pilgrims are constantly asking to be cured and thanking for their healed scars in the pilgrimage. Finally, they refer to that each pilgrimage is both the same thing but also a new and unique mission that they have to do in the pilgrimage site. So, pilgrims find great joy in coming several times.

1.3.1.3.8 The organization of the experience (church and market)

The local church organizes the pilgrimage experience by creating the pilgrimage program that takes place throughout 15 days normally, decorating the church and surrounding areas, providing cultural attraction and welcoming pilgrims in an empathetic and intimate way. The church also tries to reenact local history by creating a structure for festivities that is inspired in the village, in which happened the first miracle of the city.

The market as well gets ready to the pilgrimage seasons. There is an ephemeral streets market that is set up for the realization of the pilgrimage, in which local entrepreneurs place their tents right outside the gates of the basilica area and on the streets around. There is also the market in the downtown city that is there during the whole year, but that is more active during pilgrimage seasons. The pilgrimage is a vector of consumption and responsible for the development of the city.

Failed attempts to structure the street market in the city helped on the settlement of lots of entrepreneurs in a big market structure placed right beside the basilica that suits their needs. However, several others street vendors entered the market and are now occupying the streets. The result is that in the surrounding streets of the basilica the commerce is everywhere. Street vendors set their tents in the street, in front of the lodgings, so pilgrims pass through the market to move from their accommodations to the basilica and the other way around. Car and other vehicles

are not able to pass in these streets and local residents try to avoid these areas during the pilgrimage.

1.3.1.3.9 Pilgrims' expressions in the spiritual site

Pilgrims express themselves artistically. Music, for example, is one of the more accurate ways to express their pilgrim experience. There is a specific type of music called "benditos" that is rhythmic way of reading poetries. The bendito's lyrics are all about how is the life of the pilgrim, how they come to the pilgrimage, what they live at the pilgrimage, and all other dimensions of their experience. They sing the benditos at the bus on their way to Juazeiro do Norte or even in the pilgrimage when they have meetings designed to such artistic expressions.

1.3.1.3.10 Collective living of the experience

Communal moments are an integral part of the pilgrims' experience. One of the first collective activities of pilgrims is the travel to Juazeiro do Norte, that they often do by bus. Together with other 60 pilgrims they come together singing and praying on such buses. As soon as they arrive in Juazeiro do Norte, they tend to split themselves in different accommodations, and then they remain in short groups around 04 or even more with which they share the same hotel room. In addition, pilgrims make friendship with pilgrims from other cities, so each pilgrimage is a chance to meet again such old friends. In general, meeting those friends and living these communal moments are great sources of joy and meaning to pilgrims.

The 'pilgrim nation' is the name they give for their collective existence. Pilgrims have a lot communal moments of connection. Despite being born in different states of the Northeastern Brazil, pilgrims despite this collective Identity. Yet, their state origin also speaks out loud and they demonstrate almost a kind of competition when the number of pilgrims from each state is announced at the end of the pilgrimage.

1.3.1.3.11 The ritualistic living of the pilgrimage

The rituals of this pilgrimage start as soon as the pilgrims arrive in Juazeiro do Norte, even before leaving the bus. The cars, buses and other vehicles transporting pilgrims first go to the Franciscan Church and make 03 circle at the center of the church's main square. Circling some things 03 times can have different meanings. At this level, it means that they are arriving after long trip and are finally in the pilgrimage site.

Before doing their check-in at their accommodations, some pilgrims go first to the Basilica and enact some 'requesting' rituals such as entering at the basilica's front door barefoot or on their knees and delivering their most important blessing wishes to the saints, especially Father Cícero and Our Lady of Sorrows. Doing this ritualistic is also a sign of authenticity among pilgrims. Pilgrims may question other pilgrims' level of '*pilgrimness*' based on how much they display publicly such rituals.

1.3.1.3.12 Spiritual leaders as main influencers of the pilgrimage culture

Father Cícero, the main spiritual leader in this pilgrimage site, implies many levels of influence to the pilgrimage. The priest died in 1934, but up to this date his influence is alive. He impacts at the political, market and spiritual level. When it comes to the market, many products and services exists inspired on the image or the teachings of Father Cícero. At the spiritual level, the figure of Father Cícero is worshiped by pilgrims. Whenever and wherever pilgrims pass by an image or small statue, they stop, touch and pray. It is a sign of respect and worship. Therefore, products and images of Father Cícero have an agency to pilgrims.

1.3.1.3.13 Meanings associated with the pilgrimage

The pilgrimage can have multiple meanings to pilgrims. It is a big event out of their ordinary life that they look forward to take place every year. The pilgrimage is also a moment where they can ask and/or thank for a blessing, because it often happens the occurrence of the two things. It is, in addition, the appropriate moment to set

new goals in life and thank for the year that has gone (especially the pilgrimages that happen at the end of the year). The pilgrimage to Juazeiro do Norte is indeed a consumption touristic activity, as pilgrims normally organize themselves to buy products in the city. Finally, the pilgrimage is also an opportunity to reaffirm their faith.

1.3.1.3.14 The pilgrimage hospitality structure

Accommodations in Juazeiro do Norte are available everywhere. Initially, pilgrims used to be hosted (paid and not paid) in family houses close to Juazeiro do Norte's downtown. Today, a whole market of simple and more sophisticated accommodations was settled in the city. Therefore, pilgrims have small and medium-sized *ranchos* and *pousadas* up to medium and big-sized hotels. To the *ranchos/pousadas* owners, pilgrims display a certain loyalty. They tend to develop strong friendships with owners of these accommodations and stay at the same places every time they are back in the site for a long time, gaining advantages and priorities over time.

The pilgrimage experience is an experience of simplicity. Pilgrims normally stay in the *ranchos* and *pousadas*, and they share small bedrooms or big saloons in which dozens of pilgrims will sleep together in hammocks or bunk beds.

1.3.1.3.15 The embodied experience in the pilgrimage site

Pilgrims bodily interact with the very physical materiality of the sacred site to enact some healing rituals. For instance, using the stones, church doors, walls of sacred sites, the statue of Father Cícero, and other things. They touch and interact with the materiality as a way free them from their sins, to protect them from the evil. They also climb a hill, walk a trail, cross narrow passages between super big stones to do penitence, free them from their sins and heal. Therefore, living the pilgrimage experience is an interactive and bodily experience.

The pilgrimage is also the search to reenact the way Father Cícero once lived in the site. Pilgrims, walk the steps of Father Cícero, do the things he did, visit the

places where he lived and prayed. Through reenacting they grab a bit of the sacred Inside of them and are closer to the spiritual realm.

In the living of such a meaningful experience, pilgrims want to mark their passage in the site and leave a bit of them there. So, pilgrims have this tradition of writing their names every sacred space to them, such as in stones of the Holy Sepulcher, in the statue of the Father Cícero (which is a public monument), and even in the walls and doors of their accommodations. Writing their names, as well the names of their families, is a way to ask for the health and blessing of them.

Some places in the city are considered more sacred spaces, allowing greater connection with God, such as the Saint Sepulcher, the basilica church, Father Cícero's tomb and others. Such places are then more visited by pilgrim and their rituals are mostly performed around and within these places, since it often involves interactions with the materiality around the spaces.

1.3.1.3.16 The solution for life issues in the spiritual market

Paying Promises are one of the most key rituals of pilgrims. Pilgrims come to ask and to thank for their miracles. Paying a promise is a way to thank for a miracle. Paying is basically doing some action that represents the thankfulness for that blessing. Pilgrims also need the commercial in order to perform such rituals. For instance, pilgrims buy ex-votos to represent the body part of their body that is now healed, or they buy and wear a dress during their pilgrimage and then leave the dress in the pilgrimage as sign of ending of such difficult moments and the thankfulness for receiving Father Cicero's support. They buy candles and/or firework to light up.

Paying promises is the end of the cycle of a pilgrim's demand. Pilgrims are first faced with a difficult life situation, then they ask for the spiritual support. They engage in praying mood and intimate conversations with the spiritual leaders to ask for support. And they state a promise: If I get cured or healed or attended in my demand, I'm going to do something (which they decided what is) to thank the

spiritual support I've got. So, paying the promise is honoring the commitment the pilgrim once made with the spiritual dimension.

This cycle looks like they are signing a serious contract with the spiritual, in which they feel like they are in debt while they do not accomplish or pay the promise they have done. It can take years some time, but they will pay their promises. In this contract, there is also two parts that are having strict roles to play, with the spiritual leader as the provider of a transformation or healing and the transformed or healed person as the one that needs to perform the rituals of thankfulness in the spiritual pilgrimage site.

As pilgrims, and basically all of us as human beings, are constantly facing new problems in our life, these cycles are constantly starting and ending and that is one of the main reasons keep coming again and again for years to the pilgrimage. This also applies to relatives and close friends, so pilgrims tend to state promises for the loved ones that suffering and they engage in paying the promise for that person or also inviting and summoning up that person to also pay the promise whenever he or she get the blessing expected.

The miracles, blessings, healings and things that pilgrims achieve in their lives is the core of the pilgrimage. Pilgrims love to share their stories of blessings, and the act of leaving ex-votos in Juazeiro do Norte is a proof of many miracles that happened in the life of those persons. Therefore, the vocalized stories from pilgrims as well as the materiality of their ex-votos are clear representations of their achievements in life due to the spiritual agency. These representations reinforce their belief on the sacred, especially the understanding of Father Cícero, Our Lady of Sorrow, and other saints as close friends that will help them to access God and achieve, sometimes almost impossible, outcomes.

Both spiritual and market dimensions seem to be consumed to provide transformation and well-being to pilgrims. Spiritual activities and market offerings are consumed for the achievement of blessings. Some market offerings are even marketed as capable of preventing, if not, curing severe diseases. They are widely consumed for the promise they state and also because of a certain "place of origin" agency, once pilgrims believe such offerings from the pilgrimage would have

higher spiritual power to solve their problems compared to offerings coming from elsewhere.

In general, pilgrims consume the spiritual market offerings as a way to alleviate their difficulties in life or to prevent some others. Pilgrims buy images of saints to place them in their houses, as a sign of honor to the saint, to prevent the house from bad things, and to help them whenever they want to pray for that saint. They make a collection of several different saints, usually used for different difficulties, such as the Our Lady of Health that takes care of faithful's health, or Our Lady of Sorrows that helps faithful with their sorrows and other difficulties.

1.3.1.3.17 Market innovation as a driver of spiritual consumption

When it comes to Father Cícero, pilgrims buy whatever has its image on. So different products and services have the image of Father Cícero as a way to gather pilgrims' attention, such as bottle of water, soft drinks, t-shirts, towels, and a lot of other products.

Market innovation is responsible for developing improvements on marketing offering at the pilgrimage, such as improving the materiality of some products. For instance, initially the image of saints was mostly done with plaster, but they were also more fragile. The images usually broke in the person's home, or even in the bus back to their home. Local market then developed rubber images of saints that are resistant and long-lasting. However, pilgrims also alert to the issues of lightening up candles close to such rubber images and the risk of fires. Pilgrims also provide feedbacks to the industry through usage that facilitate innovations.

In Juazeiro do Norte, the spiritual plays a relevant role to the commercial. To a certain set of products, mostly the ones considered sacred products (as opposed to mundane/profane ones) pilgrims need to bless them after buying the products and before using it. The blessing is a type of stamp that provides the usage of the product. Pilgrims mention the first thing they want to before taking any spiritual product back home, such as rosaries or images of saints, is to bless them during the masses or through placing the object in sacred spaces such as the tomb of Father

Cícero. During masses, the priest asks pilgrims to raise the objects they want to bless and bless them all at once by saying a blessing prayer. On the tomb of Father Cícero, objects are placed right at the top of the tomb for a few seconds, and through a process of contamination they are blessed.

This whole procedure of blessing seems like a transition from the commercial sphere to the spiritual realm. Pilgrims cannot just buy it at the local market and take it back home, it requires a further permission from the spiritual for it to be considered as sacred or available for usage, be it placing the object at their home or giving it as a gift to others.

1.3.1.4 Círio de Nazaré

1.3.1.4.1 The meanings and powers of the experience

The Círio de Nazaré is a unique moment of celebration in the Para state, in Northern Brazil. Participants share the festivities are like Christmas to them, even possibly more important than it. They look forward for this moment the whole year, they celebrate it in their families and they even share a *Happy Círio!* to people they cross in the streets during this period, such as it is a holiday. The Círio is also a moment to celebrate their culture, which is observed in their traditional food, dance, and music.

This pilgrimage has a transformational influence, or agency, that is capable of changing the emotional atmosphere of the city and people. Participants mention they feel the city is more enjoyable, less dangerous, and people are invited to practice solidarity, charity, compassion, empathy, and be less egoistic. The transformational aspect is also due to the transformation of the city itself, that right before the pilgrimage is renovated, embellished and decorated. Also, people decorate their own houses and balconies, especially the ones living where the main processions take place.

1.3.1.4.2 The pilgrim's profile

Pilgrim's profile in the Círio is distinct. Pilgrims are mostly already living in Belém. Pilgrims of all ages participate in the activities, elderly and children. Despite being a Catholic pilgrimage, it is normal to see pilgrims from other religions and spiritual affiliations. Beyond local residents, there are the pilgrims that do the pilgrimage walking to Belém. They are often from other parts of the state of Pará. They walk for 24 hours or more non-stopping. Such pilgrims walk as a way to "pay their promises" (e.g., to thank for the accomplishments in life or the healings from a disease).

There are also the ones who were born in Belém but are now living elsewhere and are coming back only to the festivities, revisiting family, and so on. It is clear to see how they have a clear emotional attachment to the pilgrimage, once they do whatever they can to be at the pilgrimage and feel bad when not being able to make it. Finally, Círio de Nazaré receive some tourists during this period that are often curious to follow the famous processions and to visit the city of Belém and all its touristic attractions.

As pilgrims are mostly residents of the city, then the concept of hotels and other types of accommodations are more related to the pilgrimage experience of pilgrims that are coming walking or tourists.

Pilgrims that are coming walking they need more organization. They have a central leader who organize the whole experience. They have same t-shirts with the name of their hometown and the image of Our Lady of Nazareth on it. The organizer also organizes the trajectory and provides a supporting car that will bring first aid supplies and assistance in any urgency. Pilgrims should pay to cover general expenses.

1.3.1.4.3 The design of a unique experience (local market and church)

The local church (Basilica and Cathedral) designs the pilgrim experience with a 20-day program of activities, processions, Masses, and so on. They provide a unique

experience, spectacles, ceremonies, and special decoration. Other institutions, such as police and fire departments, army and navy, are also present and organizing/helping to organize the festivities, huge engagement of officials.

Pilgrimage sponsoring or advertisement based on the pilgrimage subject are marketing strategies for local and national companies installed in the city of Belém. Companies use the pilgrimage period as a key period to invest in advertisement and other communication strategies that are totally linked to the pilgrimage. They use pilgrimage culture, aesthetics, traditions and values in their advertisement pieces. They rely on the strong relationship pilgrims have with the pilgrimage to create bonds and close relationships with them that will then convert into sales.

Local market offerings are *per se* designed and commercialized based on the Image of Our Lady of Nazaré. Products such as clocks, towels and others, are designed with the image of Our Lady and services such as boat trips are offered as a way to be close to the image of Our Lady of Sorrows during the river procession. In addition, as her image is a key symbol of the pilgrimage, companies use it in the decoration of their in-store design as well as their showcases. Such strategy shows their religiosity as well as a strategy to be in accordance with the festivities period.

During pilgrimage, pilgrims can find ephemeral market places offering profane and sacred products right close to the basilica. Sacred offerings, such as t-shirts and other pilgrimage products, normally change their design annually, because the pilgrimage launch a new theme and slogan every year. So, products and services adapt their products design and packaging.

The basilica itself also sells spiritual offerings. The basilica functions also as a marketplace, in which priests have the role of "celebrities"/"influencers" who recommend basilica's products and services. For instance, the basilica sells the ex-votos that pilgrims use in one of the most known rituals of the pilgrimage, which is the payment of promises (explained ahead). In addition, the basilica embraces the commercial logic and use some marketing strategies such as products and service launching. For instance, the mantle of Our Lady of Nazaré is designed by a specific local designer every year, and is launched in a special ceremony.

The Círio de Nazaré is a moment where the local church develops some evangelization strategies to involve faithful people in the parochial life. Beyond the Círio de Nazaré main program, other parts in town organize a smaller and local Círio, in which the replica of the image of Our Lady of Nazareth will circulate in the families houses of the neighborhood. It is a moment to reinforce ties between neighbors and also faith in Our Lady of Nazareth and in the religion. Participants in these events also provide money donations to the local church to assist in local projects. In other words, through a process of circulation of objects, people and money, faith and community are reinforced.

The church also designs unique experiences to pilgrims during the many processions and events that take place during the pilgrimage. The church design marketing communication strategies through poster, TV, social networking, live streaming, and so on.

1.3.1.4.4 The role of materials in allowing pilgrimage schedule and practices

Materiality plays a relevant role in this pilgrimage. The material agency of the image of Our Lady of Nazaré is key for the development of the pilgrimage. The image travels dozens of kilometers in the great area of Belém, on water and land, and it attracts humans and non-humans' agents to follow her. Millions of pilgrims, walking, in their motorcycles, cars, or boats, follow the image in one or multiple processions, as well as the whole market, public and religious organization that takes place around the image. The image is also protected by army, navy, police, firemen, red cross and volunteers who organize themselves during the whole year. Due to the high emotional attachment that pilgrims devote to the saint, and to their close relationship developed with her, whenever the image passes through them during processions, they often mention the power and the emotion they feel and they start crying. Image's agency can also be observed in the several homages that public and private institutions provide to her during the processions. Even profane activities can only kick-off after the image has passed at a certain point.

Accordingly, materiality is relevant for the ritual performances. Pilgrims use material objects to express their gratitude in thanking rituals, called Paying

Promises. Pilgrims use ex-votos that represent exactly their blessings. Therefore, if they have healed from a lung disease, they often buy an ex-voto, from the basilica, in the shape of a lung to perform the thanking rituals. The same happen to accomplishments such as buying a house or a car. The normally follow processions with these objects and deliver it back to the church during or at the end.

The rituals of paying promises are related to the materiality, as explained in the previous paragraph, but also to an embodied ritualistic performance. Pilgrims also express their gratitude by performing penance bodily rituals, such as 'going on the rope' (following the procession with millions of pilgrims and holding on the rope that is connected to the car that takes the image of Our Lady of Nazaré on the trajectory of the procession), or walking the whole procession itinerary on their knees. Penance and suffering are a way to demonstrate their gratitude for the huge blessings that Our Lady of Nazaré offers to them. They also want to show that the blessings they are receiving are a lot more superior and pays off any pain and suffering they might feel.

At the end of the main procession, pilgrims that go on the rope to pay their promises have a piece of the rope to themselves. The rope has a symbolic meaning as an artefact that represents the difficulty of the procession to pilgrims. They try to have a piece of it at the end as a gift for them and even because they believe on the power the rope has on protecting them on the future.

They feel excited and rewarded after the processions and the pilgrimage is over. For many of them, the Círio is a moment where they can renew their faith, thank for achievements, and ask in times of difficulties.

1.3.1.4.5 Finding solution to life's issues in the spiritual market

Paying promises then is the first layer to understand how pilgrims have a coping strategy to deal with difficulties in their lives. Relying on the spiritual is a way to ask for positive outcomes, the healing from diseases, and other things not only for them as an individual but also for relatives and close friends. Such coping strategy is what

makes pilgrims come several times to the pilgrimage in search of asking for help or thanking for the spiritual support in previous bad events in life.

Yet related to the paying of promises, is the fact that pilgrims rely on the spiritual to protect them. For instance, the moto-boys that go on the moto pilgrimage are often asking for protection and thanking for the blessings and not being involved in any accident on their motorcycles. Basically, all the pilgrims that are paying their promises are somehow relying on the spiritual as a source of solution for their mundane problems.

The process of paying promise starts with the moment in which pilgrims find themselves in a difficult situation. Therefore, they ask for spiritual support to find a salvation, healing, cure, a solution for their situation. That is the moment where they promise to do something to thank in case the difficult moment is over. And when it is over, they go on pilgrimage to thank for it the way they first promised.

Paying a promise does not involve paying money to somebody, despite the money that pilgrims may invest to be in the pilgrimage. It is the literal translation of the "Portuguese" expression "Pagar Promessas". Therefore, it means that pilgrims feel like they need pay something to the saint in exchange for the blessings that the saints are providing to them. Pilgrims feel they have a kind of contract, in which the saint and the pilgrims have duties to accomplish.

1.3.1.4.6 Shared knowledge to navigate through the experience

Pilgrims develop and share with each other some techniques and strategies to better cope with the difficulties to make it to pilgrimage site walking. It can be very painful once the equatorial and Amazonian weather in Northern Brazil is extremely hot and humid. They usually walk for 24 hours non-stopping and it also make things harder. Through shared knowledge, they learn strategies with each other, and try to perfect that over the many times they do these pilgrimages during their lives. For instance, they prefer to start the walking with appropriate shoes for walking and running, but as soon as they got their feet hurting, they try to take their shoes

off and walk with flipflops and socks, once there is this shared knowledge that it alleviates pain and creation of blisters.

1.3.1.4.7 The cocreation of care systems

The pilgrimage creates a feeling and actions of solidarity among pilgrims. A care system is present during pilgrimages in which people feel more comfortable to help each other, volunteering to support pilgrims that are coming walking to Belém, or donating water and other food/hygiene products to people in need.

Due to the caring systems present during this period, pilgrims who are walking have support from others to arrive at the pilgrimage. Public and private initiatives, as well as citizens, help people who are walking with water, food, massages, or other first aid support on their way to the pilgrimage site. Later on, when they arrive at the pilgrimage, they are welcomed at the House of Plácido, which is another example of the structured care system of the pilgrimage. It is basically a spa for pilgrims that come walking, a way to award them and take care of their blisters and damaged feet and body.

Volunteering, is a key activity people engage in as part of this care system. People can volunteer in different institutions, such as the Red Cross, the House of Plácido, or at the Basilica, and so on. Volunteers refer that they feel good in doing so. They understand they are contributing to help pilgrims that are paying their promises. Some of them also are paying their own promises as a volunteer.

1.3.1.4.8 Spiritual and commercial interchange

Companies create facilities that help pilgrims to navigate in the pilgrimage. There is an app, sponsored by a national company, that tracks the exact location of the image along the several processions. It helps pilgrims to follow the image even when they are not being able to do it physically, or to choose where they can join to follow the image.

In general, the commercial and the spiritual combine, each at a certain level, to provide the pilgrimage experience in the Círio de Nazaré. Local church, as well as companies provide spiritual and commercial offerings that boost pilgrims experience. Moreover, the commercial and spiritual logics are used by both dimensions. For instance, the church uses the commercial logics to attract new spiritual consumers or the market develops new products and services inspired in the spiritual.

1.3.1.4.9 The embodied experience of pilgrimaging

The pilgrimage is a bodily intense experience. The bigger processions, for instance, are done under hot weather, big crowds, in which is hard to breath. So, people faint constantly during these processions. However, due to the care system created, many Red Cross volunteers follow the whole procession taking care of fainted pilgrims. Whenever they are recovered, they come back to the payment of their promises, showing high resilience and focus. They also need to do the procession barefoot, once they are too close to each other that wearing shoes can be harmful to the colleagues. But doing it barefoot is by itself a hard experience.

1.3.1.4.10 Communal experience

The pilgrimage is also a communal experience. They do the procession with millions of other pilgrims, singing together and living the collective energy. They share their pains and strategies to recover and alleviate it. They pay their promises together, sharing the moment. Another community sense of this pilgrimage is the atmosphere of solidarity and kindness that invites people to collective thinking.

1.3.1.4.11 The impact of the pilgrimage

The pilgrimage has an environmental impact, mainly caused by the over consumption of water cups made of plastic. Pilgrims that are paying their promises use such cups that are normally donate by other pilgrims paying their promises. As the weather is hot, they use to refresh themselves and drink. However, millions of

cups of water are then discarded in the streets during the processions. The cleaning services normally collect all the trashed produced, but it does not change the trash production. It is a necessary and utilitarian consumption, but that causes a huge impact.

The Círio de Nazaré is a family experience. One of the most important moments to pilgrims is the Cirio's Feast, which is the lunch that happens right after the biggest procession. It is the main family reunion of the year for most of the families, with plenty of traditional local food, celebration, music and games. Family gets together cooking or having all around the table and the house. Pilgrims refer to great memories with their families and that they have a strong emotional attachment to the pilgrimage due to that also.

Family gathering is a spiritual and commercial opportunity. It represents a family opportunity to strengthen relationships, the belief in Our Lady of Sorrows and create great memories. It is also a chance for local entrepreneurs to profit during this period with the production and selling of local and traditional meals, such as the *tacacá*, *maniçoba* and *vatapá*.

