

Master Thesis

Business writing in academic institution.

Cami de Sant Jaume:

From Port de la Selva till Montserrat

Proposition Model of development of touristic destination.

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Prologue.

Adventure of travelling is new knowledge, feelings, emotions and acquaintances; frightening, challenging and amazing experience.

History of tourism industry as we know it today started with the first one-day package tour created by Thomas Cook in 1841. It has developed tremendously since then and is recognized by UNWTO (2016) to be the third export category after fuels and chemicals worldwide. But, with development of mass tourism, the sense of travel as a challenging and refreshing experience vanished. Great masses of tourists spend vacations in crowded spots and do similar activities. Such concentrations of visitors in certain places and time periods cause damage to local communities, environment and tourist's perception of vacation.

Current tendency in contemporary tourism in Europe, particularly Spain and especially Catalonia is **sustainable development of touristic destinations**, which means the use of resources for economic development in such a way that they are not damaged, but conserved and restored for future generations. This tendency involves development of **sustainable touristic products** that diffuse tourism demand and supply equally in terms of geography and seasonality.

My Master Thesis is dedicated to a particular type of touristic activity that fits perfectly the criteria described above - **route-based trekking**. It is gradually becoming popular with travellers. It consists of walking from one place to another on a pre-arranged route for a prolonged period of time. Most successful destinations of such type are based on historic, natural or cultural values of the region. Many trekking touristic products involve additional meaning for voyage, it can be culture, adventure, religion, sports, competition or a variety of attractions.

My Master Thesis is dedicated to an existing route, situated in Catalonia - **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**. The objective of my study is to examine its current situation, analyse it and develop a proposal model for its improvement and development. To fulfil this objective, I have carried out the following activities:

- First of all, I have analysed previous academic studies of route-based tourism, statistics, expectations and reports to identify its dialectics, its potential to develop in future and provide economic growth for the region. As the route objective of this study belongs to Ways of Saint James network, second part of literature review is dedicated to motivations of visitors of routes with religious branding themes.

- Next part of the study consisted in evaluation and discussion of personal travelling experiences upon 2 routes of Saint Jaime's network: **French traditional way** and **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**. Journeys were accomplished to get personal insight on necessities of pedestrian travellers and to see both destinations from customer's point of view.
- After that, I have taken a number of personal interviews in depth with people connected to the management of the route to understand the current situation of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**.
- Then I examined characteristics of the route objective of this study, its potential to provide necessary services for travellers and identified primary customer profile of the route, carried out Benchmarking and SWOT analysis.
- Last, but not least, investigation of opinions of supply side of the route about the necessity of development was carried out.
- Analysis and discussion of data gathered throughout the study leads to Proposition Model of development of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**.

This study has a personal meaning for me, as I got involved emotionally in **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** and I want to dedicate myself to the development of this destination in future.

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Table of contents.

1. Introduction.	7
○ 1.1. The objective.	7
○ 1.2. Saint James Way Network concept and history.	8
○ 1.3. Personal motivation.	11
2. Literature review.	12
○ 2.1. Statistics and expectations of UNWTO for tourism.	12
○ 2.2. Dialectics of route-based tourism, potential for development and provision of economic growth for the region.	13
○ 2.3. Route-based destinations with religious branding themes: contemporary motivations for visit.	19
3. Methodology.	23
3.1. Technical characteristics of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.	24
3.2. Work in the Field. Personal trekking experience.	29
○ 3.2.1. Methodology of trekking experience.	29
○ 3.2.2. Methodology of evaluation.	31
○ 3.2.3. Evaluation of French traditional way.	33
○ 3.2.4. Evaluation of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.	42
○ 3.2.5. Comparison of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat with different parts of French traditional route.	45
○ 3.2.6. Results.	48
3.3. Current situation of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.	50
3.3.1. Interviews in depth.	50
○ 3.3.1.1. Methodology of investigation.	50

○ 3.3.1.2. Interviews.	52
○ 3.3.1.3. Results.	60
3.3.2. Orientated customer profile.	62
3.3.3. Benchmarking.	65
3.3.4. Investigation. Interviews with supply side of the route.	73
○ 3.3.4.1. Methodology of investigation.	73
○ 3.3.4.2. Analysis of data.	75
○ 3.3.4.3. Results of investigation.	76
○ 3.3.4.4. Discussion of the results.	79
3.3.5. SWOT analysis.	80
4. Discussion.	82
○ 4.1. Proposition Model of DMO.	83
○ 4.2. Limitations of study and further steps.	92
5. Conclusion.	94
6. Bibliography.	95

1. Introduction.

1.1. The objective.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is a route-based touristic destination in Catalonia. It was created in 2008 by enthusiastic and professional team from Department of Commerce and Tourism of Generalitat de Catalunya in collaboration with Association of Friends of Sant Jaume of Sabadell.

Region where itinerary is situated has significant historic, natural and cultural value. This route is yet to be discovered by its customers.

The objective of this business report is to identify the reasons why is **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** not successful in attracting as much visitors as needed for development and dynamisation of the region and to propose a model for its improvement and development.

1.2. Saint James Way Network concept and history.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is one of the destinations of a wide network of routes united by iconic theme of Saint James. Ways of Saint James (Caminos de Santiago) are spread throughout Europe.

The most known itinerary is **French traditional way**, it crosses Spain from French border in Pyrenees by Roncesvalles to Santiago de Compostela. History of travelling upon this route goes way back to pre-Christian times. This route was known as Way of Hercules in Ancient Greece and represented his journey to the place where Helios, God of Sun descended daily from sky carriage (the 10th labour of Hercules, Cattle of Geryon). At that point of time, there was a temple in the place of contemporary Lighthouse of Finisterre, called Ara Solis. Pilgrims walked straight to the West, following the Sun during the day and the Milky Way star constellation during the night. Upon their arrival to End of Earth, they burned their clothes, entered Atlantic Ocean and watched the sunset. Journey upon this route was symbolic and signified renovation.

Later, route was forgotten and abandoned for more than a millennium, until the year 813 A.C., when a shepherd called Pelaio noticed bright star in the night sky. Following miraculous sign, he found a cave, where relics of Saint James the Great, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ were buried with an identifying document attached. James, son of Zebedee, is considered to be the first Apostle to follow Jesus, along with his brother, John and the first one to be martyred to death. Saint James was beheaded by order of King Herod Agrippa in Jerusalem in year 44 A.C. (New Testament of the Holy Bible; Acts of Apostles, 12:1-2). His body, as one of the legends says, was taken away from Jerusalem by his disciples, Theodor and Anastasiei and brought to Galicia, Spain. Legend tells us that their boat was made of stone. There were some other miraculous acts recorded upon their arrival to Galicia, which helped them to bury the relics of Saint James in a safe place, where they stayed in peace until early 9th century.

When news about miraculous discovery by shepherd Pelaio reached King Alfonso II of Asturias, the Chaste, he ordered to build a Cathedral on the place of discovery of relics and a city around it. This was when Santiago de Compostela was founded. Santiago is the name of Saint James the Apostle in Spanish version (Saint James - Sant Iago - Santiago) and Compostela proceeds from Campo (field) and Stella (star). Alfonso II has send messages to all the governors of all European countries of those days to notify about miraculous discovery and accomplished the pilgrimage himself. Santiago de Compostela became one of 3 top pilgrimage destinations, along with Jerusalem and Rome. The peak of popularity of the route was recorded in the 12th century, when, according to Muslim ambassador Ali Ben Yusuf (1121) "amount of those who walked and came was so great, that it was impossible to follow the path towards East".

Nevertheless, French traditional way is not the only Saint James route. Concept of pilgrimage of Saint

James allows each pilgrim to start walking from the door of his own house till Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. There is an infinite number of itineraries that form part of this network and one of them passes through Catalonia.



Figure 1. Cami de Sant Jaume of Catalonia. Two itineraries. Original image from Touristic guide of Catalonia, Index ISBN 9788439381334, Carme Marsal, Rafa Domínguez. Adapted by the author of this study.

Cami de Sant Jaume of Catalonia is divided into two trekking destinations due to length and differences in geographic characteristics:

- **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** (Northern part, from Port de la Selva or Jonquera till Montserrat) - route objective of this study, and
- **Cami de Sant Jaume from Montserrat** (Southern part, from Monastery of Montserrat till Alcarràs close to Lleida) (Fig.1).

I will focus my study on the first destination, **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**, a trek of 250 km from **Port de la Selva** (Mediterranean seaside) till **Monastery of Montserrat**, one of the most important religious, cultural and natural destinations of Catalonia. It crosses beautiful landscapes from Mediterranean seaside into the mountains, passes by monasteries, such as **Sant Pere de Rodes** and **Santa Maria de L'Estany**, walks through authentic medieval towns and villages, enters top touristic cities, such as **Figueres** and **Girona**, goes through **Natural Park of Cap de Creus**, **Natural Park of Volcanic Area of Garrotxa**, **Natural Park of Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac** and **Natural park of Montserrat**. The final destination of this track, **Monastery of Montserrat** is worldwide known and highly popular with tourists and local visitors. History, culture, tradition and gastronomy of this region are outstanding and well known (Fig.2).

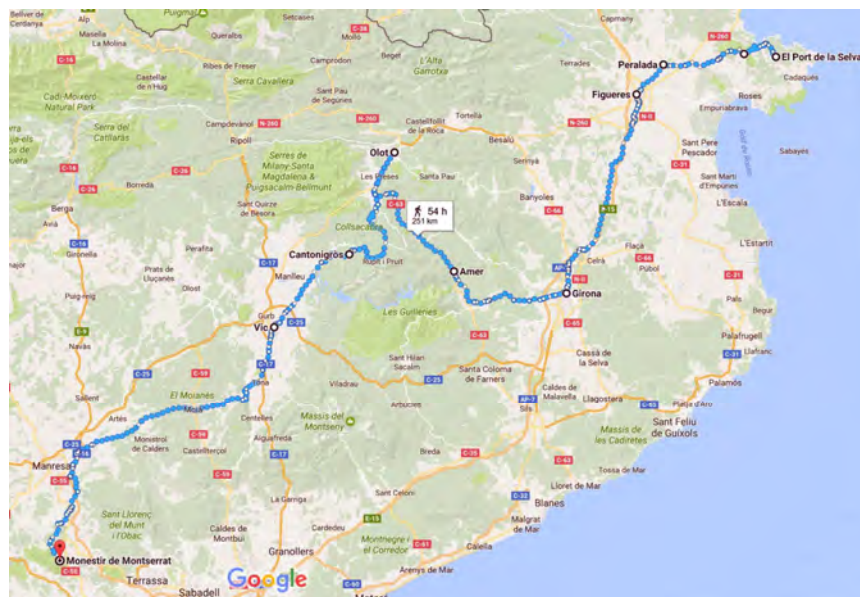


Figure 2. Route from Port de la Selva till Monastery of Montserrat. Image elaborated with Google maps by author of this study.

1.3. Personal motivation.

My personal motivation for walking long distances is desire for new experiences, curiosity, and aesthetic pleasure of discovering unknown places, challenging body and character and shaping personality of my son, who is accompanying me in these adventures from the age of 14. In my opinion, route-based tourism done by foot is a spiritual experience but, it is not directly connected to any religious discipline. It is a way to connect to nature and inner self by active meditation. Existence of historical, cultural and religious themes of pilgrimage adds value to travelling experience. It's the combination of diverse factors that make route-based tourism done by foot so special.

I learned about Saint James Way from the book "The Diary of a Magus" by Paulo Coelho. Idea to walk 1000 km following Milky Way star constellation upon a historical trail seemed beautiful, but unreal. I lived in Moscow, Russia and suffered from a continuous lack of time. In 2012 I moved to Catalonia with my family and now I live on the border of Gavarres Mountain massive, not far from Girona. Time here flows at a different pace. I have accomplished the Way in 2015 and ever since I am fond of route-based trekking. For me, experience of slow pedestrian travelling cannot be compared with any other type of tourism.

Breath-taking views, heat, tiredness, decisiveness to follow till the end, pain in the legs, joy of adventure, silence, never ending elastic time which loses its pace and becomes infinite... proudness of achieving the goal.

