

Book Title – Green Events and Green Tourism: An International Guide to Good Practice (eds. Hugues Séraphin and Emma Nolan)

Chapter Authors – Frédéric Dosquet (ORCID 0000-0002-5652-903X), Thierry Lorey (ORCID 0000-0002-1940-2822), Hugues Séraphin (ORCID 0000-0002-2092-728X and Thomas Majd (ORCID0000-0003-4553-1182)

Chapter Number and Title - Chapter 11: The elusive goal of sustainable tourism. A Case Study of the Camino de Santiago in France and in Spain

Abstract

For more than a thousand years, pilgrims have trodden the Camino de Santiago to the tomb of Saint James the Greater in Santiago de Compostela. Despite its cultural and religious heritage, the pilgrimage's popularity declined in the 16th and subsequent centuries, only to see a huge resurgence in recent decades. Somewhat paradoxically, the rejuvenation of a pilgrimage that is partly about a return to nature has raised a number of environmental issues. Hence, the recent influx of pilgrims is forcing the actors involved in managing this intangible asset to address the practical and pragmatic aspects of sustainable tourism. In conclusion, although the foundations for developing sustainable tourism along the Camino de Santiago have been laid, there remain large differences between what has been done in Spain and in France. Spain's more global vision of the tourism economy and appreciation of its strategic value have given it a lead over France. However, France has made significant progress in recent years, as the government has understood that this unique heritage must be preserved by carefully managing the Routes of Santiago and the development of tourism along them. The Camino de Santiago has the potential to become a paradigm of cross-border sustainable tourism.

Author Biographies:

Frédéric Dosquet

Frédéric Dosquet is professor of marketing at ESC Pau with a doctorate in management science and a Master's degree in marketing and communication from ESCP-Europe. He has written 15 books and more than 20 book chapters in the fields of marketing, tourism and events management. In recent years, his research has focused on the Camino de Santiago, most notably its political, managerial and environmental dimensions. He has presented his work at numerous international conferences and published his findings in academic journals. He is a member of the association El Centro de Documentación e Investigación del Camino de Santiago.

Thierry Lorey

Thierry Lorey is professor of marketing at ESC Pau and an assistant researcher at the University of Bordeaux. After obtaining his doctorate from the University of Toulouse 1 Capitole (2012), he created the Department of Agro-food Studies at ESC Pau, becoming one of its co-directors. In addition to his research into the marketing of wine, culture and spirituality, which has been published in many leading French and international journals, he has studied various aspects of the Camino de Santiago, most notably with respect to tourism

This is an accepted manuscript of a chapter published by Routledge in Green Events and Green Tourism: an International Guide to Good Practice, available online at <https://www.routledge.com/Green-Events-andGreen-Tourism-An-International-Guide-to-Good-Practice/Seraphin-Nolan/p/book/9781138334755>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Routledge.

and territorial and public management issues. Much of this work has been carried out in collaboration with Spanish universities. He is also a member of the association El Centro de Documentación e Investigación del Camino de Santiago.

Hugues Séraphin

Hugues Séraphin is a Senior Lecturer in Event and Tourism Management Studies. He holds a PhD from the *Université de Perpignan Via Domitia* (France) and joined *The University of Winchester Business School* in 2012. He is the Programme Leader of the Event Management programme. This programme is one of the leading programmes in the country with 100% students' satisfaction (NSS 2016). Hugues started his career in 2003 as a French teacher in a secondary school in Birmingham. He then started to teach Travel, Tourism, and Events in 2006 when he joined a Further Education college in London. Hugues possesses a broad range of international experiences. This includes teaching in top Business Schools and Universities in France (EM Normandie; ESC Laroche; ESC Pau; Université de Perpignan Via Domitia, etc.). Prior to his career in academic, Hugues worked in the tourism and hospitality sector within various organisations and roles (in the Caribbean and in Europe).

Thomas Majd

Thomas Majd holds a doctorate in management science. As well as running his own company, he is the director of the Business Management bachelor's degree programme at Groupe ESC Troyes, where he teaches marketing, distribution and commercial negotiation. In recent years, his research has focused on marketing intelligence, tourism marketing and commercial negotiation.