1.3.1.4.12 Syncretism

The pilgrimage is a syncretic experience, since it is organized by the Catholic church, but individuals from other religious and spiritual movements also join the celebrations. They affirm they have a connection with Our Lady of Nazaré that goes beyond their faith affiliation. People from other religious also participate by donating water and supplements to pilgrims in penance.

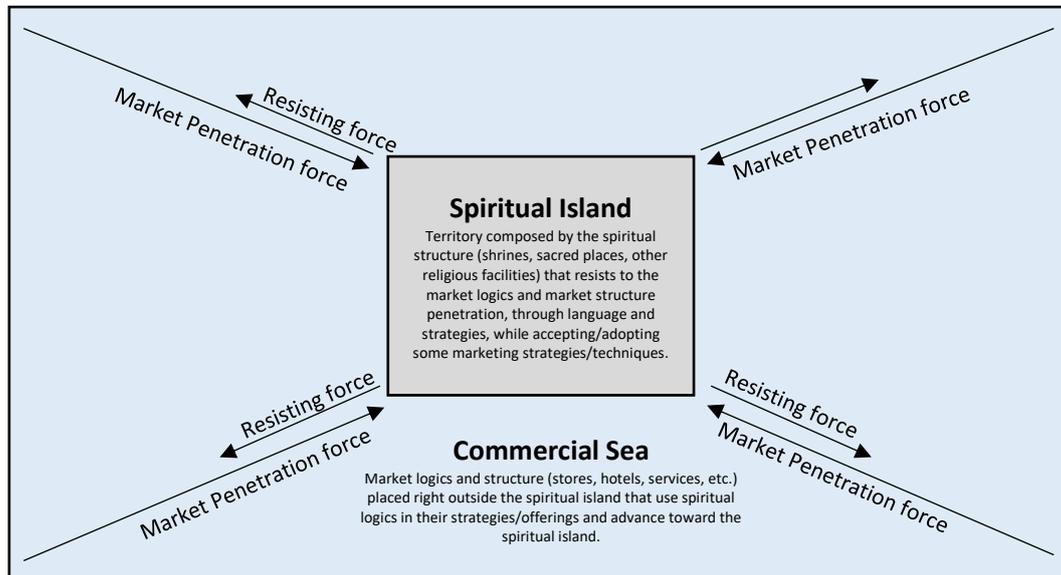
1.3.2 Inter-case analysis

This section unfolds the patterns and differences across the case analysis demonstrated in the previous section. It was raised from content analysis and hermeneutic interpretation of the actions and words of the actors.

There are *physical boundaries between the spiritual and the commercial space*. These two institutions are physically separated by concrete walls and gates. Spiritual sanctuaries normally look like closed islands in the middle of a commercial sea. However, the commercial tends to advance towards the islands. Commercial agents, such as street markets and also touristic paraphernalia are installed right at the outside area of the sanctuaries' walls, such as in a process of phagocytosis. Church's resistance to admit the entrance of the commercial in its space is also observed in their language and meanings associated to some transactions that could have been considered as pure market exchanges. For instance, to the exchange of candles for money in the sanctuary space, church calls it offering and not buying, as a way to distance themselves from commercial language. This kind of clear distinctions became more evident in the pilgrimages of Lourdes, Juazeiro do Norte and Belém. The pilgrimage to Compostella is different once pilgrims are not in a single pilgrimage site during their whole journey. The distinctions between the market and the spiritual space are less clear.

Nevertheless, *commercial and spiritual logics are embedded in each other*. The commercial logic can be observed in the spiritual space through marketing communication strategies used by the sanctuaries on the digital realm of social networks or even the exchange of spiritual offerings with pilgrims. The spiritual logic is also largely used by local pilgrimage markets, such as in the development of innovative market offerings inspired in spiritual characters, as a way to attract spiritual consumers on their pilgrimage journey. These crossing barriers logics were more expressively observed in the Lourdes, Juazeiro do Norte and Belém. As the Camino de Santiago present not so clear barriers, the interchange of logics is a lot more mixed. See Figure 245 below that summarizes this analysis.

Figure 243 - Boundaries and relationships between the commercial and the spiritual



Resisting and penetration forces work differently in each pilgrimage site. The mix of both forces lead to adaptation strategies, in which commercial and spiritual sides adapt themselves to better accommodate. Table 3 presents how these strategies take place in each pilgrimage site.

Table 3 - The dynamics of resisting and penetrating in the spiritual market

Strategies	Lourdes	Cirio de Nazare	Juazeiro do Norte	Cirio de Nazare
Spiritual Resisting	More restrictive: The sanctuary declares that market agents (stores, etc.) cannot enter the spiritual site (sanctuary facilities). Candles must be purchased at the sanctuary.	No restrictions: The Camino is mostly the trajectory, and not the final destination. Along the way, the market (stores, hotels, and albergues) is integrated into the Camino trails.	Less restrictive: The sanctuary declares that market agents cannot enter the spiritual site (sanctuary facilities), but there are no clear resistance to adopt market logics in their practices.	Less restrictive. Market agents cannot enter the spiritual site (sanctuary facilities), but there are no clear resistance to adopt market logics in their practices.
Adapting/ Accepting/ Adopting	Adapting through language: Exchange of candles and other offerings under the idea of "offering", not "buying".	Accepting: For pilgrims to get to the final destination, they need hotels/albergues, food and other services that are offered by the private and public sector. So,	Adopting market logics: - Church endorsing certain products to be consumed by pilgrims. - Church using marketing strategies	Adopting market logics: - Church using marketing strategies to sell their own products. - Church developing partnerships with

		spiritual and commercial coexist with further tensions.	to sell their own products.	companies to fund pilgrimage activities.
Market Penetrating	<p>Providing offerings for spiritual rituals: Bottles to collect the miraculous water of Lourdes.</p> <p>Circulating the spiritual territory: Market agents literally placed just outside the sanctuary's gates.</p>	<p>Providing offerings for spiritual rituals: Hotels, restaurants, and other products/services that are necessary along the Way.</p> <p>Commercial and spiritual mixed: There is no clear distinction between the</p>	<p>Providing offerings for spiritual rituals: Bottled water and other products for purification rituals, etc.</p> <p>Circulating the spiritual territory: Market agents literally placed just outside the sanctuary's gates.</p>	<p>Providing offerings for spiritual rituals: T-shirts with the image of Our Lady of Nazare, food for the Cirio's Feast, etc.</p> <p>Circulating the spiritual territory: Market agents literally placed just outside the sanctuary's gates.</p>

Besides the *collective characteristics* of pilgrimages in the experiences studied in this dissertation, pilgrims live an *individual and intimate experience of spirituality*. The communal dimension is here described as the shared living of the pilgrimage experience in which the meanings are created collectively. Such communal dimension of pilgrimages can be observed in the (i) shared knowledge of techniques and tools to better navigate the experience, (ii) shared identity of pilgrims as a unique community, and (iii) shared moments of ritual performances. Communality is present in all the pilgrimages studied in this dissertation, varying the degree of each characteristic of the communal dimension. Table 4 describes the communality of the pilgrimages studied.

Table 4 - Collective features of the pilgrimages studied

Collective Aspects	Description	Pilgrimages (presenting this feature)
Shared knowledge of techniques and tools to better navigate the experience	Pilgrims share with each other how to cope with pain, how to get to certain places, and how to navigate the pilgrimage experience better based on their own experience and learnings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lourdes: there are no clear sharing of knowledge observed in that sense. • Camino de Santiago: pilgrims share how to avoid/minimize blisters, and other tips to walk the Way. • Cirio de Nazare: pilgrims share how to avoid/minimize blisters, and other tips to walk the Way. • Juazeiro do Norte: there are no clear sharing of knowledge observed in that sense.
Shared identity of pilgrims as a unique community	During pilgrimage, and even sometimes when they are back to their ordinary lives, pilgrims consider themselves pilgrims. Moreover, they share this pilgrim identity with their group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lourdes: group of pilgrims under the same Diocese or pilgrimage travel agency can create shared identities. They move along the city with their peers, some of them dressing patterned clothes. • Camino de Santiago: pilgrims in general display a shared identity as "pilgrims of the Camino",

	at a lower level (pilgrims within the same Diocese, city), or higher level (pilgrims from the same country, region, etc.)	<p>dressing in a certain way, and doing similar things along the way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juazeiro do Norte: pilgrims call themselves the "Pilgrim Nation" to call all the pilgrims going to Juazeiro do Norte. • Cirio de Nazare: Pilgrims are mostly locals, thus not showing a specific identity during the pilgrimage period. They don't even call themselves pilgrims. The ones coming from outside the city (normally walking), these ones are called pilgrims.
Shared moments of ritual performances.	Processions, purification rituals, consumption rituals, family rituals, etc. Pilgrims live these moments collectively, even though some of them have individual motivations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lourdes: Pilgrims share collective moments in processions, shared hotel rooms, spiritual activities (praying, lighting candles, etc.) • Cirio de Nazare: Walking can be a collective and an individual activity/ritual. • Juazeiro do Norte: Pilgrims share collective hotel rooms, spiritual activities, consumption can be also done in groups even that their purchases are for their own individual desire. • Cirio de Nazare: Pilgrims share processions as their main ritual of this pilgrimage. Different processions take place and people can follow once or several times during the festivities. The main procession is known to be the bigger procession of the Catholic world. In addition, family rituals such as the "Cirio's Feast" is widely practiced during the pilgrimage.

Meanwhile, when it comes to the experience at the individual level, the individual dimension is here described as the inner motivations and living of the pilgrimage experience. Pilgrims often reach the spiritual experience to develop or renew their faith and spirituality and to support them during difficult life moments. This pattern was observed in all the pilgrimages studied, such as explained in the following Table 5.

Table 5 - Individual features of the pilgrimages studied

Features	Description	Pilgrimages
To renew their faith	The consumption of pilgrimage experiences can have a spiritual meaning of renewal of one's faith in God, nature, transcendental forces. Going to the pilgrimage once in a year (or even more times) is associated with renewing faith.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lourdes: Pilgrimage mostly undertaken several times in life. Pilgrims mention the character of faith renovation that lies in the experience. • Camino de Santiago: Despite being a less religious experience, some pilgrims mention their aim of rediscovering God or renewing their faith. • Juazeiro do Norte: Pilgrimage mostly undertaken several times in life. Pilgrims mention the character of faith renovation that lies in the experience. They

		<p>engage in specific rituals to renovate their faith, such as crossing stones.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cirio de Nazare: Pilgrimage mostly undertaken several times in life. Pilgrims mention the character of faith renovation that lies in the experience.
To express/live their spirituality	<p>Pilgrimages are opportunities to live one's spirituality, connect with a higher dimension, living the extraordinary. Pilgrims go to the pilgrimage, perform spiritual rituals, and live their spirituality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lourdes: Pilgrims' spirituality is expressed through rituals and spiritual activities in the pilgrimage site. In Lourdes, the "Pilgrim's Way" is an example of the spiritual activities performed in-site. • Camino de Santiago: Pilgrims mention they have encounters with themselves during the Camino, through reflection, connection with nature and others, and so on. The Camino seems to be an invitation to looking into oneself. • Juazeiro do Norte: Pilgrims' spirituality is expressed through rituals and spiritual activities in the pilgrimage site. Pilgrims mention that going to pilgrimage is a way to analyze what they have done, and look forward to what is coming next. • Cirio de Nazare: Pilgrims' spirituality is expressed through rituals and spiritual activities in the pilgrimage site. Pilgrims have the pilgrimage period as the most important period of the year, a moment to connect with their family, themselves, and to Our Lady of Nazare.
To solve personal problems	<p>Pilgrims report living with depression, anxiety, grief, and having issues with their families, friends and others personal issues. They try to solve such issues in the pilgrimage site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lourdes: Miracles is a key part of Lourdes' history. The pilgrimage site receives a great amount of handicaps as well as people suffering from various mental and health diseases. They often reach the spiritual site to better deal with their personal situation and issues. • Camino de Santiago: Pilgrims in the Camino refer to how they are facing important life challenges back in their ordinary lives, and the way the Camino appeared to them as a possible solution. • Juazeiro do Norte: Pilgrims going to Juazeiro often mention mental, physical and social issues that are disturbing their lives and how the spiritual, especially the deities (God and saints) are helping them to deal with it all. • Cirio de Nazare: As the pilgrimage takes place once in a year, pilgrims see it as an opportunity to ask for spiritual assistance on the things that are disturbing their lives in the previous year.

Coping with life challenges by relying on the support of the spiritual is one of the key functions of the pilgrimage site, and therefore one of the main motivations for pilgrims to engage in the experience. Pilgrims in all the pilgrimages under research in this dissertation, at different levels, referred to how the pilgrimage site, and

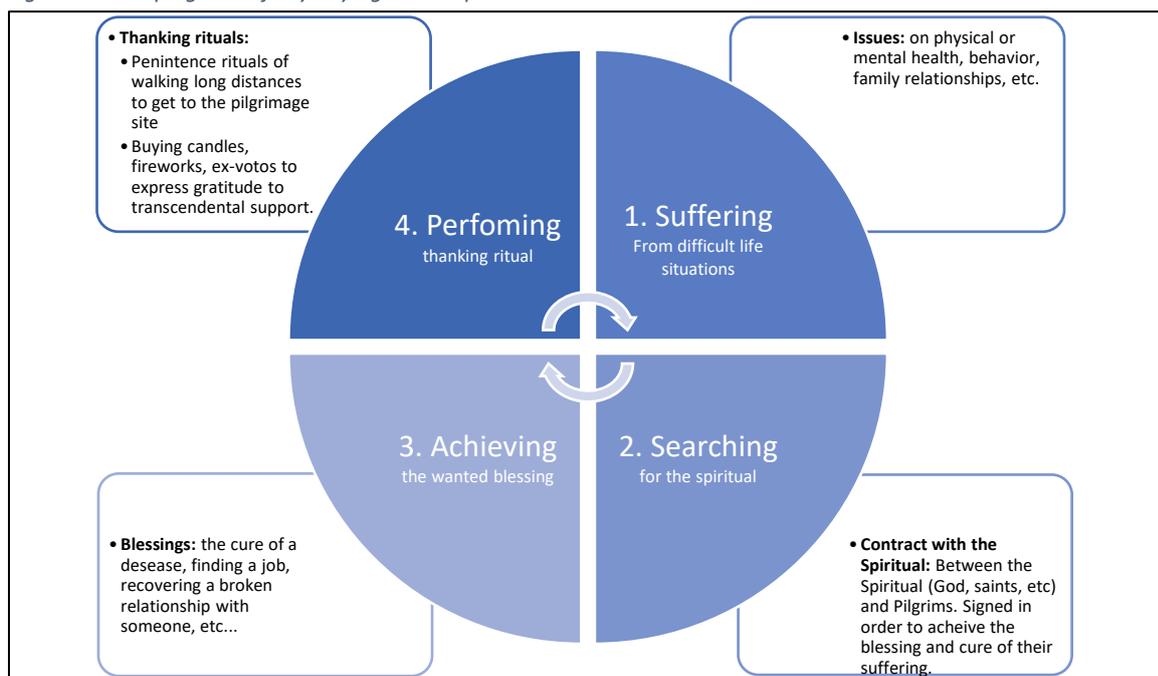
especially the spiritual leaders that represent the pilgrimage, were responsible for them to achieve blessings in their lives. In Lourdes, pilgrims are known to ask for miracles to recover themselves from physical and mental illnesses, in the Camino de Santiago pilgrims can be searching for a break from their stressful lifestyles, and in Juazeiro do Norte and Cirio de Nazare pilgrims have a close relationship with the saints to ask for help during difficult life situations also. Therefore, pilgrims find comfort in the spiritual to deal with the things that they cannot resolve themselves. Table 6 demonstrates some of the most recurrent issues that pilgrims suffer from.

Table 6 - Difficult life events reported by pilgrims

Issues	Quotes
Physical issues	Physicians told me there was no possibility of a cure for my son. So, I knelt down and said: Our Lady of Nazaré, if you save my son, I will do the procession in your homage [...] My son today is 16 years old and has a lot of energy. (Tiego, Cirio de Nazaré)
Behavioral issues	"I used to drink alcohol and smoke too. I stopped doing this." (Antonia, Juazeiro do Norte)
Family-related issues	"We come here with all the bad things we're facing in our lives, related to family betrayals and so on [...] but here it's like Our Lady is giving happiness, comfort, and we forget everything about these problems." (Isabel, Juazeiro)
Mental issues	"[...] there was this girl [...] she was almost completely deaf [...] and paralyzed in her bed. [...] So, she said in a strong way: "I'd like you to join me in this acknowledgment to the Holy Virgin, it's been 20 years since I'm on this bed, it was not what I wanted, it was what I needed to do, so let's thank". We all cried. Her transformation was not physical, but mental." (Amelie, Lourdes)
Social issues/ Accomplishments in life issues	"I'm also asking Our Lady to give me wisdom to deal with my job and personal life." (Eloeny, Cirio de Nazaré)
Well-being	"I don't come for the images and the water, but for the spirituality that exists in the place. Something that makes me feel lighter." (Emanuel, Lourdes)
Inner issues	"I didn't know what exactly I was looking for, but in the end, I feel very complete [...] I was thinking that I was going to find something outside, but I found that everything was inside. I was almost depressed." (Alessandra, Santiago de Compostela)
Emotional issues	"I've learned a lot about myself during the Camino. I learned to embrace my fear. And I keep learning. The Camino helped me anyway to open that door. I don't talk about my feelings at home [...] but it is going to change me [...]" (Sabrina, Camino de Santiago)

In pilgrimages such as in Juazeiro do Norte and Lourdes, in order to cope with life through the spiritual, pilgrims make *informal contracts* - yet highly important to them - *with the spiritual leaders*. Pilgrims promise that they will perform thanking rituals if the spiritual leader provide the spiritual blessing for them to solve their problems. This contract is a way to pay for all the positive things the spiritual leader has been done for the pilgrim. Whenever the pilgrims receive the wanted blessing and manage to better deal with their problems, but do not perform the promised rituals, then the pilgrims tend to feel in debt with the saint. Contracts are informally signed between the two parties for a various number of times, and that is one the main thing that makes pilgrims come back again to the pilgrimage. Pilgrims refer to several suffering moments in their lives and subsequent spiritual contracts that lead to their blessings, which means that this is part of a cycle of constant support in the spiritual to better cope with life issues. Figure 246 demonstrates this process.

Figure 244 - Coping with life by relying on the spiritual



Pilgrims return several times to the pilgrimage. This pattern has been observed in all the different pilgrimages studied. *Repetition* happens for multiples - sometime overlapping - reasons, such as (i) due to family traditions passed through generations; (ii) in order to revive the good feelings that the experience brings to them or because they had outstanding positive experiences before; (iii) to thank and ask for new blessings (and start new contracts with the spiritual leaders); and (iv) to renewal their faith in God or their spirituality. These characteristics are

observed in the pilgrimage sites studies in different degrees of intensity. Some pilgrims love the pilgrimage site and the good feelings that the site provides to them, that they decide to actually move to and live in the place. This last one is mostly the case for the Juazeiro do Norte pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage is an *embodied experience*. Pilgrims need to be at the pilgrimage site - and not elsewhere - as they understand the site itself is sacred and capable of providing positive outcomes for their bodies and lives. Pilgrims perform embodied rituals that can purify their lives and free them from their sins, as well as perform embodied thanking rituals that are expressions of their gratitude to the spiritual leaders. Pilgrimages, then, tend to be places of intense embodied expressions. Embodied expressions are normally observed across the pilgrimages of Lourdes, Camino de Santiago, Juazeiro do Norte and Belém.

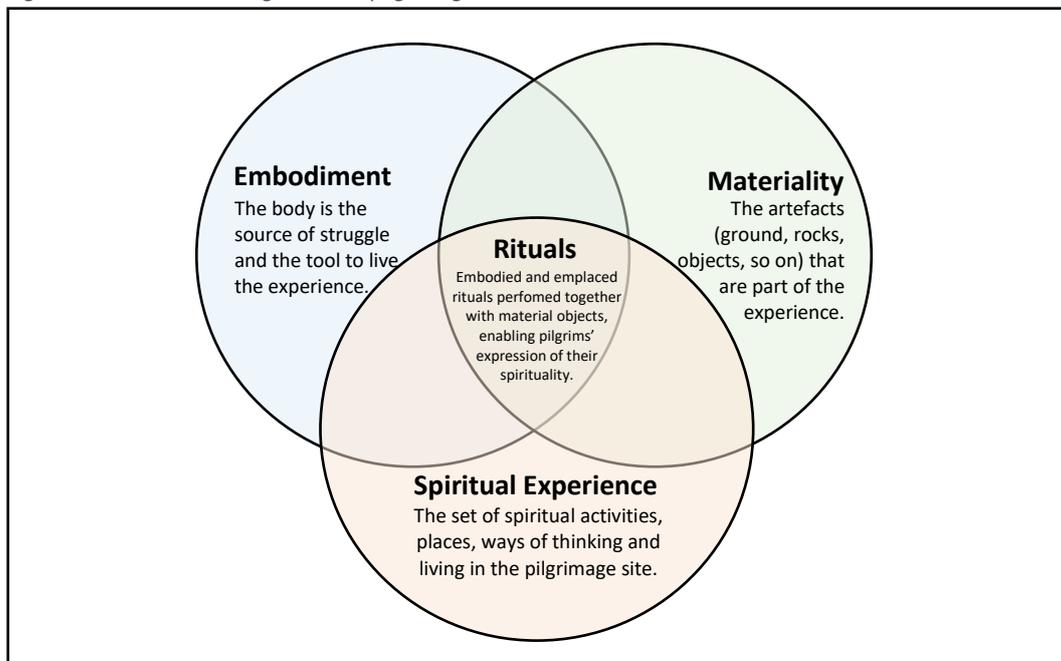
Accordingly, *materiality* plays relevant role for pilgrims' ritualistic expressions. The materiality of the pilgrimage site is first of all important as the sacred place where they can go. The materiality of objects is also indeed an integral part of their rituals. In Juazeiro do Norte and Belém, pilgrims rely on material objects as representations of their physical, mental and social healing, using such materials in their thanking rituals. In the Camino of Santiago, materiality gains a different meaning since pilgrims are trying to carry less weight, then the materials in their possession needs extra attention and selective criteria to be consumed. And especially in Lourdes, pilgrims collect material substances, such as the water from Lourdes, to use it when they are suffering.

Materiality is central to some pilgrimages, such as the Círio de Nazaré, in which the image of Our Lady of Nazareth has an agency toward human and non-human agents in the pilgrimage. As the image moves along the streets of city, such agents will act in order to follow, to pay homage or to even feel emotive about it. In contrast, in pilgrimages such as Lourdes, Santiago de Compostella and Juazeiro do Norte, the materiality of spiritual leaders is more static and also represent a force that enable the expression of rituals and other forms of activities.

Embodiment and materiality are interconnected with the spiritual experience and is mainly observed through the performance of varied rituals. In all the studied

pilgrimage experiences, pilgrims bodily interact with the materiality of the pilgrimage site (ground, rocks, objects, so on), be it during processions along the streets of Belém, touching the rocks of the sacred grotto in Lourdes, squeezing between cracks of huge stones in Juazeiro do Norte, or walking the ancient routes towards Santiago de Compostela in the Camino. Materiality here is also observed through the object-consumer interactions of pilgrims with products and other objects that are used during rituals. In other words, by being physically present in the pilgrimage site, performing interactive embodied rituals and together with different objects is a way to express and live their spirituality. The following Figure 247 uncovers the way rituals are expressed through embodiment, materiality and the spiritual experience.

Figure 245 - Understanding rituals in pilgrimages



Care system - the shared idea that the pilgrim should be around a system that is worried about their well-being. Pilgrimage sites create a structure that facilitate care to alleviate pain and suffering. Pilgrims themselves also take care of each other to navigate through the difficulties of the experience. For instance, volunteering was observed to be a way to provide love and affection among pilgrims. Care is not sold in the pilgrimage site but it is often a strategy used to associate the experience with positive and well-being results.

Accessibility is part of the spiritual marketplace in only one pilgrimage, Lourdes. The pilgrimage site is accessible for sick and disable pilgrims. Actually, sick and disable people are known to be massively visiting the pilgrimage site in search for spiritual comfort. The spiritual market is then adapted to welcome disable pilgrims, and this is probably the thing that keeps attracting them. This same accessibility is not observed as a value proposition at the same degree in the other pilgrimage sites studied. This does not mean that sick and disable individuals are not reaching other pilgrimage sites, but when doing so they do not find the same structural and emotional support offered in Lourdes.