When I reached Roncesvalles on the first day of my Saint James Way experience, I knew I have become a different person. I left Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port early morning. After 500 meters of trail into Pyrenees I already felt tired. Air was hot and humid and there was no enough oxygen. After 2 km, path became really steep and as far I could see, it was going up and up. During the following 2 hours I have walked 8 km and have ascended 750 m. There was still 21 km left with more than 450 m elevation gain for that day. When I walked into Roncesvalles after 7 hours of hardest trail, I couldn't feel my legs and it was difficult to talk because of tiredness.

As I saw a group of tourists descending from bus I realized that the gap between my perception of Roncesvalles and theirs is immeasurable. I was able to feel the town with all my senses and I will never forget the moment I saw it for the first time. There were yet 950 km of Saint James Way in front of me and every step of the Way had a special meaning for me.

I decided to dedicate my Master Thesis to **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**, because I see this destination as an interesting opportunity for business.

2. Literature review.

In this chapter I will examine statistics and expectations, reports and previous academic studies in order to identify dialectics of Route-based tourism, understand nature of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** and examine potential of route-based tourism for development and provision of economic growth for the regions it goes through.

2.1. Statistics and expectations of UNWTO for tourism.

According to Statistics and expectations of UNWTO (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2016), tourism sector is constantly growing. Spain is occupying the third place in top locations for international arrivals and receipts, with 68 million visitors and US\$ 57 billion income from tourism sector in 2016.

According to Tourism Towards 2030, number of tourists is expected to increase every year by an average of 3.3%. UNWTO is expecting 219 million visitors in Mediterranean region in 2020 and 264 million in 2030.

Main demographic factors identified by EU Commission of Tourism and WTO (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2016) for future are:

- Shorter leisure breaks with more intensive experiences.
- Demand for international and cosmopolitan attitudes.
- Concerns about ethical and environmental questions.
- Greater demand for adventure and desire to experience new things and unique experiences.
- Fragmentation of tastes.
- Movement from traditional “horizontal” families with many members of same generation to “vertical” families, with greater difference of age in between generations.
- Urbanization of population.

2.2. Dialectics of route-based tourism, potential for development and provision of economic growth for the region.

According to Benur and Bramwell (2015), attraction of **tourism destination** depend on two factors: **destinations' physical, environmental and socio-cultural characteristics** and **primary tourism products** connected to it. Physical, environmental and socio-cultural attributes include: climatic conditions, landscape and ecology, history, economic activities, ways of life, heritage and built environment. Primary tourism products are the activities that make destinations available for tourists, it's what the consumer pays for.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is a Route-based trekking tourism destination, where physical, environmental and socio-cultural attributes are represented by the route itself; natural, historic and cultural heritage and individual characteristics of climate, economic activities and society of the region. Primary touristic products of the route are services of accommodation, transport, alimentation, safety and maintenance, branding and promotion that make this destination available for visitors.

According to Deng, King and Bauer, 2002, **nature-based tourism destination** “involves the use of natural resources in undeveloped state, including scenery, landscape, waterways, flora and fauna and cultural heritage”. Nature-based tourism is increasing at a rate from 10 to 30% per annum (Deng, King and Bauer, 2002). But, according to WTO (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2016), only a small proportion of visitors exclusively choose Nature or Culture as the only and unique reason for their stay, it has to be combined with some type of activity.

Leading role in attractiveness of nature-based destinations is played by adventure tourism (Fridgen, 1991). **Adventure tourism** is defined by Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) (UNWTO: Global report on adventure tourism, 2015) as a trip that includes at least two of the following characteristics: **physical activity, natural environment or cultural immersion**. Fridgen (1991) states that adventure tourism challenges adventurer's skills and takes the visitor out of everyday routine by involving in unusual and exciting activities. He argues that the two main types of Adventure tourism that attract the majority of visitors are:

- **Soft-adventure tourism**, that implies relatively easy adventure activities in natural environments, applicable for wide customer segments, including children and senior groups,
- **Cultural-adventure tourism**, that implies activities that have exploration of cultural, historic and natural heritage at the first place, where contact with local communities are essential.

As well as nature-based tourism, demand for adventure tourism in private sector is emerging. According to report of UNWTO: Global report on adventure tourism (2015), 79% of tourist boards have reported

growth in 2011. Increasingly destinations are recognizing that travellers are seeking more authentic products. Established adventure companies in North America and Europe are developing new products, opening new destinations and expanding their commitments to sustainability in order to attract customers (UNWTO: Global report on adventure tourism, 2015).

Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) states (Adventure tourism development index report, 2015) that adventure tourism, valued at 263 billion US dollars is one of the fastest growing categories of tourism that attracts high value customers, supports local economies and encourages sustainable practises. It has grown in North America, South America and Europe an average yearly increase of 65% from 2009 to 2012. Average spending on adventure trips has also increased by nearly 20% from 2009 to 2012 (ATTA: Adventure tourism development index report, 2015).

Trekking and backpacking is recognised to be a growing type of adventure tourism and most popular activity for US adventure tourism. In North America 18, 1% of Americans and 25, 4% of Canadians have taken a day-long hike during the past two years (UNWTO: Global report on adventure tourism, 2015). As a numeric indicator of popularity of trekking in Europe, I have collected data on number of members of major Trekking Associations in 6 countries in 2017:

- France - FF Randonnée. 230,500 members.
- UK - Ramblers. 107.000 members.
- Germany - Deutscher Wanderverband. 600.000 members.
- Netherlands - KWBN. 50.000 members.
- Belgium - Wandelsport Vlaanderen. 60.000 members.
- Spain - FEDME. 108.000 members.

In comparison with data from the study: *Estudi d'identificació de rutes de senderisme, cicloturisme, BTT i de natura amb potencial per a ser comercialitzables: anàlisi de la competència i la comercialisació arreu d'Europa del turisme actiu i de natura a Catalunya*; Capellà, Vélez (2014), the number of members of FEDME association in Spain has grown from 91.000 in 2014 till 108.000 in 2017, which indicates a growth of 98% over 3 years, indicating notable increase of interest towards active tourism in Spain.

Report "Impacto económico y social del Programa de Caminos naturales", elaborated in cooperation of Feader EU Programme, Ministry of Agriculture, Alimentation and Environment of Spain and Caminos Naturales (2014) shows evidence that trekking and cycling in natural environments are very popular activities:

- In Germany, 38% of population declare to usually practice trekking (it responds to more than 30.000.000 people).
- Similar percentage of population of Switzerland (33%) states to practise trekking (2, 5 millions of people).

- 81% of population of Norway (almost 4 millions of people) declared to have carried out a trip with trekking in natural environment as leitmotif during the last year.
- French Federation of Trekking declares that there are 35 million lovers of trekking in France (56% of French population).

According to Petrack and Beckman (2015), 71% of adventure itineraries have an experimental food focus of some kind. Cooking classes and visits to wineries were ranked as top ranking activities requested by tour operators and travel agents. Four operators offering "high food focus" reported price per day for such trips of 472 US dollars. Local gastronomy was stated as one of the most important attractions for visitors of slow tourism destinations (Yurtseven, Kaya, 2011).

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat, as a route that goes through a region with high natural value, crossing Natural Park of Cap de Creus, Natural Park of Volcanic Area of Garrotxa, Natural Park of Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac and Natural park of Montserrat. It involves the use of natural resources in undeveloped state and can be considered a **nature-based tourist destination**. It involves physical activity in natural environment along with cultural and historic immersion, therefore, it can also be considered an **adventure tourism destination**. According to data presented above, demand for both nature-based and adventure tourism is currently increasing, indicating a potential for the route objective of this study to develop as an attractive tourist destination.

Catalonia is well-known for its gastronomy and enology. It was declared European Gastronomic region in 2016 (official website of Catalonia Convention Bureau, <http://www.catalunya.com>). **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** could consider offering "high food focus" to its customers to add gastronomic experiences to travelling.

Murray and Graham (1997) argue that route-based tourism destinations are a quintessential example of what has become known as "green" tourism. They suggest that is no evidence that trekking is causing any environmental degradation, footpath erosion is being diffused in limited spaces and insignificant amount. Report of FEDME: Senderos señalizados y desarrollo rural sostenible (2012), confirms this opinion, stating that trekking is a modality of tourism that comply perfectly with requirements of low impacts on the environment and is acknowledged as touristic resource of first category.

Sustainable or, in other terminologies **responsible**, **"green"** or **alternative tourism** is the opposite of mass tourism. It operates on small scales aiming rather for quality than for quantity, involving respect for resources and local communities. Priority of alternative tourism is to conserve natural, cultural and historic environment while stimulating economic development (Fridgen, 2001). According to Martinez and Jaeger (2016), awareness of ethical matters is becoming more important and a major percentage of consumers in developed countries make their purchasing decisions with consideration of ethics, including environmental and ecological matters.

Sustainable development is considered to be the pillar of philosophy of **slow tourism**, another contemporary touristic movement, which implies two essential principles: taking time and attachment to a particular place (Yurtseven, Kaya, 2011). Walking along route can be seen as perfect implication of concepts of slow tourism, as its nature is in slow and more harmonious rhythm of life. Engagement with place, local routines and local cuisines is emphasised in slow tourism ideology, which results in quality of destination's appearance and environment as well as its public image (Yurtseven, Kaya, 2011).

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat has a great potential to develop as an effective **sustainable destination**, due to its nature of route-based tourism that is proved to have minimum negative impacts on the environment. It is essential for **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** to keep up with Eco standards in all its products and services to strengthen its "green" essence and image. Application of **slow tourism** concepts is a possible segmentation of market-quality products and services aimed at ethical conscious consumers.

One of the concerns of Sustainable management of destinations is **wellbeing of local communities**. It is important to create and manage a contemporary destination in such a way that it has a positive impact on economy of the region and does not cause harm to local community.

According to Murray and Graham (1997) route-based tourism with a common cultural theme creates a marketing iconography and allows to have spatial development strategy concerned with diffusing demand and expenditure along territory rather than have it concentrated in one attraction. Briedenhann and Wickens (2003) suggest that routes establish economic and cultural connections between individual touristic sites, smaller towns and regions, creating a unique opportunity for rural operators to achieve economies of scope by establishing networks of service providers to maximize opportunity and offer a diverse range of activities.

Report of FEDME: Senderos señalizados y desarrollo rural sostenible (2012) states that **trekking activity produces important economic impacts**, generating specialized off-season tourism, bringing benefits to local communities and recuperating historical routes in mountain areas. Good planning of new routes can revitalize areas that lack of possibilities to develop (same source).

According to Briedenhann, and Wickens (2003) wide offer of touristic products maximises individual spend and acts as an incentive for visitors to stay longer and re-visit. Existence of Route-based destination in a region demands clustering activities and attractions, erection of user-friendly signage, establishment of easily accessible information offices and development of infrastructure, therefore creating jobs in tourism sector for local citizens and strengthening economy of the region (Briedenhann, Wickens, 2003). Report of FEDME: Senderos señalizados y desarrollo rural sostenible (2012) states that there is evidence of positive economic impacts of routes in certain areas, mostly recorded in

increase of number of businesses that offer specialized services for pedestrian travellers, improving sectors of accommodation and hospitality, individual services, transport, commerce, guidance services and diversifying the offer of active tourism products.

According to Murray and Graham (1997) growing popularity of trekking in organized groups boosts commercial opportunities in both budget and high-price sectors of walking market. In their study: *Exploring the dialectics of route-based tourism: The Camino de Santiago*, they argue that from economic point of view, route-based touristic destinations that are dispersed along territory are preferable to spot locations. Due to equal spread of visitors along the route, it is easier to manage carrying capacity, minimize environmental impacts and distribute economic benefits throughout the region (Murray and Graham, 1997). UNWTO in Global report on adventure tourism (2015) states that trekking visitors stay in destination longer and their expenditures penetrate deeply into local and regional economies, helping to increase the spread of tourism benefits. 65, 6% of total trip cost from adventure packages remain in destination (same source).

Report: "Impacto económico y social Del Programa de Caminos naturales" (2014) states that direct economic impact generated by Caminos Naturales in Spain in 2014 ascended to 160 million euros. 90% of impact is generated by visitors of itineraries, 70% of economic impact directly benefits local municipalities. Caminos Naturales program contributes to rural development and diversification (same source).