For more than a thousand years, pilgrims have trodden the Camino de Santiago to the tomb of Saint James the Greater in Santiago de Compostela. Despite its long cultural and religious heritage, the pilgrimage's popularity declined massively in the 16th and subsequent centuries, only to see a huge resurgence in recent decades. Somewhat paradoxically, the rejuvenation of a pilgrimage that is partly about a return to nature has raised a number of environmental issues. Hence, the recent influx of pilgrims is forcing the actors involved in managing this intangible asset to address the practical and pragmatic aspects of sustainable tourism.

A Long Transnational History

Although the first pilgrimages to the tomb of St James, in the 9th century, were entirely within the Iberian Peninsula, by the 10th century pilgrims came from much further afield. Today, the Ways of Saint James, as the Camino de Santiago is also known, cross the whole of Europe, covering several thousand kilometres as they converge upon Santiago de Compostela, the capital of the autonomous province of Galicia.

The original reason for creating the pilgrimage was to strengthen ties between the rest of Christian Europe and the Kingdom of Asturias, then under threat from the Muslim forces occupying southern Spain. It immediately fulfilled its initial, geostrategic purpose and had great politico-religious impact on both sides of the Pyrenees. In fact, Saint James would become a key figure in the building of the Spanish nation, where he is known as “the Moor-slayer” (*Matamoros* in Spanish) because of the help he is said to have given King Ramiro 1st of Asturias in his fight against the Moors in the 9th century. According to another legend, in 813 CE, Saint James appeared in a dream to Charlemagne, the king of the Franks, and ordered him to deliver his tomb from the Moors. Charlemagne was told that the Milky Way would guide him across the Pyrenees to the apostle's tomb. Other pilgrims soon began following the route indicated by Saint James, creating a dense network of pilgrimage trails covering the whole of Europe. Four main routes across France, starting in Tours, Vezelay, Puy-en-Velay and Arles, merged into a single route across Spain (*El Camino francés*). By the 12th century, the pilgrimage had reached its peak in terms of fame and social standing (Péricard-Mea and Mollaret, 2010), and, in the 15th century, Pope Alexander VI declared it to be one of Christianity's three great pilgrimages, alongside Jerusalem and Rome. Nevertheless, by the 16th century the Church authorities had begun doubting whether the apostle's tomb actually was in Santiago and the pilgrimage went into decline. As a result, by the 19th century the original pilgrimage came close to disappearing entirely, with fewer than 40 pilgrims attending the apostle's mass in Compostela Cathedral in 1867. In the middle of the 20th century, Franco's dictatorial government resurrected the cult of Saint James for ideological reasons, but Spain's closed borders prevented any significant revival of the pilgrimage. Only when democracy was restored to Spain, in 1975, were pilgrims from around the world once again free to visit Santiago de Compostela. However, the recent explosion in the number and type of pilgrims following the Camino de Santiago did not occur until modern society moved into its post-modernist phase at the end of the 20th century (Maffesoli, 1988). Finally, the particularity of these Routes is to cross several European countries, especially, France and Spain. It means that there are different policies and practices stashed about the management and especially about sustainable tourism management of these Routes of Santiago de Compostela depending of the national points of view. That's why this case is interesting because these Routes are at the crossroad of national and international managerial policies.