Some pilgrimage sites are also *adapted to welcome divergent pilgrim profiles*, based on their income and international background. In Lourdes, for instance, the hospitality structure ranges from super fancy hotels to more humble ones. Lourdes and the Camino is also ready to receive pilgrims from various countries, with touristic information materials, Masses and other supporting facilities available in different languages. This is not the same for Juazeiro do Norte and Círio de Nazaré, despite some participation of international tourists, they are more national pilgrimages. Yet, they have equally a wide range of services to offer in their hospitality structure.

Market and spiritual dimensions combine to provide the pilgrimage experience. Pilgrims resort to the market to find the offerings that will be integrated, and sometimes necessary, to their spiritual rituals. In Juazeiro do Norte and Lourdes, pilgrims buy bottles to bring back the sacred water from the pilgrimage site. In Belém and Juazeiro do Norte, pilgrims buy ex-votos to perform their thanking rituals. In Santiago de Compostela, pilgrims experience a simpler lifestyle with less things, yet they find in the market the first necessity items needed to accomplish the journey. In other words, the market and the spiritual dimensions are both important on the pilgrim journey.

Some companies create offerings that help pilgrims to navigate the pilgrimage. For instance, during the Círio de Nazaré, a national company provided pilgrims with a smartphone app that tracks the exact location of the image of Our Lady of Nazare, while she is moving along the city in one of the several processions. Offerings or

product innovations and developments are seen in the other pilgrimage sites observed.

The commercial also helps pilgrims to express their identity. In Juazeiro do Norte, pilgrims identify themselves as such when they are wearing a straw hat and a rosary. In the Camino de Santiago, the trekking clothes and the pilgrim shell are clear representations of a pilgrim.

The pilgrimage is an experience in which pilgrims search for comfort and solution for difficult moments of their lives. In doing so, some market offerings are marketed to alleviate or even cure pilgrims' pain or diseases. In Juazeiro do Norte, there is an array of healing products that rely on spiritual leaders' images to gain authenticity and sacredness for pilgrims' decision-making. Pilgrims rely on the local market offerings as well as in the spiritual experience to achieve transformation and healing.

Table 7 - Market and spiritual combining to actualize the spiritual experience

Pilgrims' Objective	Market Offerings (to attend pilgrim's objective)	Spiritual Activities/Actions (to attend pilgrim's objective)	Pilgrimages observed
Purification	Bottled water (Miraculous water from sacred sources or blessed through spiritual intersection)	Up to pilgrims' choice (not necessarily suggested by religious institutions):	Lourdes, Juazeiro do Norte, Cirio de Nazare
Quit smoking/ drinking alcohol	The "vulture powder" (black powder promising to stop alcohol and tabagism addiction)	- Embodied penitence rituals (walking on your knees, squeezing through sacred stones, etc.)	Juazeiro do Norte
Alleviating pain and curing diseases.	Balms, oils, ointments and other natural medicinal products	- Praying a rosary	Juazeiro do Norte, Camino de Santiago
Follow the processions during the pilgrimage	Smartphone app that tracks the exact location of the procession	- Going on pilgrimage (simply attending to a pilgrimage)	Cirio de Nazare
Express their pilgrim identity	Clothes and accessories that are typical of pilgrims	- Lighting a candle	Lourdes, Camino de Santiago, Juazeiro do Norte, Cirio de Nazare

Some commodities bought in the spiritual market need first a sort of validation in order to be consumed. For instance, in Juazeiro do Norte, pilgrims first need to bless

some market offerings before using them. As soon as they have these products blessed, they can take them back and introduce them to their everyday life. Not doing so would not provide authenticity to their usage. The local church designed some rituals that facilitate such blessings, and pilgrims also find other sacred places where such blessings can happen by touching in these sacred places. The same was not observed in other pilgrimages.

In pilgrimages like the Camino de Santiago, the *market is highly interconnected and analog*, which is beneficial for both the pilgrims' experience and for the market service providers. In an interconnected market network pilgrims reduce uncertainty on their decision-making process and find the solutions that best fit their problems. In the analog interconnected network, service providers can have easier access to consumers, and reinforce the partnerships and shared trades with other members. Such connected and specialized network was not observed in the other pilgrimages.

The pilgrimage is often associated with an experience of simplicity, especially in the Camino and in Juazeiro do Norte. But such simplicity can have different meanings. While in the Camino pilgrims are invited to be hosted in simple accommodations, to reduce their consumption and to carry only the most essential things to survive, pilgrims in Juazeiro do Norte despite having simpler accommodation experiences, *consumerism* is part of the experience. In Juazeiro do Norte shopping is an institutionalized activity during the experience. Pilgrims save money during the whole year and enjoy the pilgrimage to also buy a large quantity of profane and sacred products. It is the opposite in the Camino, in which traditional consumption of goods is way less strong, and instead pilgrims invest in the consumption of places and moments.

Despite the Camino suggesting to be a simple experience, it is indeed an expensive experience. It requires (i) a long period of time to accomplish the walking, which is often a scarce resource for most people; (ii) specific materials that facilitate trekking and long-distance walking, which are not cheap; and (iii) tickets and accommodations along the way; this last one tends to be below the average price of touristic destinations. Pilgrims that are going to other pilgrimages such as Lourdes, Juazeiro do Norte and Círio de Nazaré can have other realities. Especially

Juazeiro do Norte can have particular characteristics, once pilgrims are often coming from low-income families and need to save money to be able to come to the pilgrimage.

Consumption of goods in Lourdes and Círio de Nazaré seems to be more related to souvenirs, but the local market in both sites can be very diverse in terms of offerings.

As pilgrimages are also *touristic experiences*, thus consumption involves the consumption of travel tickets, accommodations and leisure activities. This is a pattern observed in all the pilgrimage sites, except the case of Círio de Nazaré. In this last pilgrimage, most of the participants actually live in the city and do not need to move from somewhere else (which is also present, but at a smaller scale).

The market around the sanctuaries prepares for the pilgrimage periods. In Juazeiro do Norte, there are specific times of the year for the official pilgrimages. In those moments, ephemeral street markets are constructed and stores in local market prepare and renew their shelves to receive the huge number of pilgrims and the consumption explosion during these periods. The same happens in Círio de Nazaré, in which consumption grows considerably during the month of October due to pilgrims' family festivities. In Lourdes, the pilgrimage is also a great vector for consumption in the local market. The case of Santiago de Compostela, is the most off the curve, since the pilgrimage premises are the reduction of consumption.

For some service provider, the pilgrimage period is a unique marketing strategy event. For instance, in the Círio de Nazaré, local companies use the pilgrimage's aesthetics, traditions and rituals to create advertisement campaigns and they also sponsor the pilgrimage itself to attract consumers and convert it into sales.

The local Church also use marketing strategies to be closer to their spiritual consumers. Strong and active participation in social networks is a clear strategy among all the pilgrimage sites observed. Local churches, basilicas and cathedrals maintain and interact with faithful and pilgrims in different social networks. Live streaming is also a digital strategy to share the spiritual activities in-site for those

not able to attend. Especially during covid-19, digital strategies like this became more relevant.

Church also sells spiritual services and products. They have their own stores, normally placed inside the sanctuary facilities to sell spiritual-related products and services. Priests serve as endorsers of such offerings and suggest pilgrims to buy during Masses, for instance. Outdoors, banners and other marketing communication strategies are used to communicate church's offerings. The Círio de Nazaré is the one that developed this strategy more clearly, but the other pilgrimage sites studied also present such characteristics at a smaller level.

1.3.4 Inducted themes

The themes emerged from the crossing of the inter-case analysis. At the end of this section, a summary table presents the interactions of each pilgrimage for the induced themes. The themes are then confronted to the literature in the next section.

Theme 01: Physical boundaries between the spiritual and the commercial space.

The commercial and spiritual spheres are often physically separated in the pilgrimage sites. Such distinctions seem to be reinforced by the spiritual dimensions who tend to differ themselves from the commercial, in the physical space and in language. However, the commercial and spiritual logics cross the physical barriers and are embedded in each other. Commercial practices and exchanges take place in the spiritual sphere as well as the spiritual is used in the commercial to sell offerings to pilgrims.

Theme 02: The pilgrim experience is the combination of both commercial and spiritual dimensions.

Pilgrims navigate through the commercial and the spiritual in their pilgrimage journey. Market offerings serve for various purposes, such as (i) helping pilgrims to navigate the pilgrimage; (ii) facilitating the accomplishment of rituals; or (iii) expressing pilgrims' identities. Pilgrims then search for the spiritual and the commercial to live the pilgrimage experience.

Theme 03: The pilgrimage as a marketing strategy

The spiritual and profane market around the sanctuaries prepares for the pilgrimage seasons as it represents a special moment of consumption in these sites. The pilgrimage is then a marketing strategy for companies trying to target spiritual consumers.

On the other side, the church also incorporates marketing communications strategies especially during the pilgrimage seasons. Accordingly, church also sells spiritual services and products to spiritual consumers, use spiritual leaders as endorsers of their offerings and suggest other spiritual products aligned to their own brand and marketing interests.

Theme 04: Collective and individualized experience of pilgrims

The pilgrimage is a collective experience that is marked by massive participation of pilgrims. Yet, such participants are also looking for deep and intimate personal encounters with God or themselves in order to solve their issues in life. The pilgrimage is then this contrasting reality of overlapping collective and individual dimensions entangled.

Theme 05: Coping with life challenges by relying on the spiritual

Across pilgrimages, pilgrims referred to the search of the spiritual to better deal with important personal issues, such as the death of loved one, physical and mental diseases, and other types of difficulties. Sometimes, when looking to cope with such situations, pilgrims make informal contracts with spiritual leaders, in which they hope for the spiritual to bring a solution to their lives and they promise to pay for it by performing specific thanking rituals. The pilgrimage is a place where transformations and healing can happen.

The market also takes advantage of such constant search for coping strategies and transformations in the spiritual site and propose market offerings that meet pilgrims' demands. Market offering are marketed to alleviate or even cure pilgrims' pains or diseases

Theme 06: Pilgrimage as an embodied experience

Pilgrimages are intense bodily experiences in which pilgrims meet with the spiritual in the sacred site. Even when they are not necessarily looking for a spiritual encounter, pilgrims go for the pilgrimage site and experience in embodied terms. Heavily intense embodied rituals are constantly observed across different pilgrimages and are part of the traditions. Expressing such rituals are actually important for pilgrims as a way to authenticate their spiritual experience, to thank for blessings received, to free them from sins and negative things.

Theme 07: The role of materiality in the pilgrimage

Materiality is a key concept for these types of experiences and have different functions across each pilgrimage observed. Material objects can be used in rituals or as identity expressions, for instance. In addition, the materiality agency of some objects such as the image of saints is the focal point of the whole pilgrimage schedule and can determine the pilgrims' journey. Finally, one of the most interesting empirical evidences observed, and mostly present in one pilgrimage (Juazeiro do Norte), is the blessing of market offerings before usage. Pilgrims need a certain validation after they buy a product and before actually the consumption of such products.

Theme 08: The interconnections between embodiment and materiality

Especially in the display of thanking and purification rituals, pilgrims perform embodied rituals that requires materials. They engage in walking for long distances, dressing especial clothes, or also delivering specific objects that represent their healings. In this sense, the body itself can be considered as a material artefact that is part of the rituals, as the living proof of the healings and transformations. Also, according to pilgrims, external materials are also needed to express their gratitude for the spiritual support.

Theme 09: The re-doing of the pilgrimage experience

One pattern that remains across pilgrimages is the huge number of times that a pilgrim comes back to the pilgrimage during their lives. Pilgrims refer to varied reasons that make them decide the pilgrimage is a worth place they should come back. The reasons vary across different pilgrimages, but pilgrims often refer to the desire to feel the positive feelings associated with the experience or also the need to ask for help to deal with a new issue that appeared in their lives or to thank for an old one that they managed to cope due to the spiritual support.

Theme 10: Accessibility as a default?

Church and market receive millions of pilgrims on each pilgrimage, but they are not necessarily ready to welcome the diversity of pilgrims and their necessities. In one pilgrimage studies (Lourdes), the accessibility of the spiritual market is widely present, especially for sick and disable pilgrims. Lourdes and Camino de Santiago seem more ready to receive international pilgrims coming from different language backgrounds, while Juazeiro do Norte and Círio de Nazaré are more nationally prepared to welcome their pilgrims.

Theme 11: Less consumption or consumerism?

Pilgrimages are often associated with an experience of simplicity. It is often an invitation to reduce and distance from the ordinary lifestyle, yet consumerism can be sometimes institutionalized. The institutionalization of consumerism is more present in the pilgrimages to Juazeiro do Norte.

Pilgrimages are also expensive experiences. As touristic experiences, they involve the consumption of travel tickets, accommodations and leisure activities and are difficult to participate for some pilgrims from low-income families. It is also needed time and money to leave ordinary life and engage in some days or weeks off. For low-income families, pilgrimages are more difficult to reach, requiring savings and financial strategies. Such difficulties were especially registered in Juazeiro do Norte.

Theme 12: Sustainability: sustainable pilgrimage practices

The environmental impact of touristic destinations, in especial in the pilgrimage sites studied is widely present. The consumption and inappropriate disposal of plastic products is one of the most relevant unsustainable practices observed. Despite some sustainable projects taking place in pilgrimage such as the Camino de Santiago, most of the participants as well as designers of the experiences studied are not dealing with this issue.

1.3.5 Summary of inducted themes

Table 8 - Summary of inducted themes

Themes	Lourdes	Camino de Santiago	Juazeiro do Norte	Círio de Nazaré
Physical boundaries between the spiritual and the commercial space	X		X	X
The pilgrim experience is the combination of both commercial and spiritual dimensions	X	X	X	X
The pilgrimage as a marketing strategy			X	X
The collective and individualized experience of pilgrims	X	X	X	X
Coping with life challenges by relying on the support of the spiritual	X	X	X	X
Pilgrimage as an embodied experience	X	X	X	X
The role of materiality in the pilgrimage	X	X	X	X
The interconnections between embodiment and materiality	X	X	X	X
The re-doing of the pilgrimage experience	X	X	X	X
Accessibility as a default?	X			
Less consumption or consumerism?	X	X	X	X
Sustainability		X		

Part II. Theoretical Discussion and Marketing Insights

2.1 Theoretical Discussion

Following Spiggle (1994) and Badot and Lemoine (2008), this section presents the confrontation of the themes raised from the analysis with the existing literature. The 12 themes explained in the last section are now individually, and sometimes jointly, discussed under the light of Consumer Culture Theoretics and Marketing literatures, as well as Sociology and Ethnology.

This discussion seeks to connect the phenomenology of the micro-social living experience of spiritual consumers to the macro-social structures and systems influencing their lives, which has been called as "the context of the context" (Askegaard and Linnet, 2011).

2.1.1 Discussion of themes 01, 02 and 03: Boundaries and Intersections between the spiritual and the commercial.

Distinctions between the commercial and spiritual have a long history. Christian religions, especially, try to disassociate their activities from commercial activities. The Christians' scriptures in the Bible already referred to the contrasting roles of the market and religion, such as the following verses in Matthew 21:12-13, often named as 'Jesus cleanses the temple':

12Then Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling doves.
13And He declared to them, "It is written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer.' But you are making it 'a den of robbers.'"

However, in a society overrun by commercial clutter, faiths of all kinds compete with each other and with a plethora of other entertaining and leisure activities

(Einstein, 2007). This competitive scenario push religions to become brands, with recognizable symbols and spokespeople with whom spiritual consumers can make immediate connections (Einstein, 2007). Therefore, despite the still present attempts to distance themselves of the commercial, the Church is increasingly incorporating the commercial in their practices.

2.1.1.1 Spiritual and market crossing each other's barriers (logics and territories)

While the market logic crosses the threshold of the religious dimension in a process called 'the marketization of religion' (McAlexander et al., 2014), the spiritual logic also advances towards the market realm. According to Belk et al. (1989), the secularization of the religion and the sacralization of the secular are current phenomenon of our society that counter-argue Durkheimian original theorizations (Durkheim, 1965) and can be observed everywhere in market settings, offerings and practices. This crossing barriers between the commercial and the spiritual was observed in the different pilgrimage sites under research in this dissertation.

Yet, the tensions and resistance forces from the spiritual sphere to embrace the commercial is even more remarkable in the data analysis. One clear boundary dividing the commercial from the spiritual is the physical spatial boundary constituting the territory that each dimension must occupy. For instance, pilgrimage sanctuaries enclose themselves in their own dimension with physical walls and giant gates. According to the conceptual framework proposed by Castilhos, Dolbec and Veresiu (2016), territory is a spatially circumscribed field of forces in which access, purposes, and meanings are molded and controlled by individuals, groups, or institutions. Sanctuaries use their territories and engage in processes of territoriality, or the "use of territory to attain organizational goals" (Agnew, 2009, p. 746) with the means of 'protecting' themselves from outside influences, especially commercial ones. In their attempts to attain their own goals, sanctuaries do not allow street markets and other types of commercial exchanges to take place in their territories.

Interestingly, even with the physical boundaries, the commercial logic does enter the spiritual territory. In a process of adaptations and exceptions, sanctuaries offer spiritual products and services to faithful individuals but using a different language to refer to the exchanges in which money is used. Indeed, language is conceptualized as a form of resistance, for instance in the post-colonial work of the Martinican poet, novelist and essayist Edouard Glissant that argues about the fragilities and strengths of using language to resist against other languages (Britton, 1999). However, in the context of pilgrimages what is seen are two 'colonial' forces, the religious and the capitalist, competing for territory and using their strategies to resist and adept. When using special language, the sanctuaries are distancing from the commercial or simply denying its embedded existence.

The use of commercial logics by spiritual institutions can also be considered as the 'commodification of the spiritual', as explained by Rinallo, Scott, and Mclaran (2013, p. 12), to refer to how religious institutions and spiritual leaders market their products and services. Existing research on the economics of religion (Finke, 1997; Stark and Finke, 2000) points to the ways that economic principles, such as supply and demand, are used to guide faithful's behavior. The topic of religious marketing and the commodification of the spiritual has been discussed in marketing and consumer research literatures (Bonsu and Belk, 2010; Croft, 2013; Einstein, 2013).

On the opposite side, data analysis also shed light on the faithful's sacralization of the secular. Marketers engage in processes of 'sacralization of the mundane' (Rinallo, Scott, & Mclaran, 2013, p. 12), in which marketers and brands call on spiritual meanings to enhance the value of their products, services, and experiences. Marketing and consumer research has devoted attention to this topic, such as the appropriation of religious symbols by Dolce & Gabbana's launch of a collection of rosaries as fashion accessories (Rinallo et al., 2013), or the ways in which the halal movement in Turkey established a faith-based market (Izberk-Bilgin, 2013). In the pilgrimages studied in this dissertation, marketers tend to appropriate religious symbols to develop products and services. Pilgrimage market's territorial area often is accommodated right outside the spiritual territory and its offerings are based on the spiritual meanings, images, and traditions of each pilgrimage. Companies also use pilgrimage's history, myths, and rituals to create appealing advertisements and other marketing communication strategies. Product innovation and distribution

strategies rise from the same premises. Therefore, the market uses the spiritual to develop their offerings and attract spiritual consumers.

2.1.1.2 Service providers interconnected in the spiritual market

The market in the Camino de Santiago is placed in a different position compared to the other pilgrimages. When considering such distinct spatiality, and inviting Castilhos, Dolbec and Veresiu (2016) to this discussion once again, the Camino would be considered as a network of market elements in a process of 'aligning', which means they are organized horizontal and interconnectedly, in a relationship that, in this case, tends to solidify the market. As explained previously in the findings section, the market agents are disposed along the Camino, and they have a specific system of recommendations that strengthens the market and facilitate pilgrims' experience. Existing marketing and consumer research literatures discussed this networking spatiality, but attributed to one particular global brand in different countries (Cova, Cova, & Park, 2007), within the process of the creation of markets through a brand-mediated legitimation process (Giesler, 2012), or through consumption-driven initiatives (Martin & Schouten, 2014). This dissertation proposes, then, that market aligning can be beneficial to market agents as well as to participant in the context of an experience.

2.1.1.3 Marketization of the spiritual as subject of critique (positive and negative aspects)

Literature on the marketization of the spiritual has been concentrated in two main streams (Kedzior & Scaraboto, 2020). The first, which was already mentioned in the last paragraphs, adopts a critical posture on the intersection noting appropriation, misrepresentation, and commoditization of religious and spiritual systems (Redden, 2016; Rinallo et al., 2013; Rindfleisch, 2005; Lhamas & Belk, 2011). The other stream positions itself in more reconciliatory way and examines the hybridization of commercial and spiritual worlds without assuming that one value regime is morally or ideologically superior to the other (Scaraboto and Figueiredo, 2017; Kedzior & Scaraboto, 2020; Gibson-Graham, 2008; Santana & Botelho, 2019).

These two streams of research can be observed in our data depending on the level of the analysis. At the macro-level, the data analysis demonstrated that there are, especially in the Lourdes pilgrimages, tensions between the commercial and the spiritual logics. While the other pilgrimage demonstrates similar physical boundaries, but are more harmoniously connected to the market. At the micro-level of the phenomenological experience of pilgrims, as spiritual consumers, they move between commercial and spiritual territories and the hybridity of the spiritual and commercial actually can be beneficial for their experience. Previous research demonstrated that the move between the sacred - the antistructure - and the profane - or the structure - can lead to tensions and also resolutions strategies (Husemann et al., 2016), and pilgrims navigate through these realms to reach their emotional, meaningful, unique and self-transformative experience. This discussion is aligned with this theorization.

Table 9 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Einstein, 2007; McAlexander et al., 2014; Belk et al., 1989; Rinallo, Scott, and Mclaran, 2013; Finke, 1997; Stark and Finke, 2000; Bonsu and Belk, 2010; Croft, 2013; Einstein, 2013	Secularization/ marketization/ commodification of the spiritual	Process through which the spiritual is marketed through the creation of spiritual brands, products and services.	There are spatial (territories) boundaries that separate the spiritual and the commercial through gates, walls, logics, and language. This phenomenon was clearly observed in Lourdes, and at a lower level in Juazeiro do Norte, and Cirio de Nazare.
Belk et al., 1989; Rinallo, Scott, and Mclaran, 2013; Rinallo et al., 2013; Izberk-Bilgin, 2013;	Sacralization of the secular	Process through which the mundane world is sacralized through religious logics, rituals and practices. Marketers and brands call on spiritual meanings to enhance the	

		value of their products, services, and experiences.	
Castilhos, Dolbec and Veresiu, 2016; Agnew, 2009; Britton, 1999	Territory	Territory is a spatially circumscribed field of forces in which access, purposes, and meanings are molded and controlled by individuals, groups, or institutions.	Despite the spatial division, the commercial logic does enter the spiritual territory, and vice-versa. Especially the spiritual domain tends to avoid the entrance of the commercial, while accepting, reshaping and molding its structure to commercial logics and ways of thinking. This phenomenon was observed in Lourdes, Juazeiro do Norte and Cirio de Nazare.
Castilhos, Dolbec and Veresiu, 2016; Cova, Cova, & Park, 2007; Giesler, 2012; Martin & Schouten, 2014.	Market network 'aligning'	They are organized horizontally and interconnectedly, in a relationship that tends to solidify the market	This dissertation follows the idea of these authors. Especially in The Camino, market agents are disposed along the way, and they have a specific system of recommendations that strengthens the market and facilitate pilgrims' experience. This dissertation proposes, then, that market aligning can be beneficial not only to market agents as well as to participants/consumers in the context of an experience
Redden, 2016; Rinaldo et al., 2013; Rindfleisch, 2005; Lhamas & Belk, 2011	Critique on the intersection of the Spiritual & the Commercial	Critical posture on the intersection noting appropriation, misrepresentation, and commoditization of religious and spiritual systems.	At the macro-level, our data analysis demonstrates that there are, especially in the Lourdes pilgrimages, tensions between the commercial and the spiritual logics. While the

			other pilgrimages show similar physical boundaries but are more harmoniously connected to the market.
Scaraboto and Figueiredo, 2017; Kedzior & Scaraboto, 2020; Gibson-Graham, 2008; Santana & Botelho, 2019; Husemann et al., 2016	Non-critical perception of the intersection of the Spiritual & Commercial	Reconciliatory way and examines the hybridization of commercial and spiritual worlds without assuming that one value regime is morally or ideologically superior to the other	At the micro-level of the phenomenological experience of pilgrims, as spiritual consumers, they move between commercial and spiritual territories and the hybridity of the spiritual and commercial actually can be beneficial for their experience.