Report of FEDME: Senderos señalizados y desarrollo rural sostenible (2012) also suggests that recuperation of historical routes stimulates initiatives of recovery of cultural heritage, provoking rehabilitation of sites, thus enriching trekking experience.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is able to establish economic and cultural connections between locations with diverse intensity of touristic demand. Girona, Figueres and Monastery of Montserrat are popular touristic destinations that attract thousands of visitors daily. But, such locations as Pontós, Bascara, Amer, Sant Esteve d'en Bas and Artes, to name a few, are not known and do not enjoy economic flows from touristic sector. These places are yet to be discovered by visitors with all their hidden beauty and attractions.

Lack of economic income influences regions directly resulting in poor state of conservation of cultural and historic heritage and less developed infrastructure. Touristic activity along **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**, if well managed, can provide economic flows in these inward locations helping them to boost development and become more attractive both for visitors and residents.

Strategy of sustainable touristic destinations implies organization of **educational programs** aimed at both visitors and residents to promote coexistence of conservation and tourism (Fridgen, 2001).

Kim, Kim and King (2016) argue that route-based tourism impacts favourably on societies and may contribute to development of alternative forms of tourism. They especially characterise routes with religious branding theme to attract the conscious type of visitors. According to Murray and Graham (1997) spirit of humility and appropriate behaviour, along with readiness to learn from their experiences is usual in visitors of route-based tourism destinations. It can educate and create a more responsible type of tourist.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat can become the perfect stage to develop ethic cautiousness about environmental problems and possible ways to contribute to their resolution.

2.3. Route-based destinations with religious branding theme: contemporary motivations for visit.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is peculiar due to its nature as a **route-based destination with religious branding theme**. It forms part of **Saint James Way's network** that has a strong historic and iconic image, but being geographically far from Santiago de Compostela, this destination lacks the ability to be easily associated with Saint James Way. It neither forms part of the “star” venue nor acts as a competitive brand.

In the following section of Thesis I will analyse and discuss opinions from academic studies about motivations of visitors of route-based destinations with religious brand theme and contemporary interpretation of medieval **pilgrimage** practise, a “journey or search of moral and spiritual significance”, as it is defined by Wikipedia (2017).

Route-based trekking destination with religious theme can be defined as **cultural-tourism route**, a “route based on a number of highlights, with places particularly rich in historical associations crossing one, two or more countries or regions, organized around themes of historical, artistic or social values”, (Council of Europe ,2002, p.2.).

According to Kim, Kim and King (2016) anthropological studies state that practise of **pilgrimage** was a **rudimentary form of tourism** and can be considered to be its origin. Indeed, the 5th book of Codex Calixtus, a list of rules and concepts that described traditional pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, its objectives and philosophy, written around the year 1140, is considered to be the first known travel guide in Medieval Europe (Gonzalez and Lopez , 2012) .

It is generally assumed, that reasons for pilgrimage in Medieval times was purely religious (Murray and Graham, 1997). Traveller who reached the sacred target got indulgence of all sins and started a new stage in his spiritual life. On the contrary, Gonzalez and Lopez (2012) argue, that there is evidence of other motivations for pilgrimage even in medieval times: for example, peregrination was taken as a confident excuse to postpone any type of act of justice. So, pilgrimage was sometimes done to escape punishment. It is also known that there was a tradition in noble families to complete the journey in carriages. So, sometimes pilgrimage was more like a luxurious vacation. From the second part of XIV century, voyage upon the route on horse became a popular type of adventurous trip for young men. So, **peregrination** even in the original époque often had more characteristics of a **touristic activity** than a purely religious act.

Gonzalez and Lopez (2012) state that the **limit between pilgrimage and tourism is not defined**. Murray and Graham (1997) observe in their study, that a journey to a cult location, in any époque,

represented a resolution of a number of conflicting ideas, **both spiritual and profane**. Religious routes always acted as touristic destinations, creating demand for infrastructure of towns, churches, hospitals, hospices, marked trails and bridges to serve visitors. Pilgrimage and tourism always have been merged and mixed in many ways throughout the history of existence of both (same source).

Contemporary rise in demand for **touristic journeys on routes with religious branding theme** in the last years withholds even less established boundaries between concepts of pilgrimage and tourism. Murray and Graham (1997) suggest that we are now living the époque, when the fact of common disbelief in authenticity of relics of Saint James the Apostle in Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela does not influence the number of pilgrims that carry out the journey. Rising attractiveness of pilgrimage in the frame of contemporary tendency of demand for individualistic patterns with greater flexibility and more meaningful experiences for vacations, indicates that visitors find meaning in pilgrimage beyond religious reasons (Briedenhann, Wickens, 2003).

The route itself and **experiences** obtained along the way are the most significant feature of such destinations (Murray, Graham, 1997; Kim, Kim and King, 2016). Contemporary cultures are increasingly orientated towards sensory experiences (Murray and Graham, 1997), and modern cultural routes adapt to the situation offering a variety of leisure and physical sports activities in natural environment, having close relation to rural tourism, sports tourism, adventure tourism and cultural tourism (Granero, Ruiz, Gracia 2007). Reasons to carry out pilgrimage nowadays are variable and mixed:

- Granero, Ruiz and Garcia (2007) state the following motivations for visiting routes with religious branding themes: **sports spirit, seeking for curation or psychological catharsis, uncertain nostalgia, escape from city and mass tourism, fashion**.
- According to Kim, Kim and King (2016), route-based tourism is valued by visitors because it offers **opportunity for adventure, personal advancement, exchange of intellectual ideas and information, curiosity and discovery**. Long walking experience re-activates body, mind and spirit, stimulates a health-oriented life and creates feeling of happiness, solidarity and commitment to one's faith, through contemplation of beauty of nature and landscape (same source).
- Gonzalez and Lopez (2012) suggest that motivations stated by visitors of cultural-religious routes are: **personal experience, arts and culture of destination, escape from everyday life, physical challenge, spiritual internal search, meeting new people, adventure, spending vacations, desire to be alone, search for calmness, intention to have fun, religious reasons and competition**. Interior rhymes of a foot traveller include solidarity, feeling of belonging, disregard of time and place, communion with nature and focus on inner self. Spiritual journey proposes emotional rest, valued by contemporary men exposed to intensity and velocity of life in big cities and searching for other quality of activities for their vacations.

Contemporary foot traveller is a citizen of a big city, looking for disconnection and authenticity with emotional, spiritual and natural components (Gonzalez, Lopez, 2012).

Kim, Kim and King (2016) state that the **core of motivation for long pedestrian journeys is the spiritual transformation through hardships of the journey**. *"People start just walking the route and end up being pilgrims..."*, direct citation of Carme Marsal, association of Friends of Sant Jaume of Sabadell (from personal interview in course of this investigation).

Murray and Graham (1997) state that visitors of prolonged routes change along the way: contemplation and self-reflection of a continuous pedestrian journey along historic religious route changes perception towards the world, people, nature, ethics and beliefs. They distinguish **3 types or stages of spiritual evolution of a pilgrim** as follows:

- **Aesthete** - a cultural tourist, who simply enjoys landscape and cultural pleasures of the way.
- **Ethical pilgrim** - a visitor who sees pilgrimage as test for stamina and self-discipline.
- **True pilgrim** - a person who believes without rational compulsion in the myth of the way.

As aesthete is met with difficulties, he starts to absorb characteristics of ethical pilgrim, eventually coming to a deeper spiritual change, accepting possibility of existence of sacred and miraculous.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is a route with religious branding theme, but motivations of a contemporary visitor of Route-based cultural touristic destination with religious theme lie within a wide range of reasons:

- Desire for aesthetic pleasure through contemplation of landscapes and discovering local gastronomy.
- Need to execute sports activity in search of adrenaline and pure challenge of stamina.
- Crusade for sacred answers to authentic religious concerns.
- Escape from routine through converting into a pilgrim for a period of time.
- Wish to experience adventure in its original frightening, challenging and amazing form.
- Need to be alone or meet new people, and many more.

These motivations are merged inside every single individual who walks along the route in individual proportions, creating an infinite set of unique and diverse mixtures of motivations. And they change along the way, as every individual is being transformed through hardships of the journey.

Murray and Graham (1997) suggest that **management challenge** of cultural routes destination lies in

balancing personal, sacred and spiritual, but not necessarily religious. Correct branding has to focus on minimizing conflicts between various market niches with their often incompatible needs and priorities, imaging place drawing inspiration from tradition and authenticity of culture of the region.

Kim, Kim and King (2016) advise DMOs to undertake periodic investigations of mentalities of existing visitors of destination with a view to tailor services to their desired experiences.

3. Methodology.

As stated above, the objective of this business report is to identify reasons why is **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** not attracting as much visitors as needed for successful development and dynamisation of the region and to propose a model for its improvement and development. I have carried out a following range of investigation activities with the aim to comply with the objective of the study:

- **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat:** technical characteristics.
- **Work in the field. Personal trekking experience.** Personal trekking experience upon two routes: **French traditional Way**, the “star” trekking destination (from Saint Jean Pied de Port till Finisterrae) and **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** (from Port de la Selva till Montserrat) were performed in order to get personal insight on necessities of pedestrian travellers, with general objective to evaluate points for improvement of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.
- **Current situation of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.** This part of methodology reflects investigation activities carried out in order to understand current situation of the route:
 - **Interviews in depth.** Conversations with people connected to creation, organization and management of the route.
 - **Orientated customer profile.**
 - **Benchmarking.** Study of best practices in route/based tourism.
 - **Investigation: Survey of supply side of destination.** Short surveys were conducted with representatives of hospitality enterprises along **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**. Survey examined current situation of the route and interest of supply side in development of destination.
 - **SWOT analysis.** Schematic evaluation of current situation of the route.

Results of these investigation activities are discussed and evaluated in the following section of Thesis and lead to Proposition model for development and improvement of destination.

3.1. Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat: technical characteristics.



Figure 3. Images from Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat. Port de la Selva, view from Sant Pere de Rodes Monastery, Vall d'en Bas, Montserrat National Park, on the way up to Montserrat Monastery. Images by author of this study.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is a route-based destination located in Catalonia with cultural religious branding theme of Saint James the Apostle (Fig. 3).

Length: 250 km.

Total accumulated gain: 1,850 m

Climate: Hot-summer Mediterranean climate (Csa), with average monthly temperatures in excess of 22 °C in warmest months and between 18 to 0 °C in coldest, with at least four months with an average of 10 °C. Regions with this type of Mediterranean climate typically experience hot and dry summers and mild, wet winters.

Stages:

Day 1. Port de la Selva - Figueres: Length - 29, 7 km. Duration - 8 hours. Difficulty - Medium. Total accumulation gain - 600 m.

Description: Stage starts from Mediterranean seaside in authentic Port de la Selva fishermen's town and ascends to Verdera mountain where Monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes is situated. Passing by church of Santa Helena and ruins of Santa Creu de Rodes village, it starts to descend into Emporda valley with astonishing views of Gulf of Roses and the valley itself. As ascend as descend can be done either upon an asphalt road with low traffic or upon a mountain path for pedestrian travellers. The rest of the track of this day is plane. Route goes through settlements Pau and Vilajuiga, Peralada, Vilabertran and ends up in Figueres, a well-known touristic site.

Hospitality:

- **Port de la Selva:** Hotels - Porto Cristo**, Cal Mariner*; Pensions - Hostal L'Arola**, La Tina**, German*, Sol y Sombra*. Variety of bars and restaurants of Mediterranean cuisine.

- **Monastery Sant Pere de Rodes:** no accommodation. Bar with light snacks and drinks.
 - **Vilajuiga:** Pensions: Hostal Xavi^{**}; rural houses: Can Ramon del Primo. Restaurants: Can Maricanes, El Cau.
 - **Peralada:** Hotels: Club de Golf Peralada^{*****}; pensions: Hostal Can Palol^{**}; rural houses: Can Carbo del Portal, Can Gori, La Costa. Restaurants: Castell Peralada, Cal Sagrista, Café del Centre.
 - **Vilabertran:** Hotels: Casa Gala^{***}, rural houses: Can Caulas. Restaurant: La Sinia.
 - **Figueres:** Hotels: 10 hotels with ratings ^{***} and ^{**} within walking distance from the route; Pensions: 15 pensions with ratings ^{**} and ^{*} within walking distance from the route. Variety of restaurants with mediterranean and international cuisine.
-

Day 2. Figueres - Bescara. Length - 17 km. Duration - 4 hours. Difficulty - Easy. Total Accumulation gain - 130 m.