Two International Labels: Increased Protection but Also Increased Pressure

Today, the Camino de Santiago is no longer as exclusively a religious affair as it once was. In fact, the pilgrimage constitutes a unique cultural, religious and commercial continuum within Europe, whose importance in terms of cultural heritage and tourism has been recognised through the award of two international heritage labels. In 1987, the Council of Europe named the “Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes” the first European Cultural Route in acknowledgement of their role in promoting the exchange of ideas, expertise and art, in bringing people together, and in creating a European collective memory. Ultimate recognition for the Camino came in 1998, when the “Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France” were inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage list. Unlike the Spanish section of the pilgrimage trail, which obtained World Heritage status in 1993, the UNESCO inscription for the French part of the routes includes monuments and buildings (churches, hospitals, bridges, etc.) along the four routes, as well as seven sections of the routes themselves. In total, 71 monuments and seven sections of the routes in ten French regions have been given UNESCO protection. The impetus provided by these two international labels has contributed to the massive rise in the pilgrimage’s popularity, with an almost 4000-fold increase in pilgrim numbers since 1970. The *Oficina del Peregrino* recorded just 68 pilgrims arriving in Compostela in 1970, 209 pilgrims in 1980, 4882 pilgrims in 1990 and 55,004 pilgrims in 2000. Taking a ten-year mean in order to smooth out year-to-year variations shows that, on average, 212,903 pilgrims reached Compostela every year between 2006 and 2016. However, this average masks an increase from 101,149 pilgrims in 2016 to 277,854 pilgrims in 2016, a rise of almost 275%. This rapid growth in pilgrim numbers is the result of a combination of sociological factors, increased publicity and religious factors.

- Viewed from a sociological perspective, the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela provides two things that individuals in today’s post-modern society are seeking (Maffesoli, 1988) - a life experience that is not just about consumption and the need to be part of a group of like-minded individuals;
- Increased publicity, largely through numerous widely marketed and successful books and films about the Camino de Santiago, has also contributed to the rise in pilgrim numbers. For example, the 100% increase in the number of Americans doing the pilgrimage in 2011-2012 was certainly fuelled by the release of an American film called “The Way” at the end of 2010;
- Two religious factors have a significant impact on pilgrim numbers. First, Jubilee Years, that is, years in which St James’ Day (25th July) falls on a Sunday, attract more pilgrims than other years. For example, 272,135 pilgrims visited Compostela in 2010, a Jubilee Year, compared with 145,877 pilgrims in 2009. Second, large religious gatherings in Compostela, such as visits by the pope in 2002, 2009 and 2010, also attract large numbers of pilgrims.

Together, these factors have had an unprecedented impact on the popularity of the pilgrimage, which now attracts people from all walks of life, and have helped ensure the cultural and physical survival, at least for now, of the Camino de Santiago. However, the resulting environmental pressure is starting to raise questions about the sustainability of tourism along the pilgrim trails.

Sustainable Tourism, A Multi-Dimensional Concept

This is an accepted manuscript of a chapter published by Routledge in *Green Events and Green Tourism: an International Guide to Good Practice*, available online at <https://www.routledge.com/Green-Events-and-Green-Tourism-An-International-Guide-to-Good-Practice/Seraphin-Nolan/p/book/9781138334755>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Routledge.

The present paper adopts François-Lecompte and Prim-Allaz's (2009) definition of sustainable tourism, which *“targets the entire tourism industry, examines wilderness areas as well as rural and urban areas, encompasses the notion of cultural and architectural heritage, and encourages changes in behaviours, starting at home and not just in the countries visited”*. This is similar to the Brundtland report's (1987) definition of sustainable development, which *“must be capable of satisfying the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability to satisfy the needs of future generations”*. So defined, the concept of sustainable tourism is highly relevant to the pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago for several reasons.

- First, the Camino de Santiago is the embodiment of a heritage bequeathed by earlier generations to the current generation, which will in turn pass it on to future generations. Pilgrims feel they are experiencing, and therefore perpetuating, a feeling of belonging to a community, whether that community is spiritual, geographic or, more globally, human;
- Second, the pilgrimage routes bring together innumerable tourism-sector stakeholders in a continuous chain that stretches for thousands of kilometres. These stakeholders, which cover the entire length of the pilgrimage, are exceptionally varied, and include public bodies and private organisations, international companies and local service providers. Following the classification drawn up by Cohendet, Grandadam and Simon (2010), Lorey, Dosquet, Errami and Chantelot (2016) defined three layers of stakeholders in the pilgrimage, categorizing them as “upperground”, “middleground” and “underground”. We will come back to this division of stakeholders, which has led to numerous issues in terms of both management and, most notably, sustainable tourism;
- Third, the pilgrimage combines natural, cultural and architectural characteristics, as pilgrims progress through a constantly changing natural and architectural landscape and meet many other people from extremely varied backgrounds (in 2016, people from 146 different countries undertook the pilgrimage);
- Finally, because many pilgrims start the pilgrimage from their front door, it is not associated uniquely with behaviours they produce in the areas through which they travel; it is also associated with the way they behave at home.