2.1.2 Discussion of theme 04: the collective and individualized experience of pilgrims.

The French sociologist Michel Maffesoli, through his book 'The Time of the Tribes' and further studies, contributed to the understanding of the 'neo-tribes', or the post-modern affectual, social, and religious interactions of members of communities (Maffesoli, 1988). Maffesoli concentrates in the emerging practices, identities and communities in contrast to modern forms of societal structure, thus highlighting the contemporary blurring boundaries between individual and society (Maffesoli, 2010; Dawes, 2016). In this dissertation, the notion of 'religious model', proposed by Maffesoli as part of neo-tribes, seems to be related to what was observed in the context of pilgrimages. Maffesoli (1988) mentions that such tribes are organized around the sacredness of social relationships, memberships, emotions and connections. For pilgrims, beyond the religious aspect of the pilgrimage, there are the religious connection between the members of pilgrimage groups that enable identity, spirituality and practices.

Anthropological studies also provide avenues for consumer research conceptualizations of collectives. For instance, Turner and Turner (2001) defend the term *communitas* to refer to the encounter of individuals in such non-ordinary experience, in which social classes, status, and other social norms are set aside

temporarily during the experience. The authors claim *communitas* is an essential part of the pilgrimage experience. Part of the constitutions of what is sacred and profane, structure and anti-structure, extraordinary and ordinary. Such collective moments are observed in the pilgrimages studied herein and are responsible for shared knowledge between novices and veterans, care between each other to alleviate pain, shared expressions of rituals, accommodation sharing, moving in groups to and in the pilgrimage site.

Building from such sociological and anthropological studies, consumer research investigate the crucial role of the group of consumers under different conceptualizations, such as brand publics (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016), brand communities (Muniz & O'guinn, 2001; McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002; Schau, Muñiz Jr, & Arnould, 2009), consumer tribes (Badot & Cova, 1995; Badot & Lemoine, 2009; Cova, Kozinets, & Shankar, 2007; Canniford, 2011; Goulding, Shankar, & Canniford, 2013), and consumption collectives (Arnould, Arvidsson, & Eckhardt, 2021). These are circumscribed around specific products, services, brands, and spaces (digitally or physically). In this dissertation, despite clear connection with some aspects of each of these conceptualizations, there is no objective association with any of them. At this level, the idea is mostly to bring the dichotomies between the collective and individual experience of pilgrims in the pilgrimages studied.

Accordingly, the individual experience demonstrates great importance at the phenomenological level for pilgrims. Appau (2021) mentions that sacred exchanges between God and faithful are commonly individualistic in essence, instead of collective. This raises the topic of spiritual experiences, such as pilgrimages, as being relevant touchpoints for the individual encounter between faithful and spiritual deities. In the pilgrimages studied, individualism is at the source of their practices and motivations to undertake the pilgrimage journey.

Both dimensions, collective and individual, of the lived experience of pilgrims seems integral for their pilgrimage journey. The boundaries between individual and collective are blurred in our current society (Maffesoli, 1988). For instance, Husemann et al. (2016) find that pilgrims can have both communal and individualistic experiences. Pilgrims find transformation and well-being through

their individual and collective experiences in the pilgrimages. More on the transformational aspect of pilgrimages are discussed in the next subsection.

Table 10 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Turner & Turner, 2001	<i>Communitas</i>	Refers to the encounter of individuals in such non-ordinary experience, in which social classes, status, and other social norms are set aside temporarily during the experience.	It is responsible for shared knowledge between novices and veterans, care between each other to alleviate pain, shared expressions of rituals, accommodation sharing, moving in groups to and in the pilgrimage site.
Maffesoli, 1988	Neo-tribes	Identities are no longer only based on social class but replaced by other types of identifications such as interests and shared outlooks that are independent of one's social background. Sacredness of social relationships, memberships, emotions and connections	This dissertation corroborates with the idea of sacredness of relationships in groups. There are religious connections between the members of pilgrimage groups that enable identity, spirituality and practices.
Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016; Muniz & O'guinn, 2001; McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002; Schau, Muñiz Jr, & Arnould, 2009; Badot & Cova, 1995; Badot & Lemoine, 2009; Cova, Kozinets, &	Brand publics, Brand communities, Consumer tribes, Consumption collectives	Communities that constitute themselves around specific topics of interest, brands, products, digitally or not.	No specific contribution to any of these concepts. Their relevance is registered herein.

Shankar, 2007; Canniford, 2011; Goulding, Shankar, & Canniford, 2013; Arnould, Arvidsson, & Eckhardt, 2021			
Appau (2021)	Individual relationships with the spiritual	Sacred exchanges between God and faithful are commonly individualistic in essence, instead of collective	In the pilgrimages studied, individualism is at the source of some of their practices and motivations to undertake the pilgrimage journey.
Husemann et al. (2016)	The combination of individual and collective aspects	Both communal and individualistic experiences are integral to the experience.	This dissertation corroborates with this idea.

2.1.3 Discussion of theme 05: Coping with life challenges by relying on the support of the spiritual.

Despite pilgrimages' ancient character, such as its traditional rituals and doctrines or their centenary temples and shrines (Turner & Turner, 2011), the individuals that participate in such experiences are living in our current fast-paced world (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b). Consequently, they are facing contemporary issues in their lives regarding their physical and mental health, as well as social relationships with relatives and communities around them. This dissertation's findings demonstrate that consumption of pilgrimage is seen as a coping strategy toward such issues in life, in which individuals can find emotional and physical protection in the sacred (Durkheim, 1965). In other words, individuals are suffering and going to the spiritual to better cope. This is one of the explanations for the growth of pilgrimages and other spiritual and religious experiences around the world (Reader, 2007).

2.1.3.1 The influence of modern life-styles in individual's search for the spiritual

In 1997, an article from the New York Times, written by James Gleick, announced we are living in the age of speed, in which internet, television commercials, music videos, and movies are super-fast, but not fast enough (Gleick, 1997). From then on, we are witnessing even faster technologies that have undoubtedly a positive impact in our lives, such as the development and access to information, but that seems to be directing to society's self-destructive addiction to faster living (Brown, 2014). In such society, the shared values are often related to the chase of money, power, success and a wilder, faster pace of life. As a result of such weight of real and imagined demands, we can observe an alarming increase in stress-related disorders of all kinds across ages, with people suffering with obesity, depression, anxiety, and others (Brown, 2014). Moreover, the fast pace of life has been studied as a key conductor to higher rates of death from coronary heart disease, higher smoking rates, and greater subjective well-being (Levine & Norenzayan, 1999).

One of the main influences in our mental health is city life (Tost, Champagne & Meyer-Lindenberg, 2015). Neuroscience research demonstrated that despite having better superior educational, economic and healthcare opportunities, individuals that live in large cities tend to have higher mental health-psychiatric disorders (Tost, Champagne & Meyer-Lindenberg, 2015). Even the population size of a given place can influence on the quality and pace of life of its citizens (Bornstein & Bornstein, 1976).

2.1.3.2 The search of the spiritual as a coping mechanism

As a way to deal with this stressed world, many individuals search for spiritual offers. Recent research investigated ancient practices, such as yoga, and find that it is not only serving as a fitness regimen, but also as an antidote to modern stress (Smith, 2019). Followers of yoga spiritual leaders engage in extraordinary experiences, performing transformational rituals and later reporting significant improvements in sleep and overall physical and mental health (Smith, 2019). As Husemann and

Eckhardt (2019b) mentioned, these individuals seem to be increasingly in search for "oasis of deceleration", in which they can relax, decelerate and recover from their ordinary lifestyles. Finally, research also find that such spiritual experiences can have therapeutic meaning for the participants (Higgins & Hamilton, 2019). The findings from this dissertation demonstrate the great number of individuals reaching the spiritual in search for miracles (Higgins & Hamilton, 2016), solutions for their issues, transformation and well-being.

Researchers on psychology have been studying the coping mechanisms that facilitate human suffering (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus, Averill, & Option, 1974; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). For instance, Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984) developed a seminal book on the evolution of psychology called 'Stress, Appraisal, and Coping'. The authors present a theory of stress, focusing on cognitive appraisal and coping in adult life and aging, in which they reveal the way individuals use adaptation systems in areas such as behavioral medicine and concern with the life course, emotion, stress management, and treatments. Their work became crucial for the development of further investigations in correlated areas such as psychiatry, nursery, sociology, anthropology, or medical research.

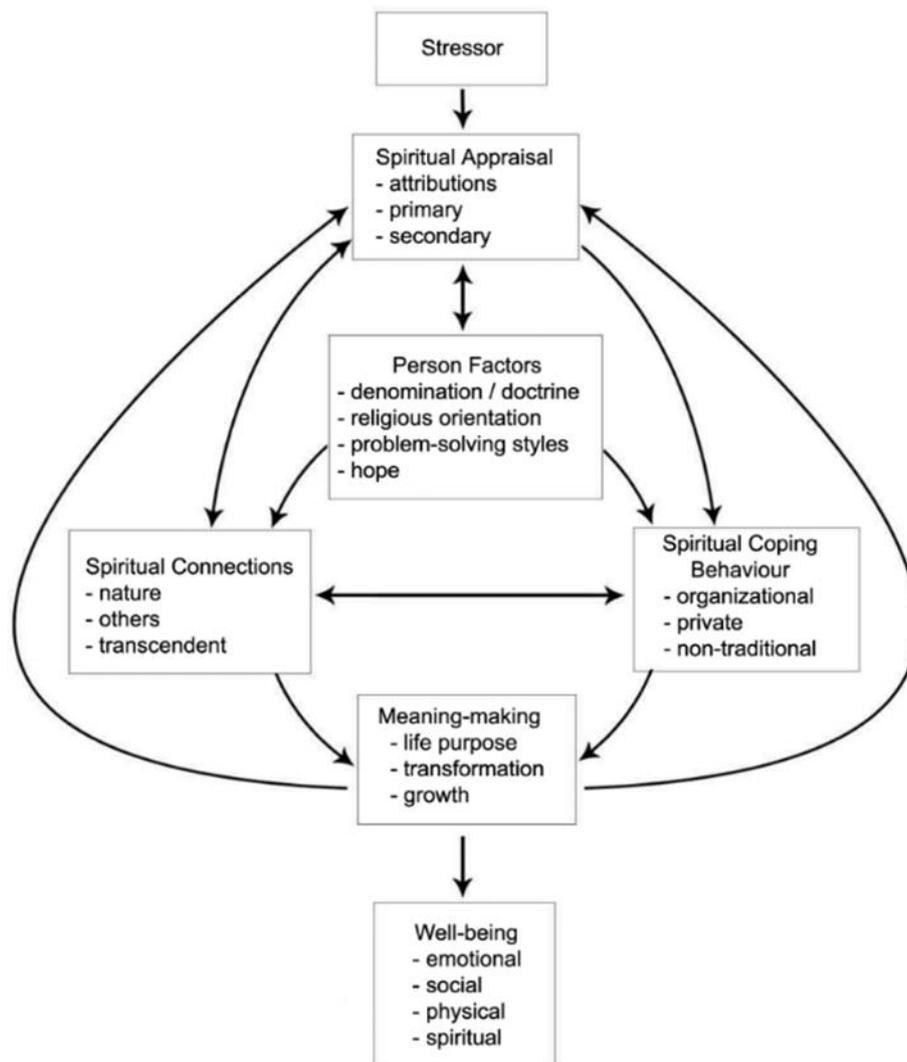
Building from these seminal approaches on psychology, religion studies researchers have been observing the key function of religious beliefs, practices and relationships in the process of dealing with stressful life experiences (Lancaster & Palframan, 2009; Graham, Furr, Flowers, & Burke, 2001; Koenig, George, & Siegler, 1988; Pargament, 1997; Pargament, Smith, Koenig, & Perez, 1998; Tix & Frazier, 1998; Wong & Wong, 2006). For instance, Koenig, George, and Siegler (1988) demonstrate religious attitudes or actions (e.g., faith or trust in God, and private prayers) are important behaviors that help their respondents to adjust in difficult circumstances in life. Accordingly, Graham et al. (2001) observe that religious individuals who express their spirituality through religious beliefs have a greater immunity to stressful situations. Finally, Ano and Vasconcelles (2005) develop a meta-analysis to synthesize the literature on situation-specific religious coping methods as well as their efficacy for people dealing with stressful situations.

2.1.3.3 Spiritual coping in the spiritual market

Amid coping literature, the concept of 'spiritual coping' rises as a way to encapsulate the phenomenon of individual's strategies to adapt and overcome major life events such as health, social and psychological events by relying on their spiritual framework (Gall et al., 2005; Lancaster & Pargament, 2009). Spiritual coping 'involves the specific behaviors that an individual uses to respond to either the stress (problem-focused) or to related emotion reactions (emotion-focused)' (Gall et al., 2005, p. 90). In addition, spiritual coping intends to reveal the role of spirituality in coping, beyond the limiting understanding of religiosity impact on coping mechanisms (Gall et al., 2005; Tix & Frazier, 1998; Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005).

To understand the process of spiritual coping, Gall et al. (2005) designed a 'spiritual framework of coping', which is dynamic and relational, phenomenological, transactional and process-oriented. Gall et al. (2005) advances Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping, by suggesting that spiritual or religious faith can permeate the entire coping process. Basically, the spiritual framework coping highlights an initial stage of response to stress, whereby, through a spiritual appraisal, an individual makes a causal attribution of the stressful event (Gall et al., 2005). A primary appraisal determines whether the stressor is a threat, and a secondary appraisal assesses the extent to which the individual can cope with the threat based on existing coping methods. According to Gall et al. (2005) spiritual coping can function at the level of person factors (e.g., beliefs), primary and secondary appraisals (e.g., God attributions), coping behavior (e.g., prayer), coping resources (e.g., connection to nature), and meaning-making (e.g., spiritual reappraisal) (See Figure 1).

Figure 246 -The Spiritual Framework of Coping (Gall et al., 2005)



The findings from this dissertation reveal that pilgrims engage in spiritual coping strategies to deal with their stressors in life. The findings corroborate with the spiritual framework of coping on the ideas that pilgrims use their pre-installed spiritual systems to appraisal a potential stressor accordingly and behave in a certain way in order achieve self-transformation and well-being. One of the main motivations behind the decision of pilgrims to engage in a pilgrimage is the presence of a stressor such as depression, physical illnesses, difficult to deal with family members, difficult situations or life projects that are not working the way expected. Pilgrims in the four pilgrimages reported they used their religion or their own spirituality systems during the pilgrimage to find a better way to deal with those stressors.

2.1.3.4 Spiritual coping through contracts, rituals and consumption

The findings from this dissertation expands the framework from (Gall et al., 2005) by demonstrating the (i) the contracts that pilgrims in some pilgrimages can do in order to guarantee they are going to succeed on their spiritual coping strategies; (ii) the associated thanking rituals from pilgrims to the deities; and (iii) the consumption of products that facilitate the expressions of such rituals.

The first contribution to the concept of spiritual coping could be the development of informal contracts between pilgrims and God, saints or other deities. After submitting the stressor to their 'spiritual appraisal', pilgrims in Juazeiro do Norte and Belém demonstrated a whole system of contracts that serve to strength their coping mechanism. Pilgrims ask for spiritual intervention in their lives, but also promise to do something back as a way to thank for the future blessing they will receive. They state clearly what is the role of each party in the contract, and need to honor to what they had promised with the penalty of being indebted to the spiritual realm.

Such contractual mechanism is also related to canonical theorizations, such as Mauss (1950) ideas on the contractual terms of gift-giving systems in archaic societies. Mauss (1950) mention that there are contracts between deities and individuals, but that specific contracts are not entirely covered by him in his famous *Essai sur le don*. In consumer research, recent theorizations from Appau (2021), shed light in the sacred exchanges between spiritual consumers and God. Appau (2021) argues that sacred exchanges happen at the individual level between faithful and God. It can be more oriented towards sacrifice, blessings are the source of value, church is the enforcement agent and sacralization is the enforcement process. The findings from this dissertation are aligned with the characteristics of such contracts and sacred exchanges. Yet, Appau's (2021) theorization does not consider the contractual terms that are present in such sacred exchanges between pilgrims and deities, nor Mauss (1950) advances further understandings of the phenomena. Pilgrims negotiate their blessings with the spiritual, and when they are ready to thank for the blessing, they call it 'payment' of their promise - even that there is no money being paid at that level.

The second contribution to the spiritual coping mechanism is the thanking rituals that pilgrims perform when they receive their blessings. They call it as 'the payment of promises' and they enact embodied rituals that need also material representation of their blessings. Embodied rituals could be, but not restricted to, penitence rituals, such as walking on their knees, or walking barefoot. The material expressions of their blessings are artefact that clearly represent their healing. For instance, pilgrims buy ex-votos with the shape of the body part that was sick and now is healed and deliver such material artefact in the pilgrimage site. Such behavior expressions of gratitude for the divine are underrepresented in the spiritual coping framework from Gall et al. (2005).

Finally, the third contribution to the spiritual coping framework is the consumption of such material objects during these rituals. Pilgrims buy or produce themselves the objects that represent their blessings. The consumption of such artefacts is a way to pay for their promises and fulfill with the contract that they made with God and saints. Pilgrims, then, go to the pilgrimage marketplace to access this market offerings that are sometimes available to sell in the sanctuary's territory or on the market around. The spiritual market is then necessary is this final stage of the contract.

2.1.3.5 Spiritual remedies to modern lifestyles

Despite the access to traditional healthcare systems (Alami et al., 2011) and the knowledge and technological advancement of contemporary life, the spiritual is yet an important place to solve issues. In general, the spiritual coping mechanism is an example of the so-called economy of salvation (McDannell, 1995, p. 140). Such sacred or sacramental exchanges between pilgrims and the God are a kind of eschatological economy that is embedded in consumption rituals to alleviate faithful people sufferings in life, renovate their faith, and guarantee their salvation after death (Belcher, 2020).

Consumers are increasingly seeking for remedies to heal issues of modern life such as movies, drugs, virtual and artificial reality, and anchors like friends, support

groups, role models and therapists (Kotler, 2019). Spiritual consumer experiences are illustrations of such consumption patterns. One example is consumer deceleration (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019), in which consumers engage in a decelerated temporal logic to experience time as passing by more slowly and as being abundant. Husemann and Eckardt (2019) discuss the consumption of the Camino de Santiago as an oasis of deceleration, where consumers can have a slowed-down temporal experience achieved via a diminution in quantities per unit of time (e.g., less traveled distance, less use of technology, fewer experienced episodes). There is evidence that slow forms of consumption, such slow food, slow city, or slow fashion, can have positive outcomes like well-being, moments of contemplation and authenticity (Parkins & Craig, 2016).

Consumers are also increasingly searching for spiritual services in what the literature calls the 'spiritual service industry' (Bowman, 1999, p. 181), 'therapeutic servicescapes' (Higgins & Hamilton, 2018), and the 'spiritscape' (Kale, 2004, p. 102). Higgins and Hamilton (2018) empirically reveal the concept of therapeutic servicescapes, or the 'consumption setting where emplaced, market-mediated performances compensate for sociocultural dilemmas' (p. 1230). The authors demonstrate how suffering is socially and geographically orchestrated and transformed in spiritual marketplace settings such as the Lourdes pilgrimage, in France (Higgins & Hamilton, 2018).

Table 11 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Durkheim (1965)	Sacred	Individuals can find emotional and physical protection in the sacred.	This is a potential explanation for the growth of pilgrimages and other spiritual and religious experiences in the contemporary world. In a fast-paced and challenging world, individuals find comfort in the spiritual.
Brown (2014)	Addiction to fast living	Technologies can have positive and negative influence in our lives. It is leading us to a faster lifestyle.	Faster technologies that have undoubtedly a positive impact in our lives, such as the development and access to

		Chase of money, power, success and a wilder, faster pace of life are valued in our society.	information, but that seems to be directing to society's self-destructive addiction to faster living.
Levine & Norenzayan (1999)	Issues related to fast pace of life	The fast pace of life is a key conductor to higher rates of death from coronary heart disease, and higher smoking rates.	Pilgrims mention related lifestyle and diseases.
Husemann & Eckhardt (2019b)	Oasis of deceleration	Spiritual experiences facilitate relaxing, decelerating and recovering from one's ordinary lifestyles.	In or findings, pilgrims can also search pilgrimages for that purpose of deceleration.
Koenig, George, & Siegler (1988); Graham et al. (2001)	Religiosity as a coping mechanism	Religious attitudes or actions are important behaviors that help individuals to adjust in difficult circumstances in life.	Pilgrims, in this doctoral research, rely on their religious appraisal to face their life challenges. But not only. Pilgrims also refer to other spiritual appraisals used, beyond a specific religion.
Gall et al., (2005); Lancaster & Pargament, (2009)	Spiritual coping (the spiritual framework of coping)	It involves the specific behaviors that an individual uses to respond to either the stress (problem-focused) or to related emotion reactions (emotion-focused). It reveals the role of spirituality in coping.	The findings from this dissertation reveal that pilgrims engage in spiritual coping strategies to deal with their stressors in life. The findings from this dissertation expands the framework from (Gall et al., 2005) by demonstrating the (i) the contracts that pilgrims in some pilgrimages can do in order to guarantee they are going to succeed on their spiritual coping strategies; (ii) the associated thanking rituals from pilgrims to the deities; and (ii) the consumption of products that facilitate the expressions of such rituals.
McDannell, (1995); Belcher, (2020).	Economy of salvation	Sacred or sacramental exchanges between pilgrims and the God are a kind of eschatological economy that is embedded in consumption rituals to	We corroborate with the idea of spiritual consumers increasingly searching for remedies to heal issues of modern life in spiritual services and products.

		alleviate faithful people sufferings in life, renovate their faith, and guarantee their salvation after death.	
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2.1.4 Discussion of theme 06: Pilgrimage as an embodied experience (pain, embodied interactions with the pilgrimage site, and collective aspects)

According to David Le Breton, in his book *Anthropologie du Corps et Modernité* (1990), “to live is to continually reduce the world to one’s body through the symbolism that it embodies” (Breton, 1990, p. 2), be this the culture, the social, the values, or other symbols. According to the author, human’s existence is embodied (Le Breton, 1990). Therefore, the pilgrimage experience is inevitably embodied. In this subsection, pilgrimage is discussed as embodied due the great amount of embodied activities that pilgrims engage with: walking the ancient routes to Santiago de Compostela, performing thanking rituals in Juazeiro do Norte, touching and entering the Grotto in Lourdes, or joining the crowded processions in the Cirio de Nazare.

This dissertation contributes to existing consumer research literature stressing the role of body on the consumption of experiences (Joy & Sherry Jr., 2003; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Scott, Cayla & Cova, 2017; Cova & Cova, 2019; Hemetsberger, Kreuzer, & Klien, 2019; Kuuru & Närvänen, 2019; Stevens, Maclaran, & Brown, 2019). The findings from this dissertation illuminates the role of pain and penance as facilitators of the spiritual experience of pilgrims. Through painful embodied rituals, pilgrims express their gratitude to the blessings received from the divine realm. Painful corporal experience also providing pilgrims to reencounter themselves (Scott, Cayla, & Cova, 2017), mainly when they feel lost, stressed, or lacking spirituality (Cova & Cova, 2019; Hemetsberger, Kreuzer, & Klien, 2019).

Walking is a key embodied activity in pilgrimages. The practice of walking was uncovered by Le Breton (2020) as having therapeutic benefits of doing it especially in a world increasingly technological. Le Breton verses about the fact that humanity

is essentially seated in cars, in front of screens, in the office, and that the levels of walking distance per day is decreasing. Especially in the Camino de Santiago and Belem, pilgrims walk long distances to get to the pilgrimage site. In the Camino de Santiago walking can have several motives, including the escape from ordinary 'seated life', as mentioned by one of the interviewees. It can be also related to religious, touristic, adventurous and self-fullings purposes (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b).

Pilgrimages are constant embodied interactions of pilgrims and the pilgrimage space. A recent stream of consumer research approaches such relational aspects between body and space (Roux & Belk, 2019), such as in the shopping experience of consumer in Hollister stores (Stevens, Maclaran, & Brown, 2019). Similar to their findings, pilgrimages are experienced through the perceptions and impressions of pilgrims about the site and the architecture, natural settings, sacred buildings and places. In addition, this dissertation adds that the actual touch and physical contact and interaction with the ground, stones and other material objects of the sacred site are source of sacred power to pilgrims, as well as capable of providing purification and renovation.

The findings from this dissertation are also conceptually aligned with the discussion proposed by Schüler (2012) that explains religious rituals are embedded in collective interactions and synchronizations. During the pilgrimages studied, pilgrims reenact rituals synchronically with peers. Some of those embodied rituals are historical learnings from early spiritual leaders reinforced by the church and other rituals are completely developed by pilgrims themselves based on their own spiritual and religious belief systems. For these last ones, in the pilgrimage of Juazeiro do Norte, pilgrims collectively create embodied rituals decided, in which they bodily interact with sacred places within the pilgrimage site.