Description: Stage starts from Figueras and follows the direction of AP-7 highway, crossing small villages with medieval architecture of wild stone on its side. Landscape is mainly plain, with pine forests and cultivated fields.

Hospitality:

- **Borrassa:** Hotels: Cal Governador^{**}; rural houses: Can Ginesta. Restaurant: Mas Pla.
 - **Pontos:** Pensions: Santa Ana^{**}; rural houses: Mas Roca de Fluvia, Mas Terrats. Restaurant: Ca'n Oliver.
 - **Bescara:** Pension: Fluvia^{**}. Restaurant: Fluvia
-

Day 3. Bescara - Girona. Length - 33 km. Duration - 8 hours. Difficulty - Easy. Accumulated elevation gain - 100 m.

Description: Stage goes on through picturesque Emporda valley, following the direction of AP-7 highway towards south, crossing Orriols, Viladasens and Cervia de Ter, with a prominent Priorat de Santa Maria del Cervia Monastery. Then route follows magnificent banks of river Ter, enjoying peace and shadow of its meadows. It finishes in Girona, a city with fascinating Ancient City Centre with various sites of attraction.

Hospitality:

- **Orriols:** Hotel Odissea d'Emporda ^{****}.
- **Vilademuls:** Hotels: Sausa ^{***}; pensions: Maret^{*}; rural houses: Can Rajoler, Can Subirols, Mas Alba. Restaurant: Can Marell.
- **Cervia de Ter:** Rural house: Can Pedrosa.
- **Medinya:** Hotels: Palace de Girona^{****}, Medina^{**}; pensions: Eugenia^{*}. Restaurant: El Caliu.
- **Girona:** Hotels: 11 hotels with ratings from ^{****} till ^{*} within walking distance from the route; pensions: 12 pensions with ratings ^{**} and ^{*} within walking distance from the route. Variety of

restaurants with Mediterranean and international cuisine.

Day 4. Girona - Amer. Length - 25, 5 km. Duration - 6, 5 hours. Difficulty - Easy. Total accumulation gain - 150 m.

Description: The following two days, Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat coincides with Vies Verdes itinerary, an ancient narrow train railroad converted into a path that connects Girona, Olot and Ripoll. Stage goes by municipalities of Bescano, Bonmati, Angles, Cellera de Ter and Pasteral and finishes in Amer. The trail is easy with sand pavement, slightly, but constantly heading up into the mountains of Garrotxa.

Hospitality:

- **Bescano:** Rural houses: Mas Grau, Can pol de Dalt. Restaurant: La Barca.
 - **Angles:** Pensions: Hostal Masso**, Tarres*. Variety of restaurants of local and international cuisine.
 - **La Cellera de Ter:** Hotels: Can Jepet Nou**. Restaurant: Can Co, Can Vernis.
 - **Amer:** Pensions: Can Marcal**, Giralt*, rural houses: Mas LLorichs. Restaurant: Can Quer, La Parada.
-

Day 5. Amer - Sant Esteve d'en Bas: Length - 22, 8 km, Duration - 6 hours. Difficulty - Easy. Total accumulation gain - 400 m.

Description: Stage follows the Via Verde to Olot with slight inclination up, crossing beautiful mountainous landscape of Garrotxa.

Hospitality:

- **Les Planes d'Hostoles:** Hotels: Can Garay**, pensions: Fonda Arnau*, rural houses: Ca l'Arnau. Variety of restaurants of local cuisine.
 - **Sant Feliu de Pallerols:** Hotels: Sanctuary de Salut***, pensions: Finet**, El Rec*. Restaurant: La Matilda, Fonda Finet.
 - **La Vall d'en Bas:** Pensions: Can Barris*, Carmelita*, rural houses: 10 rural accommodations at short distance by car.
-

Day 6. Sant Esteve d'en Bas - Esquirol: Length - 19 km. Duration - 6 hours. Difficulty - Medium. Total accumulation gain - 500 m.

Description: Stage starts in the marvellous valley of Bas, from Hostalets d'en Bas village, unique for its charming rural architecture and spectacular views of mountain El Far. It ascends mountain slopes upon an emerald trail covered from sunshine by massive trees. This trail between Olot and Vic used to be called Cami Ral. Reaching the height of 1200 m, itinerary slowly circles mountain El Far and descends towards Cantonigros and Esquirol.

Hospitality:

- **Cantonigros:** Pension: Santa Maria Del Roure. Restaurant: Can Punti, El Roc.
 - **L'Esquirol:** Pension: Collsacabra*. Restaurant: La Cooperativa.
-

Day 7. Esquirol - Vic: Length - 18 km. Duration - 5 hours. Difficulty - Easy. Descend of 200 m per day.

Description: Stage finishes continuous descend from the mountains and enters Osona valley, goes through Ronda del Ter municipality with its marvellous bridge over river Ter and walks into Vic, one of the major cities of central Catalonia.

Hospitality:

- **Roda Del Ter:** Pensions: Urgell**, Hostal Sant Jordi*. Restaurant: La Roda, Cal Rabada.
 - **Vic:** Hotels: 4 hotels of *** and **** ratings; Pensions: Hostal Osona*. Variety of restaurants of local and international cuisine.
-

Day 8. Vic - Estany: Length - 21, 4 km. Duration - 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy. Total accumulation gain - 500 m.

Description: Etape starts from Vic, passing through several small municipalities, such as Sentfores and Santa Eulalia de Riuprimer and then heads into mountainous area until L'Estany, small medieval village well known for its Monastery of Santa Maria del Estany with its marvellous and unique claustre.

Hospitality:

- **Sentfores:** Rural houses: Mas i Miranda, Mas la Riera. Restaurant: El Vinyal d'en Jordi, Cal Ramon.
 - **Santa Eugenia de Riuprimer:** Restaurant: Cal Xoriguer, Can Ton.
 - **L'Estany:** Rural houses: Cal Sabata. Restaurant: Cal Magadins.
-

Day 9. Estany - Artes. Length - **23, 3** km. Duration - 6 hours. Difficulty - Easy. Descend of 400 m per day.

Description: There are no villages directly on the route between Estany and Artes. It is a long and solitary itinerary, yet beautiful.

Hospitality:

- **Santa Maria d'Olo (2 km from route):** Pensions: Santa Maria**
 - **Calders (1 km from route):** Rural houses: Cal Vilaro, Les Oliveres, Mas Arola, Masia les Quingles. Restaurant: Raco Del Pou, SoldeVila.
-

Day 10. Artes a Manresa: Length - 20 km. Duration - 5 hours. Difficulty - Easy. Total accumulation gain - 300 m.

Description: Stage starts from Artes and heads towards Sant Benet de Bages Monastery situated on the bank of the river Caldes. Itinerary follows the river, goes through a small village Viladordis and enters Manresa. Montserrat Mountain can be noted during the last kilometres of the stage, recognizable due to its unique shape.

Hospitality:

- **Navarcles:** Pensions: Muntane**, Nou de Baviera**.
 - **Sant Frutos de Bages:** Hotels: La Sagrera**, pensions: Sant Benet*. Restaurant: Can Plana, Can Ladis.
 - **Manresa:** Alberg: Del Carme. Hotels: Pere III***, Els Noguers I**, pensions: Els Noguers**, La Masia*, Magranet*, Manila*. Variety of restaurants of local and international cuisine.
-

Day 11. Manresa - Montserrat. Length - 25, 5 km. Duration - 6 hours. Difficulty - Medium. Total accumulated gain - 500 m.

Description: Stage starts from Manresa and goes through rural landscapes with small municipalities and cultivated fields with slight ascend during 15 km. Montserrat mountain dominates the view, as the route gets closer. From Castellgali itinerary starts notable ascend up with 100 m gain during 5 km and then continues with 400 m ascend during last 5 km of the day. Stage and the whole **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** finishes in Montserrat Monastery at the altitude of 800 metres and magnificent views over central Catalonia.

Hospitality:

- **Montserrat:** Alberg of Centre de Coordinacion Pastoral, hotel: Abat Cisneros***. Restaurant Mirador, Abat Cisneros.
-

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is an off peak seasonality destination. Thanks to Mediterranean climate, trekking can be carried out all year round, excluding the hottest days of July and August for sensitive customers.

Length of 250 km gives the possibility to maintain visitors within destination for a period of time from 11 days and longer, spreading economic benefit throughout inland regions of the country. On the other hand, trekking upon parts of this route can provide intense unique experiences within several days. Although trekking activity involves physical effort, difficulty may be managed by adjusting kilometres done by a visitor daily, due to availability of accommodation and alimentation services along the route in considerable number.

3.2. Work in the field. Personal trekking experience.

Endless road. Pain, beauty of success, struggle, excitement, challenge. Severe wind, rain, burning sun, melting heat. Everlasting feeling of tiredness and satisfaction.

3.2.1. Methodology of trekking experience.

Personal experiences in route-based tourisms were carried out along 2 routes of Saint James Way Network: **French traditional way**, the 'Star' trekking destination (from Saint Jean Pied de Port till Finisterrae) and **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** (from Port de la Selva till Montserrat)

Objective: practical comparison of routes and services offered, such as accommodation, catering, transport, information, branding and sanitation facilities with the overall target to evaluate and identify points of improvement of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.

- Travelling experience along **French traditional way** lasted 40 days in June-July 2015 and covered 980 km, from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, France to Santiago de Compostela and then on to Cape of Finisterre, to the most western Lighthouse of Spain, in order to pay tribute to pre-Christian history of the route. Average distance of trekking was of 26, 6 km per day with maximum distance per day of 45 km.
- Travelling experience along **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** of Catalonia lasted 11 days in June 2016 and covered 250 km, from Port de la Selva till Montserrat. Average distance per day for this trip was of 24, 5 km per day with maximum distance per day of 33 km.

General rules for expeditions:

- Walk all the route without use of transport, despite weather conditions.
- Keep together at all times, respect necessities of each other, be positive.

Expeditions were planned in advance, with accommodation booked and transportation of luggage prearranged by means of transport companies or taxi. Preference was given to hotels rather than albergues with an average rating of 2 stars, always best price possible with 2 essential criteria of choice:

- Hotel must be within minimum walking distance from the route or provide free transportation from/to the route;
- Hotel must provide such necessities as individual bathroom, bed linen and towels.

Main criteria for alimentation was to have a healthy variable diet. Restaurants/bars were chosen with 2 criteria:

- Restaurant must be within walking distance from the route,
- Restaurant must have nice appearance, tidiness and pleasant smell.
- Any superb gastronomic experience was appreciated with joy.

Sample group in both of the journeys consisted of the same 3 individuals. Despite small size, it was rather diverse in terms of gender, age, personal interests, experiences, motivations and lifestyles:

- **Natalia Burykina**, female, 55, economist /finance management /politic, responsible for everyday schedule and timing in accordance with the distance to be covered and weather conditions, pace of walking and resting periods, healthy and reasonable diet;
- **Miquel Balakin**, male, 15, student, responsible for tracking the route and keeping record of natural phenomena, such as weather, landscape and biological species found on the way; and
- **Polina Balakina**, author of this study, female, 35, interior design /management /tourism /art, responsible for organization of the trip, communication and keeping record of data.

It is acknowledged that 3 people do not form a convincing panel of experts for viability of results for an academic study. The following analysis, discussion and results are personal opinions and reflections of the sample group. As this Master Thesis is a business type of writing in an academic institution, reflections of real customers of destinations have a significant value. I consider this part of investigation to be an insight on the mentality of existing visitors of the route with intention to provide tailored services adapted to desired expectations of alike customers in future.