Moreover, as the literature shows (Camuset al., 2010; Lozatoet al. 2012; Diallo, 2014), the Camino de Santiago encompasses all three classic dimensions of sustainable tourism. These dimensions are environmental sustainability, achieved by managing and conserving resources and biodiversity; economic sustainability, achieved by ensuring the viability of local business; and social sustainability, achieved by giving recognition to and respecting local cultures. UNESCO's justification for adding the Camino de Santiago to the World Heritage List also takes into account these three dimensions:

- *Criterion (ii): The Route of Santiago de Compostela played a crucial role in the two-way exchange of cultural advances between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Europe, especially during the Middle Ages, but also in subsequent centuries. The wealth of cultural heritage that has emerged in association with the Camino is vast, marking the birth of Romanesque art and featuring extraordinary examples of Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque art. Moreover, in contrast with the waning of urban life in the rest of the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages, the reception and commercial activities emanating from the Camino de Santiago led to the growth of cities in the north of the Peninsula and gave rise to the founding of new ones;*

- *Criterion (iv): The Route of Santiago de Compostela has preserved the most complete material registry of all Christian pilgrimage routes, featuring ecclesiastical and secular buildings, large and small enclaves, and civil engineering structures;*
- *Criterion (vi): The Route of Santiago de Compostela bears outstanding witness to the power and influence of faith among people of all social classes and origins in medieval Europe and later.*

Finally, the means of locomotion used by pilgrims following the Camino de Santiago have negligible or zero carbon footprints. Hence, as the statistics gathered by the *Oficina del Peregrino* in Compostela show, the means of locomotion pilgrims use are highly compatible with sustainable tourism.

Table 11.1 shows the percentage of pilgrims using each mode of locomotion in 2016. These figures have been stable since 2004.

<Table 11.1 here>

Table 11.1: Means of Locomotion Used by Pilgrims

All these factors would suggest that the pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago, with its focus on communion with nature and benevolence towards other people, would not have any sustainability concerns. Unfortunately, this is not the case and stakeholders in the Camino are having to rethink their positions and take measures to ensure the pilgrimage's sustainability.

A Still Fragile Form of Sustainable Tourism

The existence of the pilgrimage as a form of sustainable tourism is being challenged by a number of issues, most of which are related to its ever-increasing popularity. One such issue is waste management. For example, unless they are made aware of the problem, the large numbers of pilgrims following the Camino will inevitably generate large amounts of litter, which damages the environment along the trails. Our experience of the pilgrimage, which we did between 2012 and 2016, showed that little action has been taken to address this problem. As a result, pilgrims dispose of their litter as they see fit, which is not always in the most environmentally responsible way. Another major issue is damage to the pilgrimage's image due to crowding on the trails detracting from the journey's meaning and reducing its cachet as a unique and extraordinary experience. This observation led Dosquet, Lorey and Estella (2015) to suggest "demarketing" the pilgrimage in order to reduce pilgrim numbers.

Although officially everything possible is being done to protect the Camino, the reality is sometimes different. This is particularly obvious when the measures taken in Spain are compared with the situation in France.

- As UNESCO noted, the Spanish section of the Camino benefits from a high level of protection: *"The Route of Santiago de Compostela is completely preserved and characterised by a high level of conservation of the route itself and of the buildings and sites along the way, making it a unique example of a medieval pilgrimage route which is still in use today. The route also illustrates the integration into the environment"*. In fact, the Camino was accorded Spain's highest level of heritage protection as early as 1985, when it was listed as a "Property of Cultural Interest" (*Bien de Interés Cultural, BIC*) under the First Additional Provision of Historic

Heritage Act 16 of 25th June 1985. Further measures to protect this unique heritage have been taken by the autonomous regions through which the Camino passes. Aragon was the first region to protect its section of the Camino, creating a technical coordination committee to restore and revitalise the pilgrimage trail via Decree 96 of 24th May 1988. That same year, under Statutory Decree 290 of 14th December 1988, Navarre defined official boundaries for the Camino de Santiago combined with a special protection regime for areas within these boundaries. Castile and León, under Decree 324 of 23rd December 1999, listed a clearly defined zone around the Camino de Santiago as a “historic ensemble” (*Conjunto Histórico*), while Rioja listed its section of the Camino as a BIC via Decree 14 of 16th March 2001, which also establishes a peripheral protection zone. Most recently, three decrees approved by Galicia in 2011 and 2012 gave further protection to the Camino in this region.