Table 12 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Le Breton (1990)	Body	To live is to continually reduce the world to one's	This dissertation corroborates with that. The pilgrimage

		body through the symbolism that it embodies.	experience is inevitably embodied. There are a great amount of embodied activities that pilgrims engage with.
Scott, Cayla, & Cova, 2017; Cova & Cova, 2019; Hemetsberger, Kreuzer, & Klien, 2019	Pain	Pain and penance as facilitators of the spiritual experience of pilgrims	Through painful embodied rituals, pilgrims express their gratitude to the blessings received from the divine realm. Pain enables pilgrims to reencounter themselves, mainly when they feel lost, stressed, or lacking spirituality.
Stevens, Maclaran, & Brown, (2019)	Body and space	Relational aspects between consumers and the physical setting of a store, through their perceptions and impressions.	This dissertation adds that the actual touch and physical contact and interaction with the ground, stones and other material objects of the experience are sources of sacred power to pilgrims, as well as capable of providing purification and renovation.
Schüler (2012)	Religious rituals	Religious rituals are embedded in collective interactions and synchronizations	Pilgrims reenact rituals synchronically with peers. Some of those embodied rituals are historical learnings from early spiritual leaders reinforced by the church and other rituals are completely developed by pilgrims themselves based on their own spiritual and religious belief systems

2.1.5 Discussion of theme 07: The role of materiality in the pilgrimage (agency and singularization)

This dissertation contributes and corroborates with current discussions on materiality and consumption (Appadurai, 1986; Arcuri & Veludo-de-Oliveira, 2018; Brondino-Pompeo, 2021; Kopytoff, 1986). Consumption is conceptualized as a way

to materialize the spiritual experience (Kedzior, 2013), especially in pilgrimage experiences (Moufahim, 2013; Higgins & Hamilton, 2020). Materiality is, thus, a vehicle that spiritual consumers engage with to access the spiritual (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). Materiality is integral for the pilgrimage experience of pilgrims in all the sites observed.

Tangible things are sacralized and cherished through different religions and spiritual movements, from animals in naturistic religions to trees and plants in vegetation cults (Belk et al. 1989). Each pilgrimage site studied herein presents different materials that are important to the practices and processes of spiritual consumption. In some pilgrimages, pilgrims use material artefacts to express their gratitude towards deities (Santana & Botelho, 2019). In other pilgrimages, such as the Camino de Santiago, pilgrims pay extra attention to their belongings as they are trying to reduce the level of material weight they are carrying along the way (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b).

The findings from this dissertation shed light on the idea of material agency (Miller, 1987; Borgerson, 2005; Epp & Price, 2010) and the value creation through the circulation of objects (Desjeux, Monjaret, & Taponier, 1998; Figueiredo & Scaraboto, 2016; Scaraboto & Figueiredo, 2017; Santana & Botelho, 2019). In the pilgrimage sites, material objects represent a strong agency force regulating pilgrims' behavior, mainly through the realization of rituals and several spiritual activities. In the Círio de Nazaré, the circulation of Our Lady of Nazaré's image along the streets and rivers of the region is the agentic force that enable and authorize the fulfilment of pilgrims' rituals as well as the kick-off of sacred and profane events.

2.1.5.1 Spiritual stamps enabling products' singularization

One of the most important contributions of this doctoral dissertation, within the materiality theme, is directed towards the conceptualization of commoditization-singularization (Kopytoff, 1986; Brondino-Pompeo, 2021). This concept is widely considered in Consumer Research Theoretics to better understand consumer-object interactions in the market (Arcuri & Veludo-de-Oliveira, 2018; Epp & Price, 2010; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988; Belk, 1988). According to Kopytoff's (1986)

theorization states that an object shifts in time and space to be a commodity and then singularized through consumption. Those objects have life cycles from production, commoditization, singularization, to disposal and eventual re-commoditization and re-singularization stages that would extend their lives.

The findings from this dissertation can contribute to the literature on commoditization-singularization by considering the ritualistic processes of authenticity in pilgrimages, which are true markers of the switch of an object of consumption from its commodity status to a singularized one. Pilgrims access the spiritual market around the pilgrimages and buy spiritual products; yet, some of these products need to pass first through a blessing ritual that will authorize their consumption and singularization. Only after such rituals, pilgrims can take these objects back home and engage in consumer-object interactions and singularizations. In other words, the moving from commodity to singularization does have tensions (Brondino-Pompeo, 2021; Bardhi et al., 2012) and, in this case need some requirements previously not accounted. Finally, as mentioned by Brondino-Pompeo (2021), not every object, once in their owner's hands, enjoy the same degree of singularity. These findings can help to understand the processes through which some commodities can have official authorization to be singularized by their owners.

Table 13 -Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Kedzior, (2013); Moufahim, (2013); Higgins & Hamilton, (2020); Husemann & Eckhardt, (2019a)	Materiality	Vehicle that spiritual consumers engage with to access the spiritual ad materialize spirituality.	Materiality is integral for the pilgrimage experience of pilgrims in all the sites observed, mainly through rituals.
Belk et al. (1989)	Sacralization of tangible things	Tangible things are sacralized and	Each pilgrimage site studied presents different materials that

		cherished through different religions and spiritual movements, from animals in naturistic religions to trees and plants in vegetation cults.	are important to the practices and processes of spiritual consumption. In some pilgrimages, pilgrims use material artefacts to express their gratitude towards deities (Santana & Botelho, 2019). In other pilgrimages, such as the Camino de Santiago, pilgrims pay extra attention to their belongings as they are trying to reduce the level of material weight they are carrying along the way (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b).
Miller, (1987); Borgerson, (2005); Epp & Price, (2010)	Material agency	Material objects represent a strong agency force regulating individuals' behaviors, decisions, and relationships with such objects.	Agency is mainly observed through the realization of rituals and several spiritual activities. In the Círio de Nazaré, the circulation of Our Lady of Nazaré's image along the streets and rivers of the region is the agentic force that enable and authorize the fulfilment of pilgrims' rituals as well as the kick-off of sacred and profane events.
Kopytoff, (1986); Brondino-Pompeo, (2021)	Commoditization-singularization	Object's meanings shift in time and space to be a commodity and then singularized through consumption. Eventually being re-commoditized and re-singularized.	This dissertation can contribute to this literature by considering the ritualistic processes of authenticity in pilgrimages, which are true markers of the switch of an object of consumption from its commodity status to a singularized one. For instance, some of the products bought by pilgrims in Juazeiro do Norte need to pass first through a blessing ritual that will authorize their consumption and singularization. Only after such rituals, pilgrims can take these objects back home and engage in

			consumer-object interactions and singularizations.
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2.1.6 Discussion of theme 08: The interconnections between embodiment and materiality.

The previous two subsections mentioned the relevance of the body and materials on the spiritual experience of pilgrims. Yet, the combination of both conceptual dimensions are key agents in pilgrims' ritualistic expressions. The findings from this dissertation help to shed light on the conceptualization from the French phenomenologist philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty that investigated the relationships between 'self-other-things' to uncover the lived experience of individuals (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Merleau-Ponty mentioned the 'motor intentionality', or the corporal comprehension and intuitive negotiation of the world. Pilgrims engage themselves in such understandings and interactions with the sacred site around them and the materials.

Individuals rely on their own bodies and on materials to perform rituals and to live the experience (Downey, 2002). The Camino de Santiago is an intense embodied experience, in which pilgrims need to negotiate the quantity and quality of materials they are carrying, once it has a direct influence on their bodies and minds along the way. Such evidences are related to the way materiality can shape human body experience (Zanette & Scaraboto, 2018), causing pain and other consequences (Cova & Cova, 2019; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b). Accordingly, in the pilgrimages to Juazeiro do Norte, pilgrims perform embodied thanking rituals and use materials that are clear representations of their healings. The consumption of products and the use of their own bodies actualize and brings authenticity for their rituals and express their gratitude towards God and saints. Similar results were demonstrated initially by Santana and Botelho (2019), but the author did not consider the embodiment dimension to explain such thanking rituals.

The body is the source of suffering (e.g. mental and physical diseases) and also the source of transformation, through which spiritual consumers enact rituals in the spiritual site. Such as described by Laurent Amiotte-Suchet (2021) in his book *Frères de douleur. Récit d'un ethnologue en pèlerinage à Lourdes*, the experience of the piscines in Lourdes are rituals in which pilgrims enter in the miraculous waters of Lourdes in search for relief, miracles, and faith. Therefore, they use their own bodies to ritualistically engage with the materiality of the spiritual site. In the end, through their bodies they live the suffering and search for solutions to their issues. This was observed in all the pilgrimages studied.

Table 14 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Merleau-Ponty, (1962)	'Self-other-things'	Corporal comprehension and intuitive negotiation of the world.	Pilgrims engage themselves in such understandings and interactions with the sacred site around them and the materials.
Downey, (2002)	Embodiment and materiality	Individuals rely on their own bodies and on materials to perform rituals and to live the experience.	The Camino de Santiago is an intense embodied experience, in which pilgrims need to negotiate the quantity and quality of materials they are carrying, once it has a direct influence on their bodies and minds along the way.
Santana & Botelho (2019)	Materiality and Ritual	Materials can enable the expression of gratitude to deities	The consumption of products and the use of their own bodies actualize and brings authenticity for their rituals and express their gratitude towards God and saints. The embodiment dimension to explain such thanking rituals were not considered by the authors.

Amiotte-Suchet (2021)	Embodied rituals	The body as the source of suffering and transformation	Pilgrims use their own bodies to ritualistically engage with the materiality of the spiritual site. In the end, through their bodies they live the suffering and search for solutions to their issues.
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2.1.7 Discussion of theme 09: The re-doing of the pilgrimage

experience.

Consumer research on extraordinary experiences often focuses on the phenomenology of the living of the experience at a single time (Arnould & Price, 1993; Belk & Costa, 1998; Arnould, Price, & Otnes, 1999; Husemann & Eckhard, 2019b). Fewer contributions addressed the re-doing of the extraordinary experience and the motivations or impacts related to that. Arnould and Price (1993) explain that some consumers live life-changing learnings during extraordinary experiences, such as the River Magic one, and they can rescue the memories, feelings and learnings in their minds whenever they find themselves around a difficult situation later on. More recently, Appau, Ozanne, and Klein (2020) explore the individuals in permanent liminality between sacred and profane and how the constant move can have negative as well as positive aspects on their lives in a liquid modernity.

The findings from this dissertation are aligned less with the idea of liminality as a temporary and isolated phenomenon in time and space (Van Gennep, 1909/1960; Turner, 1967, 1969) and more with recent conceptualizations of liminality as constant and long-lasting (Appau, Ozanne, & Klein, 2020). The empirical evidences herein point to the fact that pilgrimaging is not anymore, a 'once in a life-time experience', but rather successive movements between the ordinary and the extraordinary. Moreover, in a liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000) with individuals living in a fast-paced world (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b), spirituality has become increasingly an alternative solution to rather escape from their problems (Higgins & Hamilton, 2019; Kozinets, 2002) or to fight them with the support of transcendental forces.

The constant re-doing of the pilgrimage experience can have multiple motivations, for instance as a family tradition ritual such as the consumption of other sacred events (Ladwein & Rémy, 2014). However, pilgrims mentioned that pilgrimages are a way to ask for guidance and miracles amidst life-challenging situations and to thank for the blessings they have already received. Pilgrims mentioned being tired of their work-lifestyles, suffering with uncurable or risky mental and physical diseases, and the spiritual site and spiritual leaders have a relevant role to help them during such difficult situations. Whenever they are faced with new problems, they re-engage in pilgrimage as a way to ask for such support. Finally; they use the spiritual site and market in order to perform their rituals and live the pilgrimage experience.

Table 15 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Appau, Ozanne, & Klein (2020)	Permanent Liminality	Individuals in permanent liminality move constantly between sacred and profane realms, which can have negative as well as positive aspects on their lives in a liquid modernity	The empirical evidences herein point to the fact that pilgrimaging is not anymore, a 'once in a life-time experience', but rather successive movements between the ordinary and the extraordinary. Spirituality is increasingly becoming an alternative solution to fight issues in life with the support of transcendental forces.

2.1.8 Discussion of theme 10: Accessibility as a default?

Since the 1990s, Marketing and Consumer Culture literature has been developing investigations to understand the intersection between the market and accessibility (Kaufman-Scarborough, 1999; Baker, 2006; Pavia and Mason, 2012, 2014; Kearney et al. 2019; Higgins, 2020). The findings herein corroborate with this body of research through the evidences of the living experience of people with disabilities in the

pilgrimage site. Pilgrimage sites in general are not prepared, nor have accessibility as a value proposition for their participants, with the exception of the pilgrimage of Lourdes. Such lack of structure is associated to consumer vulnerability research and discourse, in which spiritual disable consumers might feel unwelcomed, stigmatized and abnormal realizing themselves vulnerable in spiritual and commercial settings (Higgins, 2020; Paiva and Mason, 2012).

According to recent contributions from Higgins (2020), the marketplace has inadvertently perpetuated internalized oppression and psycho-emotional disability by assigning responsibility to adapt upon consumers living with impairment, rather than marketplace actors. The pilgrimage site organizers in Lourdes, mainly the sanctuaries and market actors, cooperate to facilitate the spiritual consumption experience of disable pilgrims. For instance, market, sanctuary and volunteers share activities to assist and accompany pilgrims, providing adapted wheelchairs and city/sanctuary structure for their mobility. However, the accessibility of the spiritual marketplace in Lourdes is mostly structured to facilitate the mobility of individuals that cannot walk, but other types of accessibility were not observed. In the other pilgrimage sites studied, a way smaller structure (sometimes inexistent) was observed.

Table 16 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Kaufman-Scarborough, (1999); Baker, (2006); Pavia & Mason, (2012, 2014); Kearney et al. (2019); Higgins, (2020)	Market and accessibility	The marketplace has inadvertently perpetuated internalized oppression and psycho-emotional disability by assigning responsibility to adapt upon consumers living with impairment, rather than marketplace actors.	The findings herein corroborate with this body of research through the evidences of the living experience of people with disabilities in the pilgrimage site. Pilgrimage sites in general are not prepared, nor have accessibility as a value proposition for their participants, with the

			exception of the pilgrimage of Lourdes.
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2.1.9 Discussion of theme 11: Less consumption or consumerism in pilgrimages?

Consumption is the acquisition of offerings, the usage and interactions around the act of purchase, as well and foremost the social rules and background that guide and shape it (Desjeux, 1998; 2006). In hybrid value regimes (Scaraboto & Figueiredo, 2017) religion-based alternative economies co-exist with mainstream economies, such as capitalism. In pilgrimage sites, value is then created through the circulation of singularized objects (Scaraboto & Figueiredo, 2017; Santana & Botelho, 2019) and the consumption of sacred and profane offerings (Husemann & Eckardt, 2019a). The findings from this dissertation corroborate with the idea of the consumption as part of the spiritual experience (Husemann & Eckardt, 2019a).

2.1.9.1 Frugal living of the pilgrimage experience

For some pilgrimage sites, the consumption of offerings is not encouraged, such as in the Camino de Santiago, in which pilgrims carefully consider what they will carry with them and tend to not buy other products (Husemann & Eckardt, 2019b). They engage in such less materialized consumption style due to the physical difficulty of carrying a lot of weight, but also, they learn to think about the things that really matter in life and often mention they will bring such mindset to their ordinary lives. The Camino de Santiago is, in general, an invitation to reduce pace of life, level of consumption of materials, and to relax or decelerate (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b; Rosa, 2013).

2.1.9.2 Consumerism as part of the pilgrimage experience

Other pilgrimage sites, such as Juazeiro do Norte, are closely connected to a consumerist lifestyle, or the 'society of consumption' (Baudrillard, 1970) with a great variety of consumption outlets in the spiritual marketplace that goes beyond

buying by necessity to mass consumption as a source of pleasure, differentiation, or opportunity. Consumption is then institutionalized across pilgrims. Different from the Camino de Santiago, who often has participants coming from privileged economic backgrounds (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b), and trying to escape and avoid overconsumption; the pilgrims in Juazeiro do Norte are coming mostly from less privileged scenarios. Findings with low less privileged consumers demonstrate that low-income background, coupled with traces of materialism, tend to lead consumers into debt (Ponchio & Aranha, 2008).

In the pilgrimage site of Juazeiro do Norte, low-income pilgrims engage in consumption of products and services for them and also to give to friends and relatives who were not in the pilgrimage site with them. They save money during the whole year and use it during the pilgrimage, with pilgrims mentioning that the bus luggage compartment returns home fully and pilgrims without money due the high levels of consumption of profane and spiritual offerings. Pilgrims also mentioned that some can also get indebted during such periods.

Table 17 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Husemann & Eckhardt (2019b)	Frugal lifestyle	In the Camino de Santiago, pilgrims have a “less-consumption” mindset that is related to reducing pace of life, level of consumption of materials, and relaxing or decelerating.	This dissertation corroborates with this idea that pilgrims can engage in less materialized consumption style due to the physical difficulty of carrying a lot of weight (especially in the Camino de Santiago), but also, they learn to think about the things that really matter in life and often mention they will bring such mindset to their ordinary lives.
Baudrillard (1970)	Society of consumption	Variety of consumption outlets that goes beyond buying by necessity to mass consumption as a	In the pilgrimage site of Juazeiro do Norte, low-income pilgrims engage in consumption of products and services for them

		source of pleasure, differentiation, or opportunity.	and also to give to friends and relatives who were not in the pilgrimage site with them. They save money during the whole year and use it during the pilgrimage, with pilgrims mentioning that the bus luggage compartment returns home fully and pilgrims without money due the high levels of consumption of profane and spiritual offerings
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2.1.10 Discussion of theme 12: Sustainability: discussing

(un)sustainable pilgrimage practices.

Pilgrimage site receive millions of pilgrims every year and, thus, this certainly has an environmental impact. It was observed that pilgrims, as well as spiritual marketplace actors, engage in inappropriate disposal of solid waste during pilgrimage. It seems that they have their head on the clouds, but trash is all around them. The investigation of the circulation of products inside home (Suarez, Campos, Casotti and Velloso, 2016) move from the simple analysis of how consumers throw things away and find that products of everyday use can be full of nuances and ambiguities from the purchase until ending up in the trash can. The authors elucidate that there are 'purgatories', or home liminal zones where consumers unintentionally dispose products not being regularly used. The findings from the pilgrimages of Juazeiro do Norte and Cirio de Nazaré demonstrate the consumption and disposal of waste outside home. Moreover, the findings are related to collective practices of thousands of consumers instead of household family circumscriptions. Pilgrims throw trash away unintentionally on the streets and on the sanctuary's floor due to lack of environmental awareness.

Consumer research considers whether consumers or market and governmental institutions should be responsible for proposing and designing sustainable practices (Giesler & Veresiu, 2014). Consumers are often revoked to assume

sustainable behaviors (Eckhardt & Dobscha, 2019), but even for environmentally conscious individuals living a sustainable lifestyle is tough (Longo, Shankar, & Nuttall, 2019; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Such difficulties often arise due the abyss between attitude and behavior (Devinney, Auger, & Eckhardt, 2010), or the level of embeddedness that we are in our current non-environmental routines and daily rituals and the related costs of adaption (Gonzalez-Arcos et al., 2021).

This dissertation corroborates with the idea that touristic destinations should be a great focus for the investment in sustainable practices (Camus, Hikkerova, & Sahut, 2010, 2012; Camus et al., 2013) and projects that engage all the stakeholders producing and consuming the experience. Consumer research advocates for the involvement of market and public sectors on the development of sustainable consumption (Press & Arnould, 2009), as well as developing new ways of theorization and ontological thinking about sustainable consumption (Arnould, 2020; Denegri-Knott, Nixon, & Abraham, 2018). With the exception of the Camino de Santiago, the other pilgrimage sites herein studied do not have structured projects of sustainability to incentive sustainable practices among their participants. In any pilgrimage studied, the topic of environmental impact is largely considering in the doing of the pilgrimage. In addition, especially in Juazeiro do Norte and Cirio de Nazaré, pilgrims' spiritual activities are great sources of the consumption of materials and inappropriate disposal.

Table 18 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations

Authors	Theme	Positioning (How this dissertation understands the theme/concept)	Contributing to/ Corroborating with
Suarez, Campos, Casotti and Velloso, (2016)	'Purgatories',	Home liminal zones where consumers unintentionally dispose products not being regularly used	The findings from the pilgrimages of Juazeiro do Norte and Cirio de Nazaré demonstrate the consumption and disposal of waste outside home. Moreover, the findings are related to collective practices of thousands of consumers instead of household family circumscriptions. Pilgrims throw trash away unintentionally on the

			streets and on the sanctuary's floor due to lack of environmental awareness.
Camus, Hikkerova, & Sahut, (2010, 2012); Camus et al. (2013); Press & Arnould (2009)	Tourism and Sustainability	This dissertation corroborates with the idea that touristic destinations should be a great focus for the investment in sustainable practices.	In any pilgrimage studied, the topic of environmental impact is largely considering in the doing of the pilgrimage. In addition, especially in Juazeiro do Norte and Cirio de Nazaré, pilgrims' spiritual activities are great sources of the consumption of materials and inappropriate disposal.

2.2 Marketing Insights

The findings from this research provoke not only theoretical discussions as well as insights that could be potentially applied in the market, especially spiritual markets. This section presents how marketers could improve their market offerings; associate and adept them to pilgrimage rituals and consumption practices; search for cooperation with other market actors; and invest in sustainability as accessibility to improve the experience.

2.2.1 Marketing insights to service providers in pilgrimage sites

2.2.1.1 Product and service innovation in spiritual market contexts

The first marketing insight is related to the innovation of products and services in spiritual markets. Spiritual leaders in pilgrimage and other spiritual sites have great influence over spiritual consumers. Marketers around such spiritual settings have a market opportunity to base their offering on such spiritual leaders. In the pilgrimage sites observed herein, innovation is behind the development of products that are easily incorporated by pilgrims in their rituals. However, marketers should be aware that spiritual are hard to penetrate, once the tensions between the commercial and the spiritual still exist. One example of such difficulties could be association of new products and services as exploring pilgrims' vulnerability, since pilgrims devote closer relationships with such spiritual leaders leading to a lack of criticality on their decision-making process.

Yet considering innovation, 'material matters' (Scaraboto, Ferreira, & Chung, 2016; Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016). Innovation of materials has been observed to be a way to adapt products to spiritual consumers' needs in pilgrimage experiences. For instance, in Lourdes, marketers design plastic as well glass bottles so pilgrims can buy their preferred materials and styles to collect the water from Lourdes and take back home. In Juazeiro do Norte, local entrepreneurs designed image of saints in

rubber once the plaster statuettes were focus of pilgrims' complaints regarding its fragility and difficulty of transportation. However, despite some positive sides, rubber statuettes are risky when introduced in consumption rituals such as praying and lighting up a candle. Pilgrims light up candles close to these statuettes and risk of fires are higher with the rubber images. Therefore, the development of new products with new materiality should consider the rituals performed by pilgrims.

2.2.1.2 Understanding consumption rituals to provide better products and services

The second marketing insight is related, then, to the consumption of rituals. In the pilgrimages studied, rituals are the center of the intersection between the commercial and the spiritual. The development of marketing offerings should be concentrated on the understanding of such rituals, their spiritual meanings, as well as how market offerings are often associated to them. Marketers in pilgrimage sites should think of how their products and brands deliver value to existing or yet non-existing rituals.

2.2.1.3 Identifying the movement of products and pilgrims to better situate products and services

The third marketing insight is related to the circulation of objects between the pilgrimage site and pilgrims' homes. Pilgrims purchase spiritual and profane products in the pilgrimage site that will later be singularized in their homes. Marketers and pilgrimage organizers could be interested in facilitating the transport of such materials. Pilgrimage seems to lack in providing a structure that facilitates the movement of such materials. An interesting active example lies in the Camino, in which companies offer transporting services for pilgrims that cannot handle their heavy backpacks for a certain period of time and space. Pilgrims can easily buy their services to have less weight with them and recover their belongings wherever they want along the way.

2.2.2 Insights beyond (and including) the market: church, pilgrims, pilgrimage organizers and the market.

2.2.2.1 Spiritual market cooperation and interconnection as a strategy

As fourth marketing insight, marketers, church, and pilgrimage organizers should cooperate with each other to provide pilgrims a better spiritual experience, as well as to increase profit. In the Camino, service providers have an analogic system that connects them and pilgrims can easily know where they can stop their walking the next day, or access the plethora of services available during their journey. Pilgrimage sites can gain with entrepreneurs and marketers joining forces. As a result, pilgrims can enhance their actual experience of the pilgrimage, accessing more easily services and products, which can finally be beneficial for the whole market system.