3.2.2. Methodology of evaluation.

Discussion and evaluation of criteria of analysis of 2 trekking destinations with members of sample group was done during a pre-arranged meeting in Roses, Catalonia on the 5th of May, 2017. Meeting took 3, 5 hours. Discussion proceeded in respectful manner with insignificant percentage of disagreement during the whole evaluation process. Original language of discussion was Russian. Short notes were taken during the whole process with following interpretation into English and transcription into texts. Results were sent out by e-mail to the members of sample group to be re-evaluated and corrected. With insignificant discordances, texts were accepted by the sample group and reconfirmed.

Parameters of evaluation were discussed and agreed on, based on previous academic study: "Evaluating natural attractions for tourism" by Jinyang Deng, Brian King and Thomas Bauer, 2002, who have established hierarchical structure for evaluating natural attractions of a tourism destination. The structure is based on 5 major components: **Peripheral attractions** (other things to do), **Accessibility** (connectivity, distance, and convenience), **Facilities** (educational, recreational points and infrastructure), **Local community** (culture, economy, social factors) and **Resources**. Resources component is subdivided into **Cultural factors** (architecture, religious and historical attractions) and **Natural factors**. Natural factors are subdivided into **Physical attractions** (climatic phenomena, landscape and biodiversity) and **Environmental attractions** (sanitation, comfort and security). Original structure for evaluating natural resources is wider, factors and subdivisions irrelevant for this study were not taken into account. (Fig. 4).

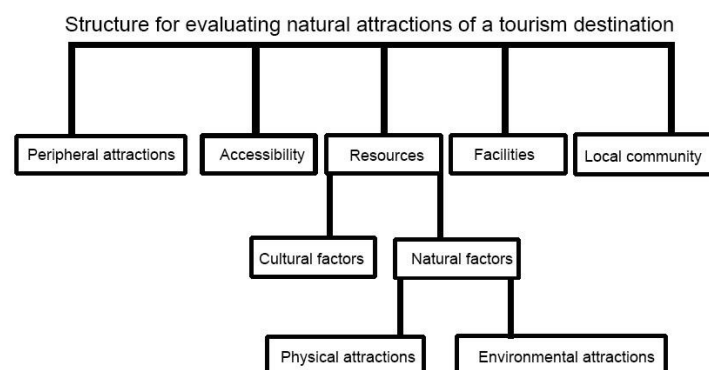


Figure 4. Structure for evaluating natural attractions of a tourism destination. Scheme elaborated by author of this study upon academic article "Evaluating natural attractions for tourism" by Jinyang Deng, Brian King and Thomas Bauer, 2002. Factors and subdivisions irrelevant for this study were not taken into account.

By discussion, this structure was adapted to the objective of current investigation by extracting relevant concepts and adding other concepts, important for evaluation of a route-based tourism destinations in natural environments. 7 relevant factors were established: **Cultural resources** (architecture, religious and historical attraction); **Natural physical attractions** (climate, landscape and biodiversity); **Infrastructure and accessibility**; **Local communities** (social factor); **Information points and**

branding; Capacity of the route and **Facilities**. Facilities were subdivided into **Accommodation, Alimentation** and **Places of rest and sanitation facilities**. In the opinion of investigation group, adapted and amplified version of structure of evaluation expresses best the current situation of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat in comparison with other itineraries. Conditions for evaluation of each factor are described below:

Cultural resources: architecture, religious and historical attractions. Presence of cultural, religious and architectural heritage on the route; state of conservation; possibility to visit sites at hours comfortable for pedestrian travellers; integrity of heritage with branding of the route.
Natural physical attractions: climate, landscape and biodiversity. Natural heritage, such as landscapes and scenery; biodiversity in terms of flora and fauna.
Facilities: accommodation. Availability, accessibility and diversity of types of accommodation from albergues till luxurious hotels.
Facilities: alimentation. Availability, accessibility and diversity of bars and restaurants. Availability of special menus for pilgrims and special menus of healthy protein diet; tidiness and cleanliness.
Facilities: places of rest and sanitation facilities. The preferred walking speed for a human is of 5 km per hour. So, the perfect condition is to have a rest and sanitation facility at least every 5 km of the route. This factor examines existence and availability of such facilities in the region and average distance between them.
Infrastructure and accessibility. State of trek and signage, level of difficulty; possibility to access any part of the route by means of transport in case of emergency; possibility to contract transfer of luggage, rescue taxi o guides at fair prices.
Local communities: social factor: acceptance of tourism. Overall impression from contacts with local communities; acceptance of tourism, curiosity, willingness to communicate or aggressive and hostile attitude.
Information and educational points, thematic branding of the route. Quantity and accessibility of information and educational points along the route, including tourist offices and information boards. Integrity of such points into the branding of the route.
Capacity of the route and number of visitors. Readiness to accept visitors: facilities, attitude of locals and special infrastructure targeted at pedestrian travellers in coherence with quantity of visitors seen by sample group.

3.2.3. Evaluation of French traditional way.

French traditional way is a route of 950 km which passes through distinct regions with their unique specific characteristics (Fig.5).



Figure 5. Images from the French traditional route: yaks in the Pyrenees mountains; village in Navarra; pilgrim monument in Rioja, Cathedral of Burgos, route through the Land of Fields, authentic clay architecture of the Land of Fields, abandoned house in the Land of Maragats, fog in Galicia, bridge over the river Tambre in Galicia. Images by the author of this study.

During discussion and evaluation, it was decided to divide the route into parts according to geographic identity and characteristics. Each region was then discussed and evaluated upon factors and criteria described above. Opinions were noted during discussion, and then combined into short descriptive texts that follow below:

Pyrenees. Saint-Jean-Pied-de Port till Larrasoaña.

Length: 55 km.

Stages:

- **Day 1. Saint Jean Pied de Port - Roncesvalles. 26 km. 8 hours. Difficulty: High.**
- **Day 2. Roncesvalles - Larrasoaña. 27 km. 7 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**

Day 1 has a Very high level of difficulty with over 600 metres accumulated gain. Kilometres stated in the guide are not correct, distances are longer. Part of itinerary close to Zubiri goes through industrial zone of excavation and procedure of magnesite, unpleasant part of route.

This part of the route has authentic architecture and historical attractions of high in local towns, in a good state of conservation. Attractions open all day. Cultural significance of route is high, it has been the spot of many historical acts. Branding theme with pilgrim stamps is highly developed. Region possesses outstanding beauty of scenery of Pyrenees, amazing landscape and biodiversity. Flora and fauna are presented in abundance. Accommodation, alimentation and information are available in towns, all services of good quality and establishments with pleasant atmosphere. Transfer of luggage services available for fair price. Route is difficult due to high altitudes and significant positive accumulation gain. Pyrenees are unpredictable in terms of weather and climate. Absence of places of rest and sanitation facilities in a 28 km part of the route through high mountains area and absence of telephone and transport connection in case of emergency, make it dangerous. High rate of accidents with pilgrims, cases of mortal outcomes registered, there are memorial stones along trail, marking places of death. Although signage is done properly, due to abundance of trails it is easy to get lost, especially in fog conditions that are often, there is no human presence on a significant radius from trail. Distances in printed guide and on signage poles are incorrect and repeated, which causes frustration because of tiredness. Number of visitors is within capacity limits, perfectly spread to allow the feeling of solidarity yet not absolute.

Navarra. Larrasoña till Logroño.

Length: 115 km.

Stages:

- **Day 1. Larrasoña - Pamplona. 16, 5 km. 4 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 2. Pamplona - Puente la Reina. 24 km. 6, 5 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**
- **Day 3. Puente la Reina - Estella. 22 km. 5, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 4. Estella - Los Arcos. 22 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**
- **Day 5. Los Arcos - Logroño. 28 km. 6, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**

Low offer of hotels in Puente la Reina (1) and Los Arcos (1). In Los Arcos we had to look for the only taxi in town to drive us to the hotel on gas station on the highway.

Authentic architecture with numerous points of high value of historic and cultural heritage, open all day, with emphasised connection to brand of the destination. Different level of conservation of heritage depending on municipality. Beautiful paysanne scenery with endless cultivated fields, domestic animals and flora in abundance. Availability of albergues, but poor offer of hotels. Large range of small bars and restaurants along the way, targeted at pilgrim travellers, with special attitude towards gastronomy: fascinating food, authentic design, high quality of services. Abundance of small villages with little bars resolves the necessity of rest and sanitation facilities in the best way possible. All places provide information and pilgrim stamps, travellers are welcome. Trail is well marked and comparatively easy, all parts are easily accessed by transport in case of emergency, fair prices for luggage transportation. Local community is friendly and eager to communicate to learn more about different cultures. Number of visitors is higher than in Pyrenees, but within capacity of the route, a perfect equilibrium in terms of economic benefits, but yet without negative impacts of overuse.

Rioja and Castilla y Leon. Logroño till Burgos.

Length: 135 km.

Stages:

- **Day 1. Logrono - Najera. 31 km. 8, 5 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**
- **Day 2. Najera - Santo Domingo de la Calzada. 21 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 3. Santo Domingo de la Calzada - Belorado. 23 km- 5, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 4. Belorado-San Juan de Ortega. 24 km. 6, 5 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**
- **Day 5. San Juan de Ortega - Burgos. 27, 5 km. 6, 5 hours, Difficulty: Easy.**

Low offer of hotels in Najera (1) and Belorado (1). No hotels in San Juan de Ortega. We had to walk 6 km more till Atapuerca, where the hotel had 3 room in total. If there was no planning in advance, we would have to take taxi to Burgos.

Overall impression of cultural and historic significance is less than in the previous region. Route most of the times goes along a highway full of heavy traffic, industrial zones of cities are more defined than historical centres, but where such heritage exists, it is in good state of conservation, open to visitors all day and with abundant information about the route and surrounding areas. Pilgrim stamps are available everywhere, integration into brand at top level, information boards with legends of the way in all places. Less natural attractions, apart from Gees Mountains Natural Park, with its peculiar flora and a mushroom reserve. No problems with accommodation in larger cities, but poor offer of hotels in rural areas. Alimentation is gradually becoming less expensive losing in quality and cleanliness of bars and taverns. Places of rest and sanitation facilities are becoming rare with an overall range of 5 to 10 km, sometimes longer distances without possibility to rest in shadow in organized place, use the bathroom and buy/refill drinking water. Route is relatively easy and signed perfectly, transport access and luggage transportation available at fair prices. Amount of pilgrims is notably higher closer to Burgos. There is lack of resources in rural areas: accommodation and sanitation facilities, which results in indifference in local community: not a hostile attitude, but also no curiosity and willingness to communicate.

Castilla y Leon. Burgos to Leon.

Length: 190 km.

Stages:

- **Day 1. Burgos - Hornillos Del Camino. 20 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 2. Hornillos Del Camino - Castrojeriz. 20, 5 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 3. Castrojeriz - Boadilla Del Camino. 17 km. 4 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 4. Boadilla Del Camino - Carrión de los Condes. 25 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 5. Carrión de los Condes - Ledigos. 23 km. 5, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 6. Ledigos - Bercianos Del Real Camino. 26, 5 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 7. Bercianos Del Real Camino - Reliegos. 21 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 8. Reliegos - Leon. 26 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**

The whole region deserves a High level of difficulty, although landscape is almost plane due to extreme heats, severe winds with sand and monotony of views. No hotels offer is Hornillos del Camino, Ledigos, Bercianos del Camino and Reliegos. We had to rearrange days 4, 5, 6 and 7, doing 39 and 42 km per day respectively, staying in Fromista (2 hotels available) and Sahagun (1). The last day, we had to take taxi from Reliegos (no hotels) to spend the night in Leon and came back the next day, which incremented the cost of journey.

Ancient **Country of Fields**. A peculiar region in terms of natural and cultural resources. It is an endless sandy plane with few cities and long distances that go through deserted areas in terms of human presence and vegetation. No variety of scenery, orange clay fields dried with sun and wind, blue cloudless sky, white electric wind turbine generators and wind that disperses sand all over. This part of the route has a high historic significance and important architectural heritage. Due to high difficulty of this itinerary, there was an elevated demand for hospitals and hospices, so religious orders accepted the obligation to convey places of rest, but until now, there is not enough. Lack of accommodation, alimentation, places of rest and sanitary facilities. Sample group had cases of food of inappropriate quality served and a case of food intoxication. Overall, there is a town every 15-20 km, but not all of them have a bar. Route is difficult due to extremely high temperatures, direct sunlight and repetitiveness of scenery, which causes negative emotional impact on travellers. It is accessible by transport, well signed and luggage service is available. Very few local people were met, bothered by heat. Few information boards and tourist offices. Authentic local architecture of orange clay. Underground houses. Impressive. Very few pilgrims.