In addition to this legislative protection, UNESCO appreciates the steps that have been taken to oversee actions by the Camino’s various stakeholders. The most important measure in this respect was the creation of the *Consejo Jacobeo* (Council of Saint James), which was set up in 1991 to coordinate cooperation between Spain’s central government, especially the Education, Culture and Sport Ministries, and the autonomous regions traversed by the pilgrimage. Royal Decree 1431/2009 of 11th September 2009 restructured the Council into a central committee, an executive committee and a cooperation committee, in order to “strengthen the functions of the Consejo Jacobeo as an entity for cooperation in relation to the management of the Camino de Santiago inscribed on the list of World Heritage Sites”.

Nevertheless, these protection measures have not resolved every problem and a number of potential threats remain, due to pressure from the growth of tourism and the number of pilgrims, and to the expansion of infrastructure such as major highways, high-speed train lines, and the natural growth of towns and cities. Hence, UNESCO has highlighted the need to enforce regulatory measures and legislation, the importance of carrying out impact studies before authorising any new construction, and the need to take into account the Camino’s attributes when drawing up municipal development plans.

- Problems in France are more perceptible for a number of reasons. First, France has had five years less experience than Spain in protecting the Camino, as UNESCO did not add the French sections of the pilgrimage to the World Heritage list until 1998. Second, in contrast with Spain, where the entire Camino has World Heritage status, the Routes of Santiago in France are listed as a serial property comprising just seven sections of the four main routes, plus 71 monuments. As a result, a large, diverse and often fragmented group of stakeholders is responsible for managing the World Heritage property in France, thereby hindering the implementation of effective conservation measures for the different sites, such as the establishment of buffer zones to protect their exceptional universal value (World Heritage Centre Periodic Reporting, December 2014). The French authorities acknowledge this problem: “[The Routes of Santiago have] *the particularity of being a serial property, which means that each of its components must satisfy management conditions (...) which must be coherent for the whole: for UNESCO, the 78 components of the property form a single property. Neglecting these management obligations for just one component could lead to the entire property losing its World Heritage status*” (Prefecture of the Midi-Pyrénées Region, 2015). This statement recognises the complexity of the

administrative landscape surrounding the Camino, with responsibility for protecting the UNESCO properties being shared between 10 regional councils, 32 *départemental* councils, and innumerable inter-municipal and municipal councils, as well as other public bodies such as the ACIR (Agency for Inter-regional Cooperation and Networking) and the European Federation of the Saint James Way. In addition, because parts of the Camino de Santiago cross private land, a number of private organisations have to be taken into account, not to mention the Church authorities and associated charities such as Webcompostella. In order to improve coordination between these bodies, in October 2014 the French government asked Pascal Mailhos, the Prefect of the Haute Garonne *département*, to head an inter-regional coordination committee for The Routes of Santiago serial property. The committee's objective is to: *"bring together landowners, managers and the "Compostelle" inter-regional cooperation association, which is responsible for running the network. It will enable stakeholders from the different regions to share objectives and exchange good practices. It will also help create and organise local commissions that will contribute to the governance of the property. These commissions will help implement local and inter-regional management plans"*. To this end, on 5th November 2015 the government signed a three-year agreement mandating ACIR Compostelle to coordinate studies and actions aimed at guaranteeing the integrity of The Routes of Santiago. ACIR Compostelle's efforts are already bearing fruit. As the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire published by the World Heritage Centre in December 2014 noted: *"protection measures designed to maintain the exceptional universal value of the property, including the conditions needed to preserve its authenticity and/or integrity, constitute an appropriate or better basis for its effective management and protection"*. Finally, the French government must create buffer zones around all 78 UNESCO-listed properties, including the seven sections of the routes. Although the 71 monuments included within the World Heritage property are already protected under current French planning and heritage-protection laws, local authority action plans for developing hiking trails do not include any measures for protecting the seven sections of the routes.