2.2.2.2 Sustainability as a common goal in pilgrimage

Developing sustainable spiritual experiences is the fifth marketing insight. Pilgrimages are places with high concentration of individuals. Millions of visitors go to the spiritual sites and they have a positive economic impact to the pilgrimage site, but also an environmental impact that can be negative. Pilgrimage stakeholders, such as local entrepreneurs, companies, public sector, church and pilgrims could join forces to tackle such issue. According to the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Objectives, we should design sustainable production and consumption and the development of sustainable spiritual experiences, as well as touristic ones could be an interesting path to achieve this objective. As a possible solution, pilgrimage stakeholders could investigate deeply how consumption rituals take place in pilgrimages and the best ways to transform such rituals to be more environmentally sustainable (Price, 2019; Giesler, 2019).

2.2.2.3 Accessibility in pilgrimage sites

The final marketing insight is directed towards the market accessibility for disable individuals. Only one of the pilgrimage sites is accessible, at a certain level, to disable pilgrims. The access to the spiritual market should be facilitated for all pilgrims. Service providers, church and other related stakeholders of the pilgrimage site should be thinking of better ways to welcome and integrate pilgrims from different realities. Accessibility should be thought in terms of diversity of body abilities, sex, gender, race and others. Spiritual consumers often feel uninvited and uncomfortable due to the lack of accessibility and welcoming activities.

Table 19 - Summary of Marketing Insights

Who	Theme	Marketing Insight
Service providers	Product and service innovation in spiritual market contexts	Spiritual leaders in pilgrimage and other spiritual sites have great influence over spiritual consumers. Marketers around such spiritual settings have a market opportunity to base their offering on such spiritual leaders.
Service providers	Understanding consumption rituals to provide better products and services	Marketers in pilgrimage sites should think of how their products and brands deliver value to existing or yet non-existing rituals.
Service providers	Identifying the movement of products and pilgrims to better situate products and services	Pilgrims purchase spiritual and profane products in the pilgrimage site that will later be singularized in their homes. Marketers and pilgrimage organizers could be interested in facilitating the transport of such materials. Pilgrimage seems to lack in providing a structure that facilitates the movement of such materials.
Church, pilgrims, pilgrimage organizers and service providers	Spiritual market cooperation and interconnection as a strategy	In the Camino, service providers have an analogic system that connects them and pilgrims can easily know where they can stop their walking the next day, or

		access the plethora of services available during their journey. Pilgrimage sites can gain with such network connections.
Church, pilgrims, pilgrimage organizers and service providers	Sustainability as a common goal in pilgrimage	Millions of visitors go the spiritual sites and they have a positive economic impact to the pilgrimage site, but also an environmental impact that can be negative. Pilgrimage stakeholders, such as local entrepreneurs, companies, public sector, church and pilgrims could join forces to tackle such issue.
Church, pilgrims, pilgrimage organizers and service providers	Accessibility in pilgrimage sites	The access to the spiritual market should be facilitated for all pilgrims. Service providers, church and other related stakeholders of the pilgrimage site should be thinking of better ways to welcome and integrate pilgrims from different realities. Accessibility should be thought in terms of diversity of body abilities, sex, gender, race and others.

Conclusion

The final words of this dissertation are written with similar, or even higher, contentment of the initial insights of the research project. After conducting ethnographic research in four pilgrimages (namely Lourdes, Camino de Santiago, Juazeiro do Norte and Círio de Nazaré) the findings revealed that the spiritual and the commercial are consumed interchangeably by spiritual consumers for various purposes and under distinct situations. In such spiritual consumption, market and spiritual dimensions intersect and clash, spiritual consumers live the experience through their bodies and bring the materials necessary to accomplish their rituals, and pilgrims solve the issues in their ordinary live through the living of such extraordinary experiences. This conclusion acknowledges the contributions, limitations, and possible further avenues for future research.

Synthesis of contributions

Contributions are divided in (i) empirical, (ii) theoretical, and (iii) methodological. Empirical contributions are related to the ways in which this doctoral dissertation approaches the empirical context of pilgrimage in the contemporary world. Theoretically, contributions comprehend corroborations and possible advancements to existing literature in consumer research. Finally, methodological contributions are highlighted.

Empirical contributions

Empirically this doctoral dissertation contributed to address some empirical phenomena, such as how individuals search for spiritual experiences as part of their coping mechanisms under stressful situations and social clutter. This dissertation presents the ways such spiritual consumers relate to God and to the spiritual market to solve day to day as well as life challenging situations. The mechanisms involve using their spiritual knowledge to connect with God, the pilgrimage sites and to others, as well engaging in specific rituals that serve to thank the achieved

blessing. Further theoretical conversations try to understand the cultural aspects related to this phenomenon and to other empirical phenomena observed in the sites investigated.

By addressing the empirical cases in Latin America, namely Juazeiro do Norte and Cirio de Nazaré, this dissertation aims to contribute to the field of consumer research. Research in non-western contexts is yet needed to provide not only different geographical contexts and empirical evidence but alternative conceptualizations that can ultimately contribute to existing literature. For instance, the Brazilian contexts presented in this research revealed outstanding consumer practices as well as market logics and configurations that added value to the findings and discussions.

Additionally, by addressing Latin American together with European empirical contexts this doctoral dissertation intends to provide cross-cultural perspectives on spiritual experiences. The differences and similarities of such contexts provide richness and complexity to understand how spiritual consumption takes place in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, limitations are still present due to decision to engage in only 04 pilgrimages associated with Catholicism in the western world. Potential limitations and suggestions are stressed in the following subsections.

Finally, this doctoral dissertation also contributed empirically by expressing 12 themes raised from the analysis that stress the tensions and agreements between the spiritual and the commercial, the collective and individualized experience of pilgrims, the consumption of the spiritual as coping strategy do deal with mundane problems, the embodied and material consumption of the pilgrimage, and also issues related to accessibility, sustainability and over consumption in pilgrimage settings.

Theoretical contributions

This doctoral research contributes theoretically to discussions on the marketization of religion (McAlexander et al., 2014) and to anthropological and social discussions of communities and *communitas* (Turner & Turner, 2001) with attention to the also

important individualistic living of the pilgrimage experience. One of the main contributions is related to the concept of spiritual coping (Gall et al, 2005) and how spiritual consumers make contracts with spiritual leaders to guarantee their blessings and to better cope with difficult live events. This is also showed to be a great source of pilgrims' re-engagement in the pilgrimage several times, which is aligned to recent theorizations on permanent liminality (Appau, Ozzane, & Klein, 2020).

This doctoral dissertation also engages in theoretical discussions on embodiment (Joy & Sherry Jr., 2003; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Scott, Cayla & Cova, 2017; Cova & Cova, 2019; Hemetsberger, Kreuzer, & Klien, 2019; Kuuru & Närvänen, 2019; Stevens, Maclaran, & Brown, 2019) and materiality (Miller, 1987; Borgerson, 2005; Epp & Price, 2010) and how spiritual consumers perform rituals that are, in essence, embodied and accompanied by other material artefacts (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Finally, this doctoral dissertation contributes to the understanding of accessibility and sustainability of the spiritual marketplace as well as the issues related to consumerism.

Methodological contribution

Methodologically, one main contribution is related to the access to fieldwork. All ethnographic work, and of course other types of methodological fieldworks, require access for it to take place more appropriately. During the data collection of this research, volunteering proved to be an essential strategy to enter the field, approach spiritual consumers and get further evidence even from the side of the service provider. The strategy used was volunteering in the pilgrimage site. In Lourdes, volunteering helped to get closer contact with pilgrims while I was providing general information at the main sanctuary esplanade or helping them in their sacred baths. Moreover, volunteering was useful as a technique to understand how service providers think and make the spiritual experience for pilgrims in Lourdes. Volunteering or even working in the fieldwork is a technique that is used in ethnographies, but it is something that have not been done in similar consumer research contexts – to my knowledge. For this reason, it could be a contribution for

other researchers that are interested in gaining more in-depth views on extraordinary experiences.

Research limitations

Despite the continuous effort to bring together a scientific robust research methodology, analysis, and theoretical discussion, this doctoral research recognizes some limitations that are mostly related to the (i) chosen religious contextual scope of the research, (ii) methodology execution throughout time and space, and (iii) analysis and findings.

This research succeeded in investigating research contexts in two distinct continents and in four pilgrimage sites. However, the findings of this doctoral research must be seen in some limitations of religious scope. All pilgrimages studied are associated with the Catholic religion, thus not allowing complete generalizations to other religious and spiritual systems (yet some findings can be observed across religious systems). Existing marketing and consumer research have been effectively covering the consumer spirituality phenomenon in other religious and spiritual systems such as Islam (Moufahim, 2013, 2016; Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019; see also *Journal of Islamic Marketing*), Pentecostalism (Bonsu & Belk, 2010; Appau, Ozanne, & Klein, 2020), New Age movement (Gould, 2006; Redden, 2016), Neopagan religions (Rinallo, Maclaran, & Stevens, 2016), and also approaches to syncretism (Rodner & Preece, 2019).

In general, the pilgrimage sites studied herein have strong roots, rituals and other practices related to the Catholicism, but it is also important to state that despite such religious connections, their participants are coming from different religious backgrounds and others are not necessarily experiencing the pilgrimage under religious or spiritual purposes. The results of this research tried to cover the different ways individuals live the pilgrimage yet recognizing the focus on the individuals searching for a spiritual experience.

The implementation of the ethnography for a longer period is another limitation this research presents. Previous research in marketing and consumer research

literatures have designed longitudinal ethnographies (Woermann & Rokka, 2015; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b) and accounted for the benefits of engaging multiples times along the years in their contexts of research. This doctoral research, then, recognizes the limitations of the research based on a year-long ethnography in different pilgrimages with a single immersion (for a couple of days/weeks) at each site. Re-engagements in the pilgrimage sites could potentially propose robustness to the findings and provide new theoretical and marketing insights. Unfortunately, during this doctoral dissertation the Covid-19 pandemic also applied some restrictions and closing of pilgrimage sites, which interfered the continuation of the fieldwork.

Still regarding time issues, this dissertation recognizes the lack of data collection of the moments before and after the pilgrimage experience. Pre- and post-pilgrimage was only covered through the discourse of pilgrims about their past experiences. Previous research in the context of pilgrimages (Santana & Botelho, 2018) adopted a methodological strategy that considers pre- and post- collection of data, which provides deeper in-loco insights beyond the discourse of pilgrims. For the purpose of this dissertation, the ethnographic observations were done mostly during the pilgrimage experience.

Finally, this dissertation could have been more based on the introspection of the doctoral student. Despite some introspection descriptions along the text, a much more structured introspection analysis was not undertaken in this research. The data collection, mainly field notes, have several personal and introspective perceptions of the research while living in the pilgrimages studied. However, due to research decisions and time constraints such aspects were not brought into light herein.

In sum, despite the registered limitations, this doctoral research meets the aims and objectives initially proposed and hope that future research could approach the same contexts and methodologies in a more effective way.

Suggested topics for further research

Consumer spirituality research has been an area of recent and constant interest among researchers (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b) and can gain yet a lot from future research. This doctoral research lies on the consumer spirituality realm and future researchers can explore the intersection of spirituality and consumption by addressing (i) syncretic and other religious/spiritual movements, (ii) digital consumer spirituality, and (iii) further implications of the intricate relationships between the spiritual and the commercial.

Future research can investigate how individuals move from a religious system to another, or how syncretism takes shape in a liquid and fragmented society (Bauman, 2000). Recent investigations addressed such syncretic approaches and to access the spiritual among faithful individuals in Brazil and how they transit between religions (Rodner & Preece, 2015). Yet, future research can scrutinize the social and economic tensions of moving from one system to the other. Accordingly, the data from this doctoral research show that families having members engaged in different religions go through conflicts at home, such as deciding whether it is acceptable or not having worshipping objects at home. Yet this topic was not vastly covered herein. Future research can explore such differences inside the family structure, how individuals consume the spiritual and negotiate with each other home space and practices based on their dogmatic beliefs.

Another avenue of research is the current consumption of the spiritual in the digital realm. This doctoral research, despite following some digital pilgrimage practices, does not extensively consider them herein. A recent contribution from Santana, Husemann and Eckhardt (Forthcoming) helps to define Digital Consumer Spirituality as the interrelated practices and processes consumers engage in when consuming digital market offerings (products, services, spaces) that yield spiritual utility. The authors propose an ambitious future research agenda related to the consumption of spiritual communities online, how brands and other market offerings are sacralized in the digital, the way individuals search for the spiritual online, and the construction of spiritual identities digitally. There is an array of

digital consumption of spirituality that is also being boosted by the Covid-19 and future research would be important to understand this phenomenon.

Findings from this doctoral dissertation highlight the cooperation of service providers in geographical distant locations in pilgrimage sites such as the Camino de Santiago, while there is less cooperation between service providers that are concentrated in one single geographical location (e.g., Juazeiro do Norte, Cirio de Nazare, and Lourdes). Further work can be done to check whether there is more cooperation when service providers are geographically distant and more competition when service providers are geographically condensed. Such approach could be done in different areas beyond the spiritual markets.

Finally, future research could explore the dichotomies of less consumption versus consumerism in pilgrimages. This doctoral research shows different pilgrimages can have distinct approaches to consumption. Yet, the impacts of such consumption styles were not widely covered. Future research can scrutinize the effects of high levels of consumption in spiritual settings. Abela (2006) indicates that consumerism is associated with reduced personal wellbeing, therefore future research on consumer spirituality could navigate through the issues associated with consumerism. The findings from this doctoral research also show the low levels of consumption during the Camino experience, for instance. Future research could explore whether pilgrims transfer such consumption styles back to their ordinary lives or if the learnings from the Camino are not long-lasting.

Figure index

Figure 1 - Field note example.....	42
Figure 2 - Interview transcription example.....	43
Figure 3 - Lourdes' pilgrimage site.....	48
Figure 6 - Juazeiro do Norte - Ceará - Brazil.....	53
Figure 7 - The Círio de Nazaré main procession	55
Figure 8 - Círio de Nazaré - Belém - Pará - Brazil	56
Figure 9 - The researcher dressed with the volunteer vest	58
Figure 10 - Dressed like a typical Camino de Santiago pilgrim.....	59
Figure 11 - The researcher dressed as the local pilgrims.....	61
Figure 12- The researcher (red t-shirt) interviewing pilgrims in the motorcycle procession	62
Figure 13 - Camino's trajectory.....	64
Figure 14 - International groups of pilgrims organizing for a picture in Lourdes....	74
Figure 15 - Montfortain schedule for the Lourdes Easter Pilgrimage 2019	75
Figure 16 - Map of the Sanctuary of Lourdes.....	76
Figure 17 - A screen at the sanctuary's promenade.....	77
Figure 18 - Pilgrims in wheelchairs.....	78
Figure 19 - Moment when pilgrims use the wheelchair red band to cross the street	78
Figure 20 - Hotel & Spa Belfry - Lourdes	80
Figure 21 - Pilgrims arriving in Lourdes' train station	81
Figure 22 - Buses and cars arriving in Lourdes' main street	82
Figure 23 - Street right in front of the hotel.....	83
Figure 24 - Pilgrims' Way in Lourdes	84
Figure 25 - The Grotto.....	85
Figure 26 - Pilgrims at the queue to the Grotto.....	86
Figure 27 - Drinking fountains.....	88
Figure 28 - Pilgrims carrying candles and bottles of water.....	90
Figure 29 - Group filling several bottles of water.....	91
Figure 30 - The water I took back home from Lourdes.....	91
Figure 31 - Candles offered by sanctuary.....	92
Figure 32 - Candle self-service kiosk at the sanctuary	93
Figure 33 - Group preparing to light up their candles.....	94
Figure 34 - Candles decorated by different groups.....	95
Figure 35 - Procession in Lourdes.....	96
Figure 36 - Pilgrims inside the underground basilica.....	96
Figure 37 - People waiting for the procession kick-off.....	97
Figure 38 - View from the top of the Basilica of the Rosary	98
Figure 39 - Pilgrims kneeling at the Way of the Cross.....	98
Figure 40 - Disable and sick pilgrims waiting to access the Grotto.....	101
Figure 41 - Lourdes city center	103
Figure 42 - Different plastic bottles for sale at a local store	103
Figure 43 - Glass bottles for sale at a local store	104
Figure 44 - Bracelets with the name Our Lady of Lourdes.....	104

Figure 45 - Notebooks and stationery products.....	104
Figure 46 - Rosaries for sale at a local store.....	105
Figure 47 - Religious images in different formats.....	105
Figure 48 - More sophisticated and stylish rosaries.....	105
Figure 49 - Bags and accessories.....	106
Figure 50 - Book store inside the sanctuary.....	106
Figure 51 - Images of saints for sell in the sanctuary bookstore.....	107
Figure 52 - Images of saints for sell in the sanctuary bookstore.....	107
Figure 53 - Images of saints for sell in the sanctuary bookstore.....	108
Figure 54 - Camino de Santiago signal.....	110
Figure 55 - Pilgrim raising the Portugal flag during a procession.....	111
Figure 56 - Huge group of pilgrims getting ready to take a picture.....	111
Figure 57 - International Mass.....	112
Figure 58 - The image of Our Lady of Lourdes inside the shrine.....	113
Figure 59 - The flowers hanging close to the image.....	113
Figure 60 - Picture from the Miracles Exhibition in Lourdes.....	115
Figure 61 - Picture from the Miracles Exhibition in Lourdes.....	116
Figure 62 - Cover page from the local newspaper.....	117
Figure 63 - Connection with nature.....	119
Figure 64 - Moments before traveling to Porto.....	122
Figure 65 - Printed map.....	124
Figure 66 - Pilgrims with a shell on her backpack.....	125
Figure 67 - Arrows along the way.....	126
Figure 68 - Totem with detailed information.....	126
Figure 69 - The botafumeiro.....	127
Figure 70 - Info board at an auberge.....	128
Figure 71 - Outdoor with auberges' distance, location, price, capacity.....	129
Figure 72 - Valença city center (commercial site).....	130
Figure 73 - Store with products designed especially for pilgrims.....	131
Figure 74 - Exploring Porto.....	132
Figure 75 - The Cathedral of Porto.....	133
Figure 76 - The first yellow arrow I observed.....	136
Figure 77 - Following the arrows.....	136
Figure 78 - Official signal in a totem - Portuguese Central Way.....	137
Figure 79 - Pilgrims walking between Barcelos > Ponte de Lima (Portugal).....	138
Figure 80 - Pilgrims leave messages to each other.....	139
Figure 81 - Noticing a peculiar thing about my body.....	140
Figure 82 - Church along the Camino.....	142
Figure 83 - Romanesque Church of São Pedro de Rates.....	142
Figure 84 - Wall covered on moss.....	143
Figure 85 - First rays of sun in the Camino.....	144
Figure 86 - Ritual of stocking stones.....	145
Figure 87 - Shells left at a certain point of the Camino.....	146
Figure 88 - Objects left close to a cross in the Camino.....	146
Figure 89 - Food trailer at the top of a hill.....	147
Figure 90 - Albergue Tuy - Espanha.....	148
Figure 91 - Albergue entrance in Milladoiro - Spain.....	149
Figure 92 - Eating moment at a private hostel.....	150

Figure 93 - Entries in a restaurant on the Camino	150
Figure 94 - Dinner with pilgrims at the auberge's terrace	151
Figure 95 - Pilgrims share receipts and products that alleviate pain	152
Figure 96 - Sing along moment in the auberge's room	153
Figure 97 - Corpus Christi in Ponte de Lima – Portugal.....	153
Figure 98 - St John Feast in Mos - Spain.....	154
Figure 99 - The Pilgrims' Passport.....	155
Figure 100 - Organ Presentation in Tuy's Cathedral - Spain	155
Figure 101 - Short breaks to let the relieve	156
Figure 102 - Checking for blisters	157
Figure 103 - View from the inn	158
Figure 104 - Checking for blisters and protecting the feet.....	159
Figure 105 - The moment we arrived in the Cathedral.....	162
Figure 106 - In the queue to get my certificate	163
Figure 107 - The souvenir store in the Certificate Department.....	163
Figure 108 - Veteran in the Camino de Santiago	164
Figure 109 - Friends from the Camino in Santiago de Compostela meeting after the walking.....	165
Figure 110 - Basilica of Our Lady of Sorrows.....	171
Figure 111 - Vila Tabuleiro Grande	172
Figure 112 - Street vendors at the outside of the Basilica	173
Figure 113 - Pilgrims arriving in the Basilica on their knees.....	176
Figure 114 - Pilgrim reaching the altar of the Basilica on her knees	177
Figure 115 - Group of pilgrims picking up their luggage from the bus.....	178
Figure 116 - Pilgrims interacting with the statue of Father Cícero	179
Figure 117 - Collective accommodation services.....	182
Figure 118 - Searching for blessed water.....	183
Figure 119 - Pilgrim showing her bottle of sacred water.....	184
Figure 120 - Pilgrims attending to a mass at the Basilica	185
Figure 121 - Group of pilgrims on the way to the Horto Hill	186
Figure 122 - Pilgrims climbing the Horto Hills.....	186
Figure 123 - Pilgrims walking to the top of the hill	187
Figure 124 - Pilgrims' hat for sale	188
Figure 125 - Special decoration & pilgrims going up to the statue	189
Figure 126 - Pilgrims line up to the statue	189
Figure 127 - Pilgrims in the Holy Sepulcher trail	191
Figure 128 - Pilgrims visiting a chapel in the Holy Sepulcher.....	194
Figure 129 - Pilgrims hanging themselves to cure body pains.....	194
Figure 130 - Pilgrims stacking stones on a plate	194
Figure 131 - Pilgrims writing their names with their fingers as if it were a pen.....	195
Figure 132 - Pilgrims making their prayer and touching Father Cícero's statue	195
Figure 133 - Pilgrims making their prayer and touching Father Cícero's statue	195
Figure 134 - Passing between stones to redeem sins	196
Figure 135 - Passing between stones to redeem sins.....	196
Figure 136 - Pilgrim passing among stones with his family to redeem sins.....	197
Figure 137 - Passing between stones to redeem sins.....	197
Figure 138 - Passing between stones to redeem sins	197
Figure 139 - Pilgrim passing between stones to redeem sins.....	198

Figure 140 - The space between a stone	198
Figure 141 - A stone that pilgrims are required to climb.....	198
Figure 142 - One of the biggest stones that are higher than pilgrims	199
Figure 143 - Difficult to leave the stone	199
Figure 144 - Pilgrims pass by a stone rubbing against it.	199
Figure 145 - Pilgrims have to lean their backs against the final stone	200
Figure 146 - Pilgrim's re-writing Father Cícero words with their fingers.....	200
Figure 147 - Pilgrim's re-writing Father Cícero words with their fingers.....	200
Figure 148 - Pilgrims' rituals (writing names and touching their back in sacred places).....	202
Figure 149 - Pilgrims' names written at Father Cícero's statue.....	203
Figure 150 - Pilgrims sliding their backs on a piece of wood fixed to the wall	204
Figure 151 - The wood piece fixed to the wall	204
Figure 152 - Pilgrims tying ribbons at a church's door.....	205
Figure 153 - Materials left as part of healing rituals.....	205
Figure 154 - Pilgrims reaching the statue on their knees.....	208
Figure 155 - Shrouds left at the base of the Father Cícero's statue.....	209
Figure 156 - Pilgrims paying pilgrims with shrouds	210
Figure 157 - Pilgrim paying a promise by using a black shroud	210
Figure 158 - Staff member at the Miracle Room.....	211
Figure 159 - Chapel of Promises.....	212
Figure 160 - Chapel of Promises.....	212
Figure 161 - Pilgrims dancing as a way to pay promises.....	213
Figure 162 - Images of Saint made of rubber.....	216
Figure 163 - Father Cícero's massage gel	217
Figure 164 - Father Cícero represented in market offerings.....	218
Figure 165 - Father Cícero represented in market offerings	218
Figure 166 - Father Cícero represented in market offerings.....	218
Figure 167 - Seller demonstrating the vulture powder.....	219
Figure 168 - Healing products in the pilgrimage site	220
Figure 169 - Healing products in the pilgrimage site	220
Figure 170 - Healing products in the pilgrimage site	221
Figure 171 - Pilgrims blessing products at Father Cícero's tomb	221
Figure 172 - Blessing of products.....	223
Figure 173 - Street market.....	225
Figure 174 - Street market	225
Figure 175 - Street market.....	226
Figure 176 - Juazeiro do Norte's Central Market	227
Figure 177 - Fair in downtown	227
Figure 178 - Revitalized area in downtown	228
Figure 179 - Trenzinho da Alegria	228
Figure 180 - Straw Hat Mass.....	230
Figure 181 - Pilgrims at the final Mass.....	231
Figure 182 - Decorated berlinda at Ver-o-Peso.....	239
Figure 183 - Themed products in a store in downtown Belém	239
Figure 184 - Graffiti and paintings decorating the streets	240
Figure 185 - Balconies decorated.....	241
Figure 186 - Image of Our Lady of Nazaré at Belém Airport	242