Castilla y Leon: Land of Maragats and Valley of Bierzo. Leon till O´Cebreiro.

Length: 140 km.

Stages:

- **Day 1: León - Villadangos Del Páramo. 22 km. 5, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 2. Villadangos Del Paramo - Astorga. 28 km. 6, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 3. Astorga - Rabanal Del Camino. 20 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 4. Rabanal Del Camino - Molinaseca. 24, 5 km. 7, 5 hours. Difficulty: High.**
- **Day 5. Molinaseca - Villafranca Del Bierzo. 31 km. 7, 5 km. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 6. Villafranca Del Bierzo - Vega Del Valcarce. 18 km. 4, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 7. Vega Del Valcarce - o´Cebreiro. 12 km. 4 hours. Difficulty: High.**

No hotels in Villadangos del Paramo, used taxi to stay in Leon and come back next day. Low offer of hotels in Rabanal del Camino (1) and Molinaseca (2), had to walk 8 km more till Ponferrada. No hotels in O´Cebreiro, walked on 12 km more till Fonfria, where the only hotel has 3 rooms in total. If previous arrangements were not made, we would have to take taxi to Sarria (around 40 km).

Region with outstanding natural beauty: pre-mountainous landscapes with pine forests and green valleys crossed by clear water streams. Architecture and culture of Maragats is peculiar, authentic and unique, it is a pity that the majority of the villages are in a state of abandonment. Route is accessible by transport in all places, luggage transfer is available at fair price, and there is a diversity of accommodation of different levels and variety of food with special menus. Quality of food, service and tidiness of local establishments is high. Route is clearly marked and maintained in good condition. Local citizens are friendly and eager to communicate. There are information boards in all places and tourist offices in bigger cities. Number of visitors is within capacity level, strengthening economy of the region without producing harm to local community and environment.

Galicia. O´Cebreiro to Sarria.

Length: 48 km.

Stages:

- **Day 1. O Cebreiro - Triacastela. 21 km. 6, 5 hours. Difficulty: High.**
- **Day 2. Triacastela - Sarria. 21, 5 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**

Low offer of hotels in general. 2 days were combined in 1 due to inaccessibility of accommodation.

Land of fogs and humidity, silver streams, blue flowers, moss, fresh fascinating cheese and octopuses. Outstanding beauty of natural resources, divine and virgin mountains region with abundant vegetation and wildlife. Architectural heritage has its own style and materials of construction. Many buildings are in poor state of conservation due to humidity and lack of maintenance. Although the majority of churches are closed for visit, there is always a pilgrim stamp somewhere at the entrance and a metal box for tips. Very few information boards along the way, but the route is clearly marked and maintained in good condition. Transport and luggage transfer available at fair price. Lack of accommodation in certain rural areas, both albergues and hotels. Fascinating gastronomy, fresh organic vegetables from garden and fresh domestic cheese. Seafood of supreme quality even in hidden mountain villages. Very warm and attentive service in local family guest houses. Local communities show signs of curiosity towards visitors, but there is a lack of private businesses along the route. Places of rest and sanitary facilities are rare, as well as small bars that could serve for the same needs. Number of pilgrims is not high, but below capacity of destination in terms of accommodation and sanitary facilities. Some travellers have to continue walking due to lack of places to spend the night in twilight's, which could result in accidents in mountain landscapes.

Last 100 km. Sarria to Santiago de Compostela.

Length: 106 km.

Stages:

- **Day 1. Sarria - Portomarin. 21, 5 km. 5, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 2. Portomarin - Palas de Rei. 22 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**
- **Day 3. Palas de Rei - Arzúa. 25, 5 km. 7 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**
- **Day 4. Arzua - O Pedrouzo. 19 km. 4, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 5. O Pedrouzo - Santiago de Compostela. 20 km. 5 hours, Difficulty: Easy.**

Low offer of hotels in Portomarin (1), Arzua (2) and O Pedrouzo (1). In Palas del Rei hotel was located at a notable driving distance from route. We had to combine last 3 days together coming to record kilometres per day of 42 km.

A very special trekking destination. Scenery of this region is repetitive with beautiful eucalyptus forests and few towns. Architectural heritage suffers from lack of maintenance. Even Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela needs renovation due to problems with hydro isolation of the roof. Certificate of accomplishment of peregrination can be obtained if a pilgrim walked last 100 km by foot. According to statistics data of Tourist Office of Santiago de Compostela, in 2015, 25, 68% of visitors of French traditional way accomplished only this particular part, the quantity of 11,612 visitors. They usually stay on this itinerary from 10 till 14 days, walking about 10 km per day. In 2015, there were 215,516 visitors registered in Santiago and significant majority of them accomplished the Last 100 km, surprisingly, this is the less adapted part of the whole French traditional way to receive pedestrian travellers. Number of visitors is far above capacity of the route. There is lack of decent accommodation and decent places of alimentation, lack of services. Attitude from representatives of private businesses is careless and hostile. There are no places of rest and sanitary facilities organized along the route and the very few bars are overcrowded with people. There are queues for toilets that can last about 40 minutes. These facts harm environment and local community. Excessive crowds of tourists result in garbage, noise and organic waste pollution (fig.6).



Figure 6. Protest of local community against the pollution caused by pilgrims in the welcome sign to the Lastres village of Galicia. Image by author of this study.

Finisterre Way. Santiago de Compostela to Finisterre.

Length: 90 km.

Stages:

- **Day 1. Santiago de Compostela - Negreira. 34 km. 8 hours. Difficulty: High.**
- **Day 2. Negreira - Olveiroa. 33 km. 8 hours. Difficulty: High.**
- **Day 3. Olveiroa - Finisterre. 30, 5 km. 7 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**

This route has high level of difficulty and long daily stages due to lack of accommodation. In both places we lived at a significant distance from the route, not accessible by walking. We were driven from/to the route by the owners of rural houses. It was difficult to find a place to stay even in advance, very low offer of accommodation.

Finisterre way forms part of Saint James way's Network, but does not enjoy the popularity of "star" destination, few people continue the journey. This beautiful route is to be discovered by visitors. There is no significant historic and architectural heritage, but local villages made of wild stone covered with moss have their charm and individuality. Natural value is tremendous, as trek goes through virgin mild forests, mountains and valleys and finishes at the side of Atlantic Ocean with divine white sand beaches and turquoise chilly waters. There is lack of accommodation and no organized areas for rest. Bars eventually appear on the way, so sanitary facilities are available from time to time. Service of luggage transportation is not organized, but hotels have taken this service in their hands. There is little information boards, but tourist offices in bigger villages give full information. Route branding with pilgrim stamps is developed and a Certificate of accomplishment of Camino de Santiago of Costa del Mort is issued in Finisterre at a fair price. Local communities are friendly and open towards visitors. We enjoyed an authentic Galician music festival in Negreira. It was a highly positive experience.

3.2.4. Evaluation of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.



Figure 7. Images from Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat: Saint Helen Church, Monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes, Cap de Creus; Banks of river Ter, Girona; Fields close to Montseny Natural Park. Images by the author of this study.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.

Length: 250 km.

Stages:

- **Day 1. Port de la Selva - Figueres. 29, 7 km. 8 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**
- **Day 2. Figueres - Bascara. 17 km. 4 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 3. Bascara - Girona. 33 km. 8 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 4. Girona - Amer. 25, 5 km. 6, 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 5. Amer - Sant Esteve d'en Bas. 22, 8 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 6. Sant Esteve d'en Bas - Esquirol. 19 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**
- **Day 7. Esquirol - Vic. 18 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 8. Vic - Estany. 21, 4 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 9. Estany - Artes. 23, 3 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 10. Artes a Manresa. 20 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Easy.**
- **Day 11. Manresa - Montserrat. 25, 5 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Medium.**

The route doesn't offer any albergues (low cost type of accommodation), but there are hotels and rural accommodations along the route in abundance, although not always directly on the itinerary. Poor offer of accommodation in the city of Manresa, but several supreme offers close by.

There is a great number of historic, cultural and architectural heritage sites along **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**, mostly in good or medium state of conservation. Cultural and architectural heritage of this part of Catalonia is outstanding and authentic: medieval villages of stone, castles, bridges. Route passes by **Monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes**, **Roman Parroquià of Santa Maria** in Vilabertran, **Priorat Santa Maria** in Cervia del Ter, **Cathedral of Girona** and **Monastery of Sant Pere de**

Galligants in Girona, **Cathedral of Saint Pere** in Vic, **Monastery of Santa Maria** in L'Estany, **Monastery of Sant Benet de Bages** in Artes and other sites of architectural, historic and cultural heritage. It walks through authentic medieval towns and villages, enters top touristic cities, such as **Figueres, Vic, Olot** and **Girona**.

Yet, opening hours are not adjusted to the needs of pedestrian travellers. They tend to walk out very early and walk all day long. Travellers by foot are not able to wait for a site to open or come back later during working hours. In **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** tourist offices and most attractions are open from 10 am and later closed for long dinner breaks. Opening hours of most attractions in low season are very short. For example, Monastery of Santa Maria in Vilabertran during the low season (from September till June) is only open on weekends from 10 am till 12 am (information from City hall of Vilabertran). Monastery of Santa Maria in Cervia de Ter is always closed. It can be opened for visit upon a preliminary accordance (information from City hall of Cervia de Ter).

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat has outstanding natural value (fig.7), it starts from Port de la Selva, at **Mediterranean seaside** and goes through magnificent landscapes, including **Garrotxa mountain regions** and valleys, passing through cities with high value of touristic attractions and finishes in Monastery of Montserrat, one of the most important sites of Catalonia. It goes through **Natural Parc of Cap de Creus, Natural Parc of Volcanic Area of Garrotxa, and Natural Parc of Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac** and **Natural Parc of Montserrat**.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat goes through a region with well-developed tourist infrastructure. There is a variety of accommodation and alimentation possibilities at a wide range of prices along the route, but only in hotels or rural accommodation, no albergues are available. In most of the places especially designated places for rest and sanitation facilities exist within a reasonable walking distance in small bars, but there is not enough visible information about them on the route.

The trek itself is in medium condition, but in some places there is clear evidence of poor maintenance. Sample group got lost two times: the first time at the side of the river Ter, where we had to climb out to N-II highway and walk several kilometres along it to come to Medina; and the second time in Garrotxa mountains between Olot and Vic, where instead of coming down to Cantonigros, we descended to Rupit and Pruit, with a geographical error of 9 km, significant for a pedestrian traveller. Difficulty of the route is easy/medium and it is accessible for a wide range of visitors, if a reasonable planning of kilometres per day is done in advance in accordance with weather conditions. No luggage delivery service available, no special services for pedestrian travellers available.

Lack of travellers in **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** results in unawareness of local communities, but people are willing to communicate and show interest towards visitors.

Apart from signage of the route, there is no evidence of belonging of **Cami de Sant Jaume till**

Montserrat to the brand of Saint James the Apostle. No information boards. Few tourist offices are opened and give information, no pilgrim stamps are available in easy access. Pilgrim tourist office which was built at the moment of creation of destination in Vilajuiga is locked and there is a thick layer of dust on the door (fig.8).



Figure 8. Information office in Vilajuiga is closed for several years. Image by author of this study.

There is very few pilgrims accomplishing **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** nowadays, so, destination is receiving less visitors than capacity limit.

3.2.5. Comparison of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat with different parts of French traditional route.

In this chapter I will compare route objective of this study with different parts of French traditional way, upon evaluation texts presented above and state measures of improvement of each factor of evaluation that has to be applied to Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat in order to reach satisfaction of pedestrian travellers.

Cultural resources: architecture, religious and historical attractions: In Cultural resources, **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is evaluated by sample group at superior level along with such parts of **French traditional route** as **Navarra**, **Rioja** and **Castilla y Leon**. Abundance and state of conservation of heritage sites is overall better than in most sites of French traditional way, yet, the opening hours are not adjusted to the needs of pedestrian travellers.