In conclusion, although the foundations for developing sustainable tourism along the Camino de Santiago have been laid, there remain large differences between what has been done in Spain and in France. Spain's more global vision of the tourism economy and appreciation of its strategic value have given it a lead over France. However, France has made significant progress in recent years, as the government has understood that this unique heritage can only be preserved by carefully managing the Routes of Santiago and the development of tourism along them. The Camino de Santiago has the potential to become a paradigm of cross-border sustainable tourism, an objective all the stakeholders involved, from international organisations and government authorities to the Catholic Church, charities and the pilgrims themselves, would like to see attained. Through its very essence, the Camino de Santiago is a potential archetype for sustainable tourism; now it must live up to that promise.

References

Brundtland (1987), « Rapport: Notre avenir à tous ».

Camus S., Hikkerova L. Sahut J.-M. (2010), « Tourisme durable: une approche systémique », *Management & Avenir*, 2010/4, 34, p. 253-269.

This is an accepted manuscript of a chapter published by Routledge in *Green Events and Green Tourism: an International Guide to Good Practice*, available online at <https://www.routledge.com/Green-Events-and-Green-Tourism-An-International-Guide-to-Good-Practice/Seraphin-Nolan/p/book/9781138334755>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Routledge.

Cerezales, N. (2013), « Santiago de Compostela, vers une redéfinition patrimoniale du chemin de pèlerinage », *Revue Conserveries mémorielles*, 14/2013.

Cohendet P., Grandadam D., Simon L. (2010), « The Anatomy of the Creative City », *Industry and Innovation*, vol. 17, n° 1, p. 91-111.

Diallo M.-F. (2014), « Les études quantitatives sur le tourisme durable : une analyse des principaux travaux de recherche », *Management & Avenir*, 2014/3, p. 204-221.

Dosquet, F, Estellat, N, Lorey, TH. (2015), « Marketing touristique, démarketing et création de valeur. Le cas des chemins de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle, dans les Pyrénées-Atlantiques », 2e Conférence de l'AFMAT, EM Strasbourg, mai 2015

Dosquet, F, Lorey, Th, Majd, Th, Seraphin, H. (2017), « Les chemins de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle à l'aube d'un tourisme durable », 8eme journées scientifiques du Tourisme Durable, Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam), sous l'égide du CNRS.

François-Lecompte, A., et Prim-Allaz, I. (2009), « Les Français et le tourisme durable : proposition d'une typologie », *Management & Avenir*, 2009/9, p. 308-326.

Lorey, Th., Dosquet, F., Errami, Y, Chantelot, S, (2016), « La gestion du patrimoine des Chemins de St Jacques de Compostelle: la nécessaire émergence d'un nouveau leadership public », 5eme Congrès de l'Airmap (Association Internationale en Recherche de Management Public), Poitiers, juin 2016.

Lorey, Th., Dosquet, F, Errami, Y, Cuevas, F. (2017), « La gestion par l'Eglise des Chemins de Saint Jacques de Compostelle : un modèle universel en France et en Espagne ? », 6eme Congrès de l'Airmap (Association Internationale en Recherche de Management Public), Nice, juin 2017.

Lozato-giotart, J.-P., Leroux E. et Balfet, M. (2012), *Management du tourisme durable: Territoires, offres et les stratégies*, Pearson Education.

Maffesoli, M. (1988), *Le Temps des tribus*, La table ronde.

Pericard-Mea, D. Mollaret, L. (2010), *Chemins de Compostelle et Patrimoine mondial*, La Louve Editions.

Unesco, « Rapport sur les Chemins de Saint Jacques de Compostelle: Camino francés et chemins du nord de l'Espagne », doc en ligne.

Unesco, « Rapport périodique du centre de patrimoine mondial », décembre 2014, doc en ligne.