Figure 187 - Religious products	244
Figure 188 - Shop selling different types of ex-votos	245
Figure 189 - Improvised store for ex-votos.....	246
Figure 190 - Craft fair stand	247
Figure 191 - Pilgrims walking to the Basilica.....	250
Figure 192 - Pilgrims arriving at the Basilica.....	251
Figure 193 - Pilgrims arriving at the center of the Casa de Plácido.....	254
Figure 194 - Volunteers washing pilgrims' feet	254
Figure 195 - Person showing the image at her house.....	256
Figure 196 - Family delivering the image at the Parish.....	257
Figure 197 - Families' entrance with the images.....	258
Figure 198 - Car and participants at the Car Procession.....	259
Figure 199 - Designing unique experiences	260
Figure 200 - Participants living unique moments in the pilgrimage	260
Figure 201 - Mantle Presentation.....	262
Figure 202 - Image of the mantle pamphlet	262
Figure 203 - Motorcycle Pilgrimage 2019	265
Figure 204 - Group of bikers before the procession.....	265
Figure 205 - KD a Berlinda app print screen.....	266
Figure 206 - Image of Our Lady gets off the navy boat.....	267
Figure 207 - Participants enjoying the Pavulagem Parade on the background..	268
Figure 208 - Costumes in "Auto do Círio".....	270
Figure 209 - Costumes	270
Figure 210 - Pilgrim paying a promise.....	272
Figure 211 - Crowd warming up for the procession.....	272
Figure 212 - The first station of the rope	273
Figure 213 - Transportation Procession.....	274
Figure 214 - Red Cross saving fainting pilgrim	275
Figure 215 - The berlinda coming	276
Figure 216 - The berlinda.....	276
Figure 217 - Pilgrims in procession	277
Figure 218 - Pilgrim walking on his knees.....	278
Figure 219 - Pilgrims in the procession	279
Figure 220 - Transportation close to its end.....	280
Figure 221 - Trash all around.....	280
Figure 222 - Garbage collectors cleaning the streets.....	281
Figure 223 - Print from Círio Official Instagram Account.....	282
Figure 224 - Círio de Nazaré Procession	283
Figure 225 - Pilgrim with the miniature house.....	284
Figure 226 - Pilgrims refreshing themselves	285
Figure 227 - Floor during the procession	286
Figure 228 - The berlinda coming.....	286
Figure 229 - Commerce in parallel streets.....	287
Figure 230 - Promisers fighting for a piece of the rope	288
Figure 231 - Promiser showing his piece of the rope	288
Figure 232 - Promisers posing for a selfie with their ropes.....	289
Figure 233 - Church volunteers catching the ex-votos.....	289
Figure 234 - Promiser with an ex-voto.....	290

Figure 235 - The researcher posing with a piece of the rope.....	291
Figure 236 - Water to be distributed during the processions.....	293
Figure 237 - The rope that was used in 2019	295
Figure 238 - The view from the window of the first feast visited.....	296
Figure 239 - The first family feast.....	296
Figure 240 - Dessert moment at the final feast.....	298
Figure 241 - Nazaré Network (Radio and TV).....	299
Figure 242 - Basilica's Facebook Account.....	299
Figure 243 - Basilica's Instagram Account	300
Figure 244 - Donation basket.....	303
Figure 245 - Boundaries and relationships between the commercial and the spiritual	341
Figure 246 - Coping with life by relying on the spiritual	346
Figure 247 - Understanding rituals in pilgrimages.....	348
Figure 248 -The Spiritual Framework of Coping (Gall et al., 2005).....	375

Table index

Table 1 - Selected Pilgrimage Sites.....	56
Table 2 - Data set	70
Table 3 - The dynamics of resisting and penetrating in the spiritual market.....	341
Table 4 - Collective features of the pilgrimages studied	342
Table 5 - Individual features of the pilgrimages studied	343
Table 6 - Difficult life events reported by pilgrims.....	345
Table 7 - Market and spiritual combining to actualize the spiritual experience	350
Table 8 - Summary of inducted themes	360
Table 9 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	366
Table 10 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	370
Table 11 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	378
Table 12 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	381
Table 13 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	384
Table 14 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	387
Table 15 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	389
Table 16 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	390
Table 17 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	392
Table 18 - Summary of theoretical discussions, contributions and corroborations	394
Table 19 - Summary of Marketing Insights.....	399

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Appendix

Table 2 – Interviews data set

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality/ Country of residence	Occupation	Pilgrimage	Motivation	Number of times in the pilgrimage	Number of days on the Camino	Organization of pilgrimage	Modal	Place and time
Fernanda	65	Female	Portugal	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Interest	1	NA	Self-organized with friends	Bus	Lourdes, April 2019
Emanuel	68	Male	Portugal	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Interest	1	NA	Self-organized with friends	Bus	Lourdes, April 2019
Michael	70	Male	United Kingdom	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Interest	38	NA	Self-organized	Airplane	Lourdes, April 2019
Amelie	82	Female	France	Nurse, Retired	Lourdes	Religious Interest	+30	NA	Organized with the Diocese	Train	Lourdes, April 2019
Socorro	59	Female	Brazil	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Tourism	1	NA	Tourism agency	Airplane	Lourdes, April 2019
Edinalda	50	Female	Brazil	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Tourism	1	NA	Tourism agency	Airplane	Lourdes, April 2019
Geovana	56	Female	Brazil	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Tourism	1	NA	Tourism agency	Airplane	Lourdes, April 2019
Fatima	51	Female	Brazil	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Tourism	1	NA	Tourism agency	Airplane	Lourdes, April 2019
Lucia	60	Female	Brazil	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Tourism	1	NA	Tourism agency	Airplane	Lourdes, April 2019
Janine	82	Female	France	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Tourism	+30	NA	Organized by the Diocese	Train	Lourdes, April 2019
Dede	70	Female	France	Retired	Lourdes	Religious Tourism	+30	NA	Organized by the Diocese	Train	Lourdes, April 2019
Anne	48	Male	France	Priest	Lourdes	Works at the Pilgrimage	5 years working	NA	Help pilgrims to organize their pilgrimage	Walking	Lourdes, April 2019
Severo	66	Male	Brazil	Bank officer, Retired	Camino de Santiago	Personal re- discovery	1	11	Self-organized	Walking	Along the Camino (Walking and at

					(Portuguese Way)						Auberges), June 2019
Sabrina	28	Female	United Kingdom	Sabbatical	Camino de Santiago (French Way)	Adventure/ Practicing Spanish	1	30	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Alessandra	29	Female	Italy	Just graduated	Camino de Santiago (French Way)	Physical interests/ Self re-discovery	1	30	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Archangelo	40	Male	Italy	Actor/ Tour guide	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Way)	Adventure/ Self re-discovery	1	11	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Klaus	70	Male	Germany	Retired	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Coastal Way)	Adventure/ Meeting people	3	11	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Antonia	56	Female	France	Psychiatrist/ Retired	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Way)	Religious Interest	3	12	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at an <i>auberge</i>), June 2019
Lucas	30	Male	Brazil	Independent Worker	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Way)	Adventure/Self-discovery	1	23	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Lothar	61	Male	Germany	NA	Camino de Santiago (French Way)	Religious Interest/ Looking for God	1	15	Self-organized	Biking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Eleny	46	Female	Germany	Marketer	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Way)	Physical interest/ Escape from ordinary	1	15	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at an <i>auberge</i>), June 2019
Anna	19	Female	Germany	Just graduated from high-school	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Way)	Self-discovery	1	11	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at an <i>auberge</i>), June 2019
Maria	32	Female	Italy	NA	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Way)	Meeting people/ Escaping from ordinary	1	15	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Josefine	33	Female	Italy	NA	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Way)	Close contact with nature/ Finding own limits	1	15	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019

Lara	42	Female	Spain	NA	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Way)	Curiosity, finding own limits	1	NA	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Rebeca	44	Female	Spain	NA	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese Way)	Meeting people/spiritual interest	5	NA	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Olivier	65	Male	France	Professor	Camino de Santiago (Portuguese and French Way)	Adventure/ Connection with nature and spirituality	2	35	Self-organized	Walking	Paris (after years of the experience)
Mike	60	Male	Netherlands	Engineer	Camino de Santiago (French Way)	Meeting people/ Spiritual	2	30	Self-organized	Walking	Santiago (at the main square), June 2019
Giovanni	32	Male	Italy	Professor	Camino de Santiago (French Way)	Physical interest/ celebration of life	1	10	Self-organized	Walking	Skype (2 years after the experience)
Alaise	81	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	30 (currently living at the pilgrimage site)	NA	Self-organized	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Antonia	78	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	1	NA	NA	NA	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Luiza	75	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	1	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Maria A.	80	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	1	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Sebastião	52	Male	Brazilian	NA	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	5	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Mariselia	62	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	Currently living at the pilgrimage site	NA	NA	NA	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Maria B.	79	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	Currently living at the pilgrimage site	NA	NA	NA	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Agnelina B.	67	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	12	NA	Self-organized	Airplane	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Ana	65	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	+40	NA	Self-organized	Airplane	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Isabel L.	69	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	+65 (currently living at the pilgrimage site)	NA	NA	NA	Juazeiro do Norte (at the sanctuary)
Francisca L.	73	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	1	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at a museum)

Maria Rita	75	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	13	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at a museum)
Maria Ap.	56	Female	Brazilian	Retired	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	24	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at a museum)
Almir	25	Male	Brazilian	Student	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	45	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at a restaurant)
Felipe	22	Male	Brazilian	Student	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	15	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at a restaurant)
Margarida P.	50	Female	Brazilian	Former City Council Member	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	+40	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at a lodging)
Nara	49	Female	Brazilian	Politician	Juazeiro do Norte	Religious interest	+40	NA	Group of pilgrims	Bus	Juazeiro do Norte (at a lodging)
Bernadete	45	Female	Brazilian	Lawyer	Belém	Religious interest	Every year (lives close to the pilgrimage site)	04 hours	Self-organized	Walking	Belém (at a Cathedral)
Tiego	35	Male	Brazilian	Uber driver	Belém	Religious interest	Every year (lives at the pilgrimage site)	18 hours doing processions	Self-organized	Walking	Belém (at a Uber ride)
Eloeny	44	Female	Brazilian	Government employee	Belém	Religious interest	Every year (lives close to the pilgrimage site)	05 hours	Group of pilgrims	Walking	Belém (at the sanctuary)
Elizete	54	Female	Brazilian	Volunteer (House of Placido)	Belém	Religious Interest	Every year (lives at the pilgrimage site)	NA	NA	NA	Belém (at the House of Placido)
Socorro	72	Female	Brazilian	Volunteer (House of Placido)	Belém	Religious Interest	Every year (lives at the pilgrimage site)	NA	NA	NA	Belém (at the House of Placido)
Naiana G.	30	Female	Brazilian	Self-employee	Belém	Spiritual interest	Every year	NA	Self-organized	Airplane	Belém (at the House of Placido)
David	38	Male	Brazilian	Moto boy	Belém	Religious interest	Every year (lives at the pilgrimage site)	NA	Self-organized	Motorcycle	Belém (at the motorcycle pilgrimage)
Fernanda	35	Female	Brazilian	Self-employee	Belém	Religious interest	2	NA	Self-organized	Bus	Belém (at the procession)
Roseli	50	Female	Brazilian	Saleswoman	Belém	Religious interest	Every year (lives at the pilgrimage site)	NA	Self-organized	NA	Belém (at the procession)

Introduction

Contexte empirique

Cette thèse de doctorat se place dans le contexte des pèlerinages religieux. Même si un contexte religieux peut sembler éloigné du monde des affaires, j'expliquerai comment les deux dimensions se croisent dans le processus d'avoir du sens dans cette thèse. Tout d'abord, pour ceux qui ne connaissent pas complètement le côté divin de cette histoire, une bonne définition de ce que sont les pèlerinages semble juste. Les pèlerinages sont des voyages fondés sur une motivation religieuse ou spirituelle, entrepris par des individus ou des groupes, vers un lieu considéré comme plus sacré que l'environnement de la vie quotidienne, pour rechercher une rencontre transcendante avec un objet de culte ou avec soi-même et, par conséquent, acquérir une guérison spirituelle, émotionnelle ou physique (Hervieu-Léger, 2003 ; Margry, 2008 ; Moufahim, 2013 ; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). Cette pratique consistant à s'engager dans de tels voyages est devenue importante au début de l'histoire de la religiosité, comme les premiers enregistrements de pèlerinages au 4ème siècle (Turner & Turner, 2011). Ces lieux sacrés anciens et, parfois, contemporains détiennent le pouvoir et les mythes d'événements miraculeux du passé et continuent d'attirer des pèlerins de diverses religions (par exemple, le catholicisme, l'islamisme ou le bouddhisme).

Chaque année, des millions de pèlerins se lancent dans des pèlerinages vers une multitude de sites sacrés à travers le monde. Par conséquent, les pèlerinages ont commencé à assister à la création d'un marché d'interactions spirituelles et

commerciales, le marché spirituel. Par exemple, selon l'OMT, en 2018, le marché de visites à des parents et amis, santé et tourisme religieux était d'environ 27 % parmi les autres types de tourisme dans le monde, seulement derrière la catégorie "loisirs, détente et vacances" (Global, 2020). Il représente environ 380 millions de voyages avec une attente de croissance d'environ 4 % par an (Global, 2020).

Comprendre l'aspect commercial qui réside dans les expériences religieuses est pertinent dans le cadre de cette thèse de doctorat. La religion est passée par un processus de marchandisation, comme ce qui s'est passé avec des domaines clés de la vie sociale tels que l'éducation et la santé (McAlexander, Dufault, Martin et Schouten, 2014). En raison d'une telle marchandisation, les temples et les lieux sacrés peuvent être expérimentés, consommés, marqués et commercialisés. Par exemple, certains chefs religieux peuvent considérer leurs fidèles comme des consommateurs de religion, et les églises investissent alors dans des activités de marketing pour renforcer leur image et attirer d'autres adeptes (McAlexander, et al., 2014).

La marchandisation de la religion et des expériences peut avoir de profondes implications. Des recherches antérieures ont observé les conséquences économiques, culturelles, sociales et environnementales que la marchandisation peut avoir dans des destinations touristiques paradisiaques, telles que Shangri-La (Llamas & Belk, 2001). Selon Llamas et Belk (2011), la marchandisation de tels lieux purs est possible grâce à une normalisation de la manipulation des paysages pour renforcer leur attrait, en créant et en mettant en œuvre des ingrédients où les frontières entre « authentique » et « touristifié », le sacré et le profane, le marchand et le non marchand, est devenu flou et tout à fait nébuleux. De plus, McAlexander et al. (2014) démontrent que la marchandisation de la religion peut entraîner une *détraditionalisation* de la religion et de ses rituels et pratiques, ce qui contribue à la perte de la foi de nombreux membres et à difficulté pour construire de nouvelles identités.

Cependant, la marchandisation peut avoir des résultats à la fois négatifs et positifs (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012). Des recherches auprès des consommateurs ont enquêté sur le fait que la consommation de produits sacrés et profanes peut faciliter l'expérience religieuse (Hemetsberger, Kreuzer et Klien, 2018 ;

Kamarulzaman et al. 2015 ; Higgins et Hamilton, 2016). Hemetsberger, Keuzer et Klien (2018) examinent sur comment la consommation de substances conduit les consommateurs à un voyage spirituel de pleine conscience qui peut entraîner un renouvellement de soi et une réunion du corps et de l'esprit. De plus, Higgins et Hamilton (2016) observent la consommation des pèlerinages, comme celle de Lourdes - France, peut avoir en promouvant des mini-miracles à ses participants. Enfin, même le numérique peut faciliter l'expérience spirituelle des consommateurs, comme les conclusions de Kamarulzaman et al. (2015) révèle, dans laquelle les musulmans utilisent les réseaux sociaux pour faciliter leur recherche et le partage d'informations sur l'alimentation halal. Les auteurs suggèrent que les réseaux sociaux servent à la médiation et à la connexion des communautés religieuses et des marchés.

Au-delà de la discussion de savoir si cette marchandisation du religieux est positive ou négative, cette thèse de doctorat s'intéresse plutôt à naviguer dans le jeu entre le marchand et le religieux, dans lequel on admet l'existence du phénomène marchand dans des sites spirituels, comme les pèlerinages, et l'examiner pour mieux le comprendre dans une perspective d'étude de consommation.

Les liens entre les pèlerinages européens et latino-américains

Les pèlerinages entre différentes religions peuvent être complètement différents. Les pèlerinages islamiques à La Mecque en Arabie saoudite, appelés Hajj, sont des commandements religieux obligatoires pour tous les musulmans valides qui peuvent en assumer les coûts financiers (Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019). Ces pèlerinages sont notoirement fermés aux étrangers, même pour les chercheurs musulmans l'accès est difficile (Moufahim, 2013 ; Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019). Parallèlement, les pèlerinages bouddhistes sont souvent suivis par des pèlerins qui souhaitent rencontrer des sites anciens associés à la vie de Bouddha dans le nord de l'Inde ou le sud du Népal, par exemple. Enfin, des sites de pèlerinage encore plus contemporains suivis par des adeptes du New Age dans des endroits comme Sedona - Arizona, ont une manière spécifique dont les pèlerins font l'expérience de la nature, de la spiritualité et d'eux-mêmes (Ivakhiv, 2003).

Une fois que nous reconnaissons les différences complexes entre les pèlerinages dans des religions distinctes, cette thèse de doctorat tranche un côté de ce contexte et choisit les pèlerinages catholiques comme milieu d'investigation. Nous comprenons que le choix d'une circonscription religieuse peut aider dans le processus de recherche de modèles et de différences dans des cas comparables. Ainsi, nous avons quatre pèlerinages catholiques distincts sous notre intérêt de recherche. Deux d'entre eux au Brésil (les pèlerinages de Juazeiro do Norte et le Círio de Nazaré) et deux d'entre eux en Europe (le pèlerinage de Lourdes en France et le Camino de Santiago qui se dirige vers la cathédrale de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle).

Cependant, je n'ai pas l'intention d'affirmer que les pèlerinages catholiques dans le monde sont tous pareils. Au lieu de cela, je crois aux similitudes dans leurs pratiques et principes de dévotion qui facilitent et discernent l'engagement dans la recherche scientifique.

En ce qui concerne les pèlerinages en Amérique latine et en Europe, il existe encore d'autres similitudes et liens qui méritent d'être mentionnés dans cette thèse. Tout au long de l'histoire de leur colonisation, les pays européens et l'Église catholique ont utilisé leurs doctrines religieuses pour envahir et exterminer les identités spirituelles indigènes. Dans un tel mouvement, l'insertion « réussie » des rituels et des institutions catholiques s'est cristallisée dans le pays même après la période coloniale et a transformé des pays comme le Brésil en pays comptant le plus grand nombre d'individus autoproclamés chrétiens. Il y a eu un transfert de traditions et de rituels de dévotion que l'on peut voir dans différents lieux de pèlerinage en Amérique latine et en Europe qui illustre les racines religieuses entre les continents.

La raison du choix de ces sites de pèlerinage spécifiques nécessite des explications supplémentaires. Premièrement, il y a des raisons personnelles qui m'ont amené à m'engager dans ce contexte. Comme je suis né à Juazeiro do Norte, l'un des lieux de pèlerinage étudiés dans cette thèse, j'ai été témoin tout au long de mon enfance et de mon adolescence du va-et-vient des pèlerins pendant les moments de pèlerinage dans ma ville natale, et comment ils avaient en quelque sorte un certain pouvoir pour changer l'atmosphère de la ville. Je me souviens de leurs gros camions et autobus garés dans les rues de mon quartier et de mes amis, avec les enfants

des pèlerins jouant dans les rues. En grandissant, j'ai observé l'impact social, démographique et économique du pèlerinage dans la ville, et tous les autres types d'influences directes et indirectes. Ce n'est que des années plus tard que j'ai eu l'idée de m'engager scientifiquement dans ce contexte pour ma thèse de master.

Cette idée est venue juste après avoir lu les recherches de Higgins et Hamilton (2014) sur les pèlerinages à Lourdes (un autre choix que j'ai fait pour cette thèse de doctorat). Les auteurs ont constaté que la consommation de ce pèlerinage français révèle la construction de liens et de relations familiales intimes, offrant aux consommateurs un cadre unique composé de foi, de plaisir et de famille. Cependant, au-delà de leurs excellentes découvertes, j'ai tendance à croire que les auteurs m'ont vraiment convaincu de la décision de revenir dans ma ville natale et d'enquêter moi-même sur les pèlerinages autour desquels j'ai passé une bonne partie de ma vie. Avant de lire leur article, je n'étais pas conscient de la possibilité de concevoir une recherche marketing dans un contexte religieux. Mais, peu de temps après, je faisais ma première collecte de données parmi les pèlerins lors d'une autre journée ensoleillée dans le nord-est du Brésil.

Après cinq ans de recherche dans ce contexte, j'ai développé une meilleure compréhension des intersections entre le commercial et le spirituel. À propos, l'une des choses qui m'a le plus aidé à créer ces connexions neuronales a été ma décision de m'engager dans le domaine de recherche de la Théorie de la Culture du Consommateur (CCT). Des recherches antérieures sur CCT dans le cadre de pèlerinages et d'autres contextes spirituels (Belk et al. 1989 ; McAlexander et al., 2014 ; Rinallo et al., 2013) ont été essentielles dans ma compréhension de la soi-disant « Spiritualité du consommateur », ou les « pratiques et processus interdépendants dans lesquels les gens s'engagent lorsqu'ils consomment des offres de marché (produits, services, lieux) qui produisent une "utilité spirituelle" » (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a, p. 393). Par conséquent, je circonscris cette thèse de doctorat dans le champ de recherche de CCT, qui est orienté vers « l'étude des relations dynamiques entre les actions des consommateurs, le marché et les significations culturelles » (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868).

En ce qui concerne la décision de m'engager dans les pèlerinages étudiés dans cette thèse, j'ai décidé de chercher sur deux principaux pèlerinages au Brésil : les

pèlerinages à Juazeiro do Norte et le Círio de Nazaré. Tous deux reçoivent environ 2,5 millions de pèlerins par an. Comme le Brésil est le pays avec le plus grand nombre de catholiques au monde, il était logique de choisir deux bons exemples de pèlerinages. De plus, les deux pèlerinages ont des racines catholiques similaires dans leurs rituels de consommation et leurs proximités concernant les caractéristiques générales des participants, des individus des classes populaires et moyennes à l'âge adulte et âgé, malgré la facilité à trouver des pèlerins de tous âges.

En Europe, j'ai choisi deux principaux lieux de pèlerinage. Le pèlerinage de Lourdes est l'un des plus importants de France. Chaque année, le site reçoit des millions de pèlerins de différentes nationalités dans ce qui est devenu un pèlerinage très international. Également, les pèlerinages à Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle ont des racines millénaires en Europe qui, malgré leurs origines catholiques initiales, semblent être de plus en plus entreprises par des aventuriers désireux de vivre des expériences uniques. Des gens du monde entier passent des semaines et des mois sur les rails vers la cathédrale de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle. Ils consomment des moments individuels et collectifs sur le Chemin - la façon dont ils se réfèrent au chemin vers le lieu de pèlerinage.

Ce qui unifie ces quatre contextes de pèlerinage, c'est (i) la réunion d'individus catholiques même s'il est aussi très courant de voir des personnes de contextes religieux différents (ex. religions afro, mouvements new age, etc.), (ii) les solides racines catholiques, qu'il est possible d'observer dans les sanctuaires ou rituels ; et (iii) la présence d'un marché spirituel composé de l'ensemble du réseau lié au tourisme religieux, à l'hébergement, à la restauration et aux produits religieux et profanes.

Lacune empirique

Cette thèse aborde de multiples lacunes empiriques dans la littérature sur la Culture du Consommateur : (1) les lacunes dans la recherche sur la consommation en tant que mécanisme d'adaptation dans des situations stressantes et le désordre social ; (2) des lacunes dans la recherche sur la consommation d'expériences spirituelles en Amérique latine ; et (3) les lacunes dans la recherche interculturelle sur les expériences spirituelles. Les sections suivantes sont consacrées à combler ces lacunes.

Lacunes dans la recherche sur la consommation en tant que mécanisme d'adaptation dans des situations stressantes et le désordre social

Les mécanismes d'adaptation font partie de la nature humaine dans notre parcours pour nous adapter aux situations extrêmes et légères qui nous entourent. Malgré l'engagement des chercheurs à découvrir les relations entre la consommation et les mécanismes d'adaptation (Duhachek, 2005 ; Pavia & Mason 2004), la littérature existante en CCT n'a pas encore couvert en détail l'intersection des mécanismes spirituels, de consommation et d'adaptation. En d'autres termes, des investigations empiriques et théoriques sont nécessaires pour comprendre pourquoi et comment les consommateurs s'engagent dans la consommation spirituelle pour mieux faire face à leur vie.