Natural physical attractions: climate, landscape and biodiversity: In the evaluation of Natural resources factors **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is equal to top regions of French traditional route: **Pyrenees**, **Navarra**, **Rioja y Castilla y León** and **Galicia**. Route goes from Mediterranean scenery towards mountains and valleys with abundant flora and fauna and finishes at Montserrat, a mountain with unique, peculiar and well-recognized shape.

Facilities: accommodation and alimentation: **French traditional route** offers possibilities of low-cost accommodation (albergues) in most of municipalities on the route, but there is generally low offer of hotels in most rural areas. **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**, on the contrary, offers a variety of hotels and rural accommodations, but no albergues, which goes in conflict with the concept of a route-based destination with religious branding theme.

Facilities: places of rest and sanitation facilities: This factor has proved to be problematic in most of the parts of **French traditional route** and **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**. The best practise regions of **French traditional way** that offer comfortable environment for pedestrian travellers are **Navarra**, **Rioja** and **Castilla y León**. In these regions, need of rest and sanitary facilities is resolved with abundance of small bars at short distances.

Infrastructure and accessibility: Physical state of path and transport services are the issue of primary importance for a route-based destination. In all regions of **French traditional path** maintenance and signage of the route are the top priority. Transportation services of luggage and people are managed by **JacoTrans** Transport Company along the route for fair prices of 5 to 7 euros per piece of luggage per day (up to 30 km). Service is realized by local representatives in each part of itinerary. In the last 100 km part of **French traditional way** number of transport companies boosts to 7, only working in this short passage. In Finisterre way, where this service is done by hoteliers. In comparison, **Cami de Sant**

Jaume till Montserrat lacks constant maintenance and transfer services.

Local communities: social factor: acceptance of tourism: Regions of **French traditional way** where social factor is in perfect state are: **Pyrenees, Navarra, Rioja and Castilla y León, Valley of Bierzo, Galicia and Finisterre**. A bad example of management of social factor is **Last 100 km** part of **French traditional way**, where excessive amount of visitors causes harm to local community and environment and results in disturbance of all stakeholders of the destination.

Information and educational points, thematic branding of the route: Strong point of all parts of the **French traditional route** is branding. Millennium history makes this itinerary unique and attractive. The route itself is History, most heritage was built in early middle ages to respond demands of its visitors. Route vitalized region and boosted economy back then and does it again now.

History of **French traditional way** teaches us that success is achieved by intention, effort and impudent marketing. The first brand of the route was "Hercules way" and it invited visitors to see the place where Helios descended from his carriage. Christian legend introduced the brand of Saint James the Apostle, just as sacred and just as doubtful. Branding of the route was done despite credibility of legends. King Alfonso II has done good job on marketing, promotion and mass mailing. Over the ages of success of destination, critical studies emerged to prove unviability of the legend of Saint James, but they were always set apart and forgotten. In the 15th century sacred relics of Apostle have vanished from Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, which caused a decline in popularity of destination, but in late 19th century they were miraculously found again and it was claimed that they never left the building.

Contemporary branding uses old legends along with new ones that draw inspiration from tradition, culture and everyday life of people that live on the way. When pilgrims enter Logroño they pass by a house where a woman is selling water, figs and scallop shells. She tells a touching story to every visitor about her husband who was selling these goods to pilgrims for over 70 years until his recent death, and no one can reject to buy fruits from her.

Contemporary pilgrims look for authenticity and participation in real life of local communities. For me, the most important cultural experiences of my journey were my presence at a baptism celebration of a small girl in Viana and a local folklore music festival in Negreira. Simplicity and sincerity of these moments made them special. Pilgrim stamps and certificates of accomplishment of the route are important part of experience. Finisterre way also issues its own Certificate of accomplishment of Saint James way in Costa de Muerte for a price of 2 euros. Certificate is a tangible memory of intangible experience (Fig. 9).



Figure 9. Personal Certificates of accomplishment of Saint James way of the author of this study: Compostela, Certificate of kilometres accomplished on the French traditional way and Finisterre way.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat lacks the whole complex of branding activities.

Capacity of the route and number of visitors: Example of **French traditional route** shows the importance of managing balance between capacity and number of visitors. It has to be done correctly from the very first moment of activity of destination, aiming for an equal spread of visitors, minimizing environmental impacts and distributing economic benefits evenly. The **Last 100 km of French traditional route** is experiencing crisis with local communities, that don't want to receive vast amount of visitors with noise, waste and organic waste pollution they bring. **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** due to lack of visitors is now in a virgin state where the number of visitors is far below the capacity of destination.

3.2.6. Results.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is evaluated to have superb cultural and natural resources, but it lacks essential services for pedestrian travellers. Points of improvement of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** according to the opinion of sample group as a result of Work in the field travelling experiences:

- Longer opening hours for attractions, adjusted to rhythms of pedestrian travellers and focus on restoration/conservation of heritage in certain remote rural areas.
- Stimulation of hospitality businesses of all types to inform visitors of their existence and organize free transport from/ to the route. It will widen geographical range of accessibility for pedestrian travellers and give more choice to the visitors.
- Organization of a network of special accommodation for pilgrims with local communities, under constant supervision of quality of service and complying with legal requirements.(type Airbnb or Couchsurfing).
- Installation of sanitation units where appropriate and to provide necessary services for the visitors.
- Management of day-to-day maintenance of the route and stimulation of hospitality businesses and local transport companies to provide services at fair prices. As the number of visitors is currently low, transport services must be included in touristic products offered along the route and managed correctly in order to reach the economy of scale. Random visitors should also be informed about the existence of transport services at acceptable prices. Another possible solution of this problem is to contact bigger transportation and delivery companies, such as Correus Express or Seur and contract them for service of baggage delivery. Chains of delivery companies are going through fast expansion currently due to popularity and development of Amazon.com on-line sales hub. These delivery chains may be interested in giving delivery services to the visitors of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**.
- Conservation of interest towards visitors by sustainable management, aiming at dynamisation of economic wealth of the region and gaining benefits for the local community from tourism, yet, not damaging resources.
- Implication of legends of the way branding theme through storytelling.

Storytelling can be brought to life through a variety of techniques. Various destinations are made

attractive to visitors by implementation of costumed theatrical acts, wax figures, workshops and rides, that offer experiences for all 5 senses to recreate historic atmosphere (Canterbury tales pilgrimage route, UK.; Jorvik Viking centre York, UK.)

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat could enrich customers experiences by implementing scenes with wax figures and living costumed actors to recreate historic atmosphere in perfect setting of Medieval Catalan villages. Such installations will differ destination from other routes of Saint James network and attract visitors. Themes of theatrical acts may be connected to iconic image of Saint James or may represent local legends and historical events of particular municipalities of the route.

Another technique that could be implemented in branding and marketing of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is **reality quest games** - an emerging trend in leisure activity and tourism with younger generations. Concept of reality quest games emerged from computer quest games, where the gamer was obliged to look for hints and solve puzzles.

Nowadays computer reality came out of the screen to real life, it is done in a specially designed and constructed place, where small teams are locked and have to escape within 60 minutes. Experience is enriched by complete immersion into surroundings, where participants forget about real world, there is a story behind each game. It's a search for answers, objects, signs, images, treasures.

There is no offer of reality quest games in Catalonia. **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** could become a perfect ground for a series of reality quest games in municipalities where it goes through. This activity could be perfectly combined with pilgrimage experience and enrich it.

Another contemporary trend in marketing destinations is augmented reality. It enhances real world experiences through mainstream technologies. Smartphone apps add a layer of guidance, content and entertainment to physical locations seen through the phone's camera view. It also has been integrated into applications for translation, arts, education, commerce and more (Tuscany+, Pokemon Go, Discover Moscow Photo app, Casa Batllo).

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat could apply augmented reality to support pilgrims in their native languages, offer maps and guides for specific niche audiences, offer historical or cultural content or create games for education, entertainment, sharing meaning, simplicity, sincerity and the promise of sacred and miraculous.

3.3. Current situation of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.

3.3.1. Interviews in depth.

3.3.1.1. Methodology of investigation.

Interview 1: President of GERUNDA, Association of Friends of Cami de Sant Jaume of Girona Province, Señor Joaquim Rosa y Roca: Interview with Señor Joaquim Rosa y Roca took place on the 31st of February 2017, in Girona, Catalonia. It lasted about 1, 5 hours. Atmosphere of conversation was pleasant and friendly. Original interview was taken in Spanish, guiding conversation upon a pre-written questionnaire with open questions, approved in advance by coordinator of Master Thesis. Señor Rosa had absolute liberty to express opinions and thoughts within the topics suggested by questions. Key words and phrases were noted down during the interview. Later the same day, full text of questions and answers was written down and translated into English. Qualitative method of research was used to analyse the data, which consisted of transcription of the interview into a short text, expressing the most important ideas, relevant for this investigation.

Interview 2: Josefina Diez Pascual, responsible for organization and signage of Cami de Sant Jaume; Silvia Cassá, responsible for management of Cami de Sant Jaume and Eva M Ferrer, responsible for signage of Cami de Sant Jaume, Generalitat de Catalunya: Interview with Josefina Diaz Pascual, Silvia Cassá and Eva M Ferrer took place on the 9th of February 2017 in the premises of Tourism department of Generalitat de Catalunya in Barcelona, language of interview - Spanish. Group conversation took about 2 hours, it proceeded in a very open and participative manner, rather like a workshop of exchange of opinions. Pre-written questionnaire with open questions guided the path of conversation, but there was no question-answer procedure, discussion developed by itself in a liberated manner. Short notes were taken during the interview and then, later the same day, written down in full phrases and interpreted into English. In the course of analysis of data, full texts of interviews were transcript into short review of the most relevant topics for this study.

Interview 3: Carme Marsal, member of Association of Friends of Sant Jaume of Sabadell: Interview with Carme Marsal took place on the 25th May, 2017, in Mollet del Valles, Catalonia. Original language of interview was Spanish. It took 2, 5 hours. Interview was carried out upon a pre-written questionnaire with open questions, answers were written down in short notes, with special attention to keywords and individualistic phrases. Interview was written down in full length later the same day and translated into English. Analysis of text was done by paraphrase method of qualitative research, extracting data relevant to this study and transcribing it into short text.

Interview 4: Karina Bejar, manager of Council of Cami de Bones Homes of Catalonia: I have carried out personal interview with Karina Bejar, manager of Council of **Cami de Bones Homes** in Berga, Catalonia, on the 14th of February 2017. It lasted about 40 minutes, language in which the original interview was conducted was Spanish. I have used pre-created questionnaire, with open questions, that was corrected by supervisor of Master Thesis beforehand.

Objective of this interview was to find out most possible information about Management of **Cami de Bones Homes**, as it is a similar destination to the **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**. Nature of interview was semi-structured, where I guided conversation along the questions, but gave maximum liberty to Karina to express her thoughts on topics. Her answers were written down in short phrases, capturing key words and expressions during the interview and written down properly in full length later the same day, while memories of conversation were still fresh. Later, text was translated into English with special attention to conservation of original sense of phrases and overall message. Data collected with this interview was analysed with qualitative method of research and processed by transcription into a text provided below with direct citations of the most important phrases to support the content.

3.3.1.2. Interviews.

Interview 1: President of GERUNDA, Association of Friends of Cami de Sant Jaume of Girona Province, Señor Joaquim Rosa y Roca: Association of Friends of Sant Jaume of Girona Province was created 10 years ago to provide support for pilgrims. It consists of 1 active member, Señor Joaquim Rosa y Roca himself, currently retired, and is financed with his personal funds. His personal motivation for this activity is sacred and full of meaning: *"I think that while I am doing it and not finished yet, Saint James will wait for me..."*

Association, according to the words of Señor Roca and Roca, is *"in conflict with Generalitat de Catalunya"*, because Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat was created without coordination with Association and the objective of its creation was *"to amortize some sites and villages, but not to restore historic route"*. Association is dedicated nowadays to creation and maintenance of additional itineraries of Cami de Sant Jaume, such as: Ripolles route, Via Augusta and Via Heraclea. These routes are cleaned and marked by means of volunteers, but there is no economical, technical or managerial support to newly born destinations, no guides, websites, information boards, etc., due to the lack of resources.