La littérature a cependant expliqué les motivations derrière la consommation du spirituel (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a ; Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019 ; Higgins & Hamilton, 2019). Les consommateurs spirituels (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a) ont tendance à surmonter certaines expériences extraordinaires dans le cadre de leurs traditions et en tant que pratique d'authenticité (Mouhfaim & Lichrou, 2019), en tant que pratique familiale qui unit les proches (Higgins & Hamilton, 2014), ou même comme un *servicescape* thérapeutique pour compenser les dilemmes socioculturels (Higgins & Hamilton, 2019).

Nous nous appuyons sur l'idée de Higgins et Hamilton (2019) pour comprendre ces dilemmes. Cependant, nous nous concentrons sur les produits et services spirituels et commerciaux qui pourraient faciliter l'adaptation aux événements majeurs de la vie.

Lacunes dans la recherche sur la consommation d'expériences spirituelles en Amérique latine

La recherche CCT sur les pèlerinages et les expériences spirituelles s'est concentrée principalement sur les contextes nord-américain et européen occidental, bien que les chercheurs concentrent de plus en plus leurs travaux dans les économies en développement.

En abordant une perspective globale du Sud, j'espère co-construire des idées et des théories sur la consommation spirituelle (Chelekis & Figueiredo, 2015). Les expériences des consommateurs spirituels dans des pays comme le Brésil peuvent révéler des informations pertinentes sur le développement des aspects culturels de la consommation d'expériences extraordinaires.

Les profils des consommateurs ont tendance à être différents et peuvent aider dans le processus de nouvelles théorisations. Par exemple, alors que les pèlerinages en Europe ont tendance à être visités par des pèlerins ayant un pouvoir économique relativement élevé, les pèlerinages au Brésil sont principalement vécus par des individus des classes populaires et moyennes.

Lacunes dans la recherche interculturelle sur les expériences spirituelles

Je crois qu'il y a une opportunité de trouver de grandes idées théoriques à partir de la comparaison d'expériences spirituelles dans différents contextes. C'est la raison pour laquelle j'ai décidé de m'engager dans quatre pèlerinages différents en Europe et en Amérique latine. Reliés par leurs racines historiques de colonisation et les réalités économiques, sociales et démographiques distinctes, ces pèlerinages

catholiques peuvent nous aider à mieux comprendre la consommation spirituelle à l'époque actuelle.

Certaines recherches sur la culture du consommateur ont observé des expériences spirituelles isolées (Higgins et Hamilton, 2014, 2016, 2019), tandis que d'autres se concentrent davantage sur des preuves empiriques multisites. Par exemple, Mona Moufahim (2013, 2019) s'est engagée dans divers lieux saints et sanctuaires en Syrie et en Irak pour comprendre les pratiques d'offrir des cadeaux dans les pèlerinages islamiques, appelés *ziyara*. De même, Husemann et Eckhardt (2019b) ont étudié le pèlerinage de Compostelle alors qu'elles empruntaient différents chemins menant à la ville de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle en Espagne. Chaque chemin de pèlerinage peut être une expérience différente pour les individus, ce qui a enrichi leur compréhension et leurs découvertes. Enfin, van Laer et Izberk-Bilgin (2019) ont recueilli des preuves sur des forums en ligne concernant les sites de pèlerinage des cinq principaux groupes religieux du monde.

Par conséquent, sur la base de ces derniers exemples de recherche multisites, cette thèse est fortement investie dans l'observation des différences et des similitudes entre les pèlerinages catholiques en Europe et en Amérique latine, en partant du principe qu'un tel contraste peut faire évoluer notre compréhension de la consommation spirituelle dans le domaine de études sur la culture du consommateur.

Cadre théorique

Spiritualité du consommateur

Contrairement aux prédictions selon lesquelles les religions s'effondreraient avec les développements de la technologie et les mouvements de mondialisation (Hammond, 1985), « le spirituel ne s'est jamais complètement estompé, mais plutôt en permanence réapparaît, juste sous différentes contours et formes, selon ce que les conditions sociales permettent » (Husemann et Eckhardt, 2019a). Au-delà de la présence pourtant importante des religions traditionnelles, on assiste en permanence à la montée des mouvements New Age (Ivakhiv, 2003) et aux reformulations de doctrines séculaires dans leur tentative d'adaptation au monde contemporain (Askegaard, & Eckhardt, 2012).

Les chercheurs du Marketing et de CCT manifestent un intérêt considérable pour les phénomènes liés à la consommation spirituelle au cours des dernières décennies (Belk et al., 1989 ; Muñiz & Schau, 2005 ; Gould, 2006 ; Poulain, Badot, & Camus, 2013 ; Ladwein, & Rémy, 2014). Un effort pionnier pour provoquer une compréhension intersectionnelle entre le marché et le sacré a été proposé par Belk et al. (1989). Grâce à une enquête naturaliste appelée *Consumer Behavior Odyssey*, les auteurs ont été les premiers à décrire et interpréter cliniquement les dimensions sacrées présentes dans le comportement de consommation. En particulier, Belk et al. (1989) élucident les changements de la vie contemporaine qui transforment les frontières décalées existantes entre le sacré et le profane, permettant des tendances liées à la sécularisation de la religion institutionnelle et à la sacralisation du profane. Les auteurs ont semé les graines qui ont ensuite été utilisées par d'autres chercheurs dans la recherche sur les consommateurs.

Par conséquent, les études de consommation sur l'intersection du sacré et du marché se sont de plus en plus développées (Mittelstaedt, 2002 ; Arvidsson, 2014) et tendent à explorer la sacralisation du profane (Mathras, et al., 2016 ; Belk, & Tumbat, 2005 ; Buchanan-Olivier, & Schau, 2013 ; Appau, 2020) ainsi que la sécularisation du sacré (McAlexander, Dufault, Martin & Schouten, 2014 ; Rinallo,

Borghini, Bamossy, & Kozinets, 2013 ; Lhamas & Belk, 2011 ; Askegaard et Eckhardt, 2012 ; Kale, 2004 ; Bamossy et al., 2011 ; Izberk-Bilgin, 2012, Redden, 2016 ; Rinallo, Maclaran et Stevens, 2016 ; Einstein, 2013).

En ce qui concerne la sacralisation du profane, les études de consommation montrent comment la pensée et les affiliations religieuses peuvent avoir un impact sur la consommation. Mathras et al. (2015) définissent quatre dimensions religieuses - croyances, rituels, valeurs et communauté - affectant la psychologie et le comportement des consommateurs. Par exemple, les auteurs soutiennent que les croyances partagées dans une religion donnée, telles que les croyances sur la vie après la mort, peuvent influencer la recherche d'un statut, le matérialisme et les connexions du soi aux marques des croyants (Mathras et al., 2015). Ainsi, Belk et Tumbat (2005) expliquent l'extrême dévotion des consommateurs envers le Macintosh. Les auteurs démontrent la fervente fidélité des tenants du culte du Mac dans leurs mouvements de sacralisation de la marque Apple et de profanation des marques adverses sur le marché (Belk & Tumbat, 2005).

Parallèlement, les recherches portant sur la sécularisation du sacré s'intéressent à l'influence du marché sur les systèmes, pratiques et objets sacrés. McAlexander et al. (2014) expliquent comment la marchandisation de la religion peut affecter un mouvement de *détraditionalisation* qui peut finalement conduire les membres à perdre leur identité et à être incapables de rester à l'aise dans leur communauté autrefois chérie. De plus, Askegaard et Eckhardt (2012) élucident les processus d'internationalisation et ensuite la réappropriation de pratiques culturelles et spirituelles telles que le yoga. Ils explorent comment la mondialisation a profondément changé les pratiques et les idées autour des pratiques de consommation locales sur le marché indien.

En outre, la recherche sur la consommation s'intéresse également à diverses dimensions sacrées de la consommation, telles que les lieux, le temps, les choses tangibles et intangibles, les personnes et les expériences (Belk et al., 1989). Des lieux tels que les sanctuaires, la nature ou les lieux de pèlerinage ont été étudiés en tant que marchés de consommation pertinents (Margry, 2008 ; Ivakhiv, 2003 ; Gesler, 1996 ; Turley, 2013). Le temps est une autre dimension cruciale dans la recherche du sacré par les consommateurs ; par exemple, les moments de décélération ou les

lentes formes de consommation peuvent avoir des avantages spirituels pour les consommateurs qui ont besoin d'échapper à un rythme de vie accéléré (Huseman & Eckhardt, 2019). En conséquence, les chercheurs ont un large intérêt pour la consommation d'événements sacrés rituels (Ladwein & Rémy, 2014), et d'expériences extraordinaires, ou d'expériences hors du domaine ordinaire de la vie des individus (Arnould, & Price, 1993 ; Scott, Cayla, & Cova, 2017).

Plus récemment, un concept particulier, et un domaine d'étude, appelé « Spiritualité du Consommateur », prend forme et revêt une grande importance pour le développement de cette thèse. La spiritualité du consommateur a été proposée pour la première fois par Husemann et Eckhardt (2019a) pour encapsuler les « pratiques et processus interdépendants dans lesquels les gens s'engagent lorsqu'ils consomment des offres de marché (produits, services, lieux) qui procurent une "utilité spirituelle" » (Husemann et Eckhardt, 2019a, p. 393). Les auteurs ont poursuivi les efforts antérieurs initiés par Mathras et al. (2016) et Rinallo, Maclaran et Stevens (2016) de développer une approche systématique de ce corpus croissant de littérature en recherche de marketing et du consommateur associée à la consommation du spirituel (Higgins & Hamilton, 2016 ; 2018 ; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b ; Husemann, Eckhardt, Grohs et Saceanu, 2016 ; Hemetsberger, Kreuzer et Klien, 2018 ; Bonsu et Belk, 2010 ; Askegaard et Eckhardt, 2012 ; Kale, 2004 ; Thompson et Coskuner-Balli, 2007 ; Turley, 2013).

La recherche sur la spiritualité du consommateur s'est concentrée sur les trois dimensions centrales : (i) la matérialité ; (ii) *embodiment* ; et (iii) la technologie (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). De plus en plus de littérature se concentre sur le rôle de la matérialité et du commerce dans l'accès au spirituel (Kedzior, 2013 ; Moufahim, 2013 ; Santana & Botelho, 2019). Deuxièmement, la recherche sur l'*embodiment* a attiré une attention considérable sur le rôle fondamental du corps comme moyen d'accéder à l'auto-spiritualité et à la connexion avec le monde sacré (Hemetsberger, Kreuzer et Klien, 2018 ; Scott, Cayla et Cova, 2017). Enfin, la technologie a également été observée comme un vecteur de connexions et d'expériences spirituelles (Kale, 2004 ; van Laer & Izberk-Bilgin, 2019).

Les chercheurs ont un intérêt profond et large pour les significations associées aux objets tangibles ou matériels liés à la consommation du sacré (Kedzior, 2013, Gould,

2006), comme la nourriture sacrée (Kamarulzaman et al., 2016), la pratique de donner cadeaux dans les expériences spirituelles (Moufahim, 2013), les objets et reliques sacrés (Rinallo, et al. 2013 ; Croft, 2013), le mouvement des objets sacrés et profanes (Santana & Botelho, 2019 ; Scaraboto & Figueiredo, 2017).

Les chercheurs intéressés par la spiritualité du consommateur ont recherché des contextes empiriques de pèlerinage avec différentes optiques théoriques (Higgins & Hamilton, 2016, 2018 ; Husemann et al., 2016 ; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b ; Kedzior, 2013 ; Moufahim, 2013 ; Santana & Botelho, 2019). Par exemple, Husemann et al. (2016) étudient les pèlerinages à Medjugorje et la manière dichotomique dont les pèlerins surmontent les tensions du marché résultant d'un marché religieux sur-commercialisé pour expérimenter la spiritualité, tout en s'appuyant sur certaines de ces ressources du marché pour approfondir leur expérience spirituelle. De même, Higgins et Hamilton (2016, 2018) étudient les pèlerinages à Lourdes en France, et ils observent que la participation au marché du pèlerinage peut avoir des qualités thérapeutiques, transformatrices et magiques. Enfin, Husemann & Eckhardt (2019b) ont découvert des expériences temporelles ralenties obtenues en réduisant l'utilisation de la technologie, les mouvements physiques et les niveaux de consommation pendant le pèlerinage de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle.

Cette thèse de doctorat s'aligne avec le concept et le domaine de recherche de la Spiritualité du Consommateur. En abordant un tel concept dans la recherche des contextes de pèlerinage, cette thèse s'intéresse aux pratiques et motivations derrière les activités des pèlerins lors de la consommation de l'expérience de pèlerinage. D'ailleurs, cette thèse accorde une attention particulière à certains mécanismes d'adaptation spirituelle derrière les pratiques des pèlerins.

Questions de recherche

Suite à l'appel à d'autres recherches de Husemann & Eckhardt (2019a) sur la Spiritualité du Consommateur, ainsi qu'à la littérature actuelle sur le marketing et la recherche sur le consommateur dans l'intersection du spirituel et du marché (McAlexander, Dufault, Martin, & Schouten, 2014 ; Poulain, 2021) cette thèse de

doctorat interroge le champ empirique des pèlerinages selon trois axes : (i) l'expérience vécue des pèlerins ; (ii) l'intersection du spirituel et du marché ; et (iii) les systèmes sociétaux plus larges qui influencent l'expérience.

QR 1 - L'expérience vécue des pèlerins

Le premier intérêt de l'enquête se concentre sur les manières dont les pèlerins vivent le pèlerinage, aux niveaux individuels et collectifs, en considérant également leurs comportements, leurs significations et les ressources utilisées lors de l'expérience vécue. La question de recherche est :

Comment et pourquoi les pèlerins (individuellement et collectivement) s'engagent-ils (par des comportements, des significations et des ressources) dans l'expérience du pèlerinage ?

QR 2 - L'intersection du spirituel et du marché

Malgré des recherches antérieures pertinentes sur la marchandisation du spirituel (McAlexander, Dufault, Martin, & Schouten, 2014) et à l'intersection du spirituel et du commercial (Poulain, 2021), il reste encore des questions empiriques-théoriques à aborder sur la consommation d'expériences de pèlerinage, en particulier compte tenu des contrastes entre les pèlerinages européens et latino-américains. Cette thèse demande :

Comment le commercial et le spirituel (dans les différents pèlerinages étudiés) se rejoignent-ils pour offrir (s'ils le font) une expérience aux pèlerins ?

QR 3 - Les systèmes sociétaux plus larges qui influencent l'expérience

Cette thèse de doctorat s'intéresse enfin aux influences macrosociales dans les consommateurs spirituels et la dynamique des marchés. En d'autres termes, quels sont les phénomènes sociaux et économiques qui impactent la vie des pèlerins au-

delà du pèlerinage, influençant peut-être leurs décisions de s'engager dans tels sites ? Cette thèse s'intéresse à comprendre les façons dont les consommateurs spirituels négocient ces influences macrosociales et les tensions potentielles sur le marché spirituel. Cette recherche doctorale met en question :

Comment les modes de vie sociétaux actuels impactent-ils (ou non) les consommateurs dans leur quête de spiritualité ?

Onto-épistémologie et croyances sous-jacentes

Positionnement onto-épistémologique et conception de la recherche

Philosophiquement, je comprends la réalité comme socialement construite par les êtres humains, dans laquelle les entités sociales sont perçues de manière subjective (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Cette recherche s'appuie alors sur un paradigme ontologique interprétatif/constructiviste. En d'autres termes, en tant que chercheur, j'interprète le monde qui m'entoure par l'observation et l'interprétation (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Par observation, j'entends la collecte d'informations sur les événements, tandis que par interprétation, j'entends la signification de ces informations et le dessin d'inférences et de modèles abstraits. Sous le paradigme interprétatif/constructiviste, je comprends les phénomènes à travers les significations que les gens leur attribuent et à partir de leurs expériences subjectives en tant qu'individus et collectifs. Au lieu de prédéfinir des variables dépendantes et indépendantes, je me concentre sur la complexité de la fabrication du sens humain et sur les raisons subjectives et le sens qui sous-tendent leur action sociale. Il n'y a pas de connaissance objective qui attend d'être découverte.

En conséquence, cela m'amène à expliquer la nature de la relation entre moi, en tant que chercheur, et ce qui est connu ? J'encadre ma vision épistémologique dans la perspective de l'interprétativisme, car je vois le monde comme construit, interprété et vécu par les gens dans leurs interactions les uns avec les autres et avec des systèmes sociaux plus larges (Antwi & Hamza, 2015 ; Guba et Lincoln, 1985). Mes intérêts empiriques et théoriques sont alors sur les liens sociaux et les relations entre les multiples agents dans un contexte donné, à savoir les personnes, les objets, les contextes géographiques, les textes et autres. Selon le paradigme interprétatif, la nature de l'enquête ne cherche pas à généraliser les résultats à une population, mais plutôt à comprendre un phénomène particulier. Enfin, l'approche interprétative a tendance à être naturaliste car elle applique des situations du monde réel et est non manipulatrice, discrète et non contrôlante.

Les positions ontologiques et épistémologiques ont mené cette recherche pour avoir une approche méthodologique orientée au sens (au lieu d'être orientée à la mesure) (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Pour comprendre la signification associée à la consommation d'expériences spirituelles, les chercheurs interprétatifs s'appuient souvent sur des méthodologies inductives qui facilitent le contact personnel sur une certaine période de temps entre le chercheur et le groupe faisant l'objet de la recherche (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Par conséquent, il est possible de comprendre le monde à travers une expérience de première main, des reportages et des citations véridiques et des conversations réelles. Ils emploient des méthodes de collecte de données sensibles au contexte et qui permettent une description riche et détaillée ou épaisse des phénomènes sociaux en encourageant les participants à parler librement et à comprendre la quête de l'enquêteur pour mieux comprendre un phénomène que le participant a vécu (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Selon Lincoln et Guba (1985), le critère fondamental des rapports qualitatifs est la confiance, au lieu de la validité et de la fiabilité comme cela se produit dans la recherche positiviste. La recherche qualitative vise à explorer, découvrir et comprendre un certain phénomène (Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

Croyances sous-jacentes

Au-delà de la discussion des philosophies et paradigmes sous-jacents qui ont conduit à mes choix méthodologiques et de recherche, je présente également ici les croyances sous-jacentes qui imprègnent ma conscience et mes attitudes, et qui peuvent également avoir un impact sur mon style de recherche. Il semble tout à fait pertinent de soulever ce genre de questions, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit de rechercher un contexte religieux. Je me positionne comme une personne non religieuse, ou en voie de déconstruction de fortes racines religieuses pourtant présentes dans ma façon de penser. En raison d'une enfance ancrée dans les dogmes et les pratiques religieuses, j'étais entouré d'images, d'activités et de pratiques familiales auxquelles un individu catholique participe normalement (par exemple, aller à l'église tous les dimanches, participer à des groupes d'adoration une fois par semaine, communier, confession des péchés lors des séances de confession, etc.). Ce mode de vie religieux est tout à fait normal, surtout quand vous

êtes né dans le pays le plus catholique du monde (à savoir, le Brésil), et encore plus quand vous êtes né à la campagne dans un immense lieu de pèlerinage catholique.

Le moi actuel contraste beaucoup avec cette ancienne version de moi. Je me déclarerais plutôt intéressé par une spiritualité de soi en ce moment, comme quelqu'un de très sensible et ouvert aux différents mouvements spirituels mais qui a tendance à s'opposer aux dogmes restrictifs. Les pratiques religieuses ne sont plus présentes dans ma vie actuelle, sauf pour des raisons de recherche, mais un mode de pensée religieux est pourtant présent dans ma façon de penser, peut-être à cause des dogmes persistants dont je ne pouvais pas encore complètement me détacher.

Il y a aussi quelques ambiguïtés qui sous-tendent mes choix avec ce contexte. En tant qu'homosexuel cis, s'engager dans un contexte de recherche conservateur était assez difficile. J'ai fait mon *coming out* pour moi et mes proches il y a environ cinq ans, quand j'avais 22 ans, et je crois que les idéologies religieuses présentes dans mon processus d'éducation ont été l'un des principales responsables de mon blocage pendant si longtemps. Donc, à ce niveau, le lecteur doit supposer avec empathie les émotions que j'ai ressenties tout au long de ce processus de recherche. Un mélange de culpabilité, de honte, de colère, mais aussi de bonheur et de gratitude était présent dans mon processus de *coming out*, ainsi que pendant mon parcours de recherche. D'une part, j'hésitais à m'engager dans un contexte religieux après tout ce que j'ai traversé, mais d'autre part, j'étais reconnaissante de trouver un contexte de recherche qui me parlait comme ces pèlerinages.

De nombreuses questions ont été posées par les gens sur ma décision de m'engager dans un tel contexte religieux tout en étant gay et, évidemment, certaines de ces questions sont également venues de moi-même. L'une de ces questions était : pourquoi est-ce que je fais des recherches sur un contexte qui est intégré à des dogmes qui ont historiquement massacré des personnes qui me ressemblent ? Toutefois, après réflexion, j'ai réalisé qu'il pourrait être également important d'avoir quelqu'un comme moi qui recherche de tels contextes. J'ai réalisé que je pouvais avoir des avantages et des inconvénients de mon côté. En tant qu'individu qui a grandi aux côtés de tels dogmes religieux et au milieu de tels contextes de pèlerinage, cela me permet de mieux comprendre les phénomènes

liés au contexte étudié. En même temps, je vois les avantages d'avoir une relation plus détachée avec la religiosité en tant que chercheur dans ce contexte, ce qui permet d'explorer davantage des explications alternatives et une perspective extérieure sur celle-ci. J'ai donc décidé de surmonter et de compenser les mauvaises émotions que je ressentais et de m'engager avec une vision de recherche mature sur cette thèse.

De plus, cette thèse n'était pas la première fois que je faisais des recherches sur les pèlerinages catholiques. Je me suis d'abord engagé dans ce contexte lors de ma thèse de master et alors que je faisais une méthodologie inspirée de l'ethnographie dans les pèlerinages, j'ai réalisé à quel point j'appréciais faire de la recherche et c'est à ce moment-là que j'ai décidé de suivre le parcours académique. Les résultats de cette thèse de master ont ensuite été publiés et cela m'a également donné la force de continuer à rechercher des contextes reliés alors que je réalisais des résultats positifs.

LA CONSOMMATION DU MARCHE SPIRITUEL : UNE ETHNOGRAPHIE DANS LES LIEUX DE PELERINAGE

RESUME

Cette thèse se concentre sur l'intersection entre le commercial et le spirituel pour comprendre comment les expériences spirituelles sont vécues par les consommateurs. Nous sommes alignés sur le domaine récemment constitué de la 'spiritualité du consommateur' (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a, p. 393) qui considère les « pratiques et processus engagés lors de la consommation d'offres de marché (produits, services, lieux) qui produisent une « utilité spirituelle » ». À travers une approche ethnographique interprétative dans quatre lieux de pèlerinage catholiques en Amérique latine et en Europe, cette recherche révèle les modèles et les différences de la consommation spirituelle entre et à travers chaque cas étudié. Les résultats mettent en évidence 12 thèmes émergés de l'analyse qui sont liés aux tensions et aux accords entre le spirituel et le commercial, l'expérience collective et individualisée des pèlerins, la consommation du spirituel en tant que stratégie d'adaptation traitent des problèmes mondains, la consommation incarnée et matérielle du pèlerinage, ainsi que les problèmes liés à l'accessibilité, à la durabilité et à la surconsommation dans les lieux de pèlerinage. Cette recherche doctorale contribue donc à la littérature sur la marchandisation du sacré, les mécanismes d'adaptation, *embodiment*, la matérialité et d'autres enjeux sociétaux.

Mots clés : expériences spirituelles ; spiritualité du consommateur ; ethnographie.

CONSUMING THE SPIRITUAL MARKET: AN ETHNOGRAPHY IN PILGRIMAGE SITES

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is concentrated in the intersection between the commercial and the spiritual to understand how spiritual experiences are lived by consumers. We

are aligned with the recently constituted field of Consumer Spirituality (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a, p. 393) that considers the "practices and processes engaged in when consuming market offerings (products, services, places) that yield 'spiritual utility'". Through an interpretive ethnographic approach in four Catholic pilgrimage sites in Latin America and Europe, this research reveals the patterns and differences of the spiritual consumption between and across each case studied. The findings highlight 12 themes emerged from the analysis that are related to the tensions and agreements between the spiritual and the commercial, the collective and individualized experience of pilgrims, the consumption of the spiritual as coping strategy do deal with mundane problems, the embodied and material consumption of the pilgrimage, and also issues related to accessibility, sustainability and over consumption in pilgrimage settings. This doctoral research therefore contributes to the literature on the marketization of the sacred, coping mechanisms, embodiment, materiality, and other societal issues.

Keywords: spiritual experiences; consumer spirituality; ethnography.