According to Señor Roca, Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat, has the following problematic points: there is no DMO dedicated to promotion of the route as a touristic destination (neither private or public sector); there is lack of information for pilgrims in guides and on site; there is lack of albergues; management of voluntary accommodation is too difficult to manage due to mistrust towards visitors; there is no registration of visitors of destination.

Interview 2: Josefina Diez Pascual, responsible for organization and signage of Cami de Sant Jaume; Silvia Cassá, responsible for management of Cami de Sant Jaume and Eva M Ferrer, responsible for signage of Cami de Sant Jaume, Generalitat de Catalunya: Cami de Sant Jaume in Catalonia was created by Generalitat de Catalunya in 2008. Project included physical creation of the route, signage, design and production of guides, website and a promotion campaign in various media. Generalitat de Catalunya has never considered creation of a Management body or touristic products to be its objective, it was expected that they will emerge by themselves once infrastructure is created. *"We thought that the private businesses will evoke naturally and bring life and money into the project, but it didn't happen..."*. There has been no agent detected in dynamisation of destination since the moment of creation until now.

According to Josefina Pascual, the main obstacle for development of destination is the lack of DMO: *"There is no professional management. Someone that would make it work from the business point of view. Associations of Friends of Sant Jaume are decentralized and there is no key management body to it."* Overall impression about the project is disappointment. *"...lots of work done, but without any point. No feedback, no interest."*

Current situation of the destination, according to Eva Ferrer, is abandonment. Maintenance is done in some parts of the path by volunteers and is financed by their own means. No renovation of guides, maps or signage is financed by Generalitat, *"as the project had such an unsuccessful result, there is no importance at all to it right now, no budget is dedicated whatsoever."* Nevertheless, development of Cami de Sant Jaume del Norte as a touristic destination is seen as a highly positive outcome of the current situation. *"If someone would create the network of services, we would be happy to see the project develop and prosper."*

Interview 3: Carme Marsal, member of Association of Friends of Sant Jaume of Sabadell:

According to Carme, Cami de Sant Jaume in Catalonia consists of 2 parts, Northern part from French border till Montserrat and Southern part from Montserrat till Lleida. Current situation of destination is abandonment, especially of Northern path. Southern route is maintained by Association of Friends of Cami de Sant Jaume of Sabadell, a voluntary organization funded by members. The objective of Association of Sabadell is to maintain the route in good condition in case some pilgrims want to walk through Catalonia towards Santiago, there is no business interest in the route. No one is dedicated to development and promotion of either of destinations professionally.

"Route is not ready for visitors. It has to be dressed. There is no albergues, places to rest, no services of transport available essential to attract visitors, but they will not appear without visitors", "it is a vicious circle, where lack of infrastructure causes lack of demand and vice versa".

Cami de Sant Jaume in Catalonia was created and signed between 2008 and 2011, with a promotion programme in 2009. It was presented in several Fairs, in Madrid office of Generalitat de Catalunya and a massive media campaign was carried out. The objective of Generalitat was to create the route and keep its maintenance, but there was no strategy for its development as a touristic destination. Business component was missing from the beginning. Last maintenance was done in 2015. Guides were published in 2008 and were not renewed since then.

Association of Sabadell existed long before Cami de Sant Jaume project of Generalitat. In the year 2008 the route from Montserrat towards Lleida was already cleaned and signed with yellow arrows and the guide was published. The Northern route, **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** has a completely different history. There are two Associations in Girona managed by Joaquim Rosa and Roca and Jaume Oller Figueras and both of them have very special individual profiles. They are not easy to talk to. In 2008 there was no academic study about the history of the path upon Northern territory of Catalonia, so Generalitat had invented the route taking into consideration some political reasoning and personal taste of Jaume Font Gallorela, a brilliant professor of University of Barcelona and PhD in Geography. He is a professional in development of territories by means of tourism. From May 2006 till December 2010 he was the Subdirector of General Program of Tourism of Generalitat de Catalunya and Cami de Sant Jaume was his own project. According to Carme Marsal, Jaume Font Gallorela knows the territory perfectly, so he had chosen the most beautiful and historically valuable locations for the Northern route. At the moment of creation of the route he has decided to take advantage of new-born route-destination, Vies Verdes to join two venues. **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is not linear and has little historical background, but, it goes through regions with high geographical and cultural value and has high potential to attract tourists.

In opinion of Carme Marsal, the future of two parts of Cami de Sant Jaume is different. Southern part is maintained in good condition and walked on, there are some pilgrims who start their journey in

Montserrat and walk towards Santiago de Compostela. There is another destination emerging on the same physical path, but in the opposite direction: Via San Ignacio from Logrono to Manresa, that starts to get popularity and the number of visitors is growing constantly. So, Southern destination is developing, although the rate of growth is slow. There are at least several albergues and pilgrim stamps are available in many spots.

Northern part, **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is abandoned, no one takes care of the path and few visitors walk upon it. According to Carme Marsal *"this part of Cami is going to disappear without maintenance quite soon."* *"There is a potential for this destination, for the region is magnificent, and there are so many people in all the places nowadays that there is enough for every place and activity. But effort is needed. Major part of the work is to create communication network and to establish contacts with administrations and local businesses."*

Carme has accomplished French traditional way, the "star" destination an infinite number of times and has given me her personal opinion about the reasons why local businesses of Catalonia did not start activities along destination once infrastructure was created by Generalitat de Catalunya. According to Carme Marsal, French traditional way worked out, because authorities provided help to private sector to establish businesses along the path, as Castilla and Leon does not get as much tourism as Catalonia and it was interested in development. There has been financial help for renovation of the "star" destination and significant benefits in terms of legal issues. Legislation for pilgrims in traditional path is very flexible. For example, municipalities allow pilgrims to sleep in churches or on the stairs of Cathedrals, always if they have access to sanitary facilities. In Catalonia, regulations for albergues are very strict and costly, so, administrations and religious institutions deny to create and maintain municipal albergues for pilgrims.

In order to change attitude of authorities of Catalonia and ask for some legal benefits from Generalitat de Catalunya, Associations of Friends of Cami de Sant Jaume and Management bodies of destinations would have to come to an agreement about the strategy of development, and present a common project. But, nowadays, Management bodies of destinations do not exist, and the 14 Associations of Friends of Cami de Sant Jaume in Catalonia are in disagreement. The only general assembly in 2008 ended up in quarrel and there is no communication between Associations since then. On the contrary, Association of Friends of Camino de Santiago in the French traditional way act as Management bodies of the destination and profit from the route.

Interview 4: Karina Bejar, manager of Council of Cami de Bones Homes of Catalonia:

Cami de Bones Homes in Catalonia is a Route-based destination dedicated to history and culture of Cathars. Study of Management strategy of this destination was considered necessary, due of its similarity to **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** in terms of location in Catalonia; passage through natural environments; similar mountainous landscapes and particularity of local communities.

Cami de Bones Homes.

Length: 205 km.

Total accumulated elevation gain: 9.259 m.

Stages:

Day 1. Berga - Gosol. 30 km. 8 hours. Difficulty: High.

Day 2. Gosol - Baga. 24 km. 6 hours. Difficulty: Medium.

Day 3. Baga - Bellver de Cerdanya. 28 km. 7 hours. Difficulty: High.

Day 4. Bellver de Cerdanya - Porta. 36 km. 9 hours. Difficulty: Very High.

Day 5. Porta - Merens-les-Vals. 22 km. 6, 5 hours. Difficulty: High.

Day 6. Merens-les-Vals - Orgeix. 18 km. 4, 5 hours. Difficulty: High.

Day 7. Orgeix - Comus. 23 km. 5, 5 hours. Difficulty: High.

Day 8. Comus - Montsegur. 16 km. 4 hours. Difficulty: High.

Day 9. Montsegur - Roquefixade. 16 km. 4, 5 hours. Difficulty: Medium.

Day 10. Roquefixade - Foix. 17 km. 5 hours. Difficulty: Medium.

Cami de Bones Homes is managed by **Council of Cami de Bones Homes**, combined by:

- County Councils of Bergueda, Cerdanya, Solsones and Alt Urgell.

It collaborates with:

- Deputies of Barcelona and Lleida,
- Natural Park de Cadi-Moixeró
- 65 private companies of touristic sector of the region.

Objectives of DMO:

- Social and economic development of the region;
- Protection of the brand;
- High standards of quality of its services and products;
- Physical maintenance of the route on Catalan territory.

Concept of destination dedicated to Cathars was created in 1995 and started with an academic study and analysis of history, culture and tradition of the region. Similar path through Pyrenees was used by

Cathars in the XVth century when they were forced to refuge from France to escape from persecutions of Catholic Church. Cathars have settled down in these remote mountain areas and have brought their culture and traditions with them.

DMO was founded in 1998. The first part of project consisted of physical creation of path GR 07, Cami de Bones Homes and management of its constant maintenance. According to Karina, the most important and difficult part of the work is communication and coordination. Network counts with more than 70 stakeholders. Continuous work with providers of services is essential for the destination. Karina receives calls every day with questions and enquiries, there are educational talks and meetings, trainings twice a year with representatives of all the companies.

Other important part of management process is the complex of activities connected with image and branding, designing the maps, guides, souvenirs, website, passports for visitors, etc. They even have published a Gastronomy recipe book with traditional Cathar dishes that can be tasted along the path (Fig 10).



Figure 10. Examples of graphic design of Cami de Bones Homes in printed materials and souvenirs. Images from Presentation of Cami de Bones Homes, gratitude of Karina Bejar, the manager of Cami de Bones Homes.

Branding of destination is done on superior level, information leaflets, souvenirs, guides and maps are present in all places, designed in the same laconic yet decorative style. Pilgrim passports are available and stamps can be received in every business located within destination. Certificate of accomplishment is issued in Foix, France, target destination of the route.

The nuclei of DMO, working with contract, is just one person, Karina Bejar herself. When more people are needed, she combines bigger teams, but it's only her who is in constant charge of the destination. DMO is financed by trimestral imports done by members of network, depending of the type of business. The quote is from 90 to 300 euros per trimester per businesses (accommodation the most, taxis the least) and 3000 euros per trimester for County Councils. Money is used to maintain path and promote destination. Local administrations of towns do not pay quota, they participate on a different scale,

organizing Summer Cather Festival, which lasts 2 months during summer season and consists of continuous cultural events in different locations.

According to Karina, Route-based destination cannot exist without DMO: *"It's absolutely impossible. If there is no Management body, it will never work. These things do not happen by themselves. It's years and years of meetings, conversations, contacts, problem conciliation..."*

Essential services for pedestrian travellers are:

- Maintenance of the path.
- Accommodation.
- Alimentation.
- Information.
- Sanitation facilities.
- Transport.

"Maintenance is difficult, nature takes it back constantly." Karina receives complains about fallen trees and branches, damaged signs from visitors all the time.

In opinion of Karina Bejar, Route-based destination is capable of being profitable and impulse dynamism to the region without harming environment and local communities. There has always been positive collaboration, people are interested in the dynamisation that the route brings. *"There were several restaurants and bars that emerged as a result of existence of the destination."* **Cami de Bones Homes** needs to attract more visitors to enjoy notable economic flows, so now priority of management body is given to promotion and marketing, without forgetting about constant maintenance and provision of high quality services to the visitors.

Cami de Bones Homes receives about 4 000 visitors per year. This number was constant over years. Seasonality of destination is from March till October, best in June, when flowers blossom. Track of travellers is done in touristic offices and accommodation units, there are also counting machines hidden along the route, but data received from them is not 100 % viable. About 20% of travellers buy a pre-arranged tour from Travel agencies, the rest travel on their own. Existence of receiving Travel agencies is essential for any route-based destination, as tour operators require a responsible entity on the route to sell touristic products.

There are certain problematic points in destination. According to Karina Bejar, certain stages of the route are very long and there is no accommodation and places of rest available for visitors who prefer less kilometres daily. Route is difficult, and not all types of visitors can cope with challenge. DMO organizes transport in case of emergency, but it's too costly to create infrastructure in remote deserted areas of high mountains. Transport services are managed by local taxi establishments and tend to be costly.

Transportation of luggage is organized by Travel agencies and is included in the pre-paid tours, otherwise this service is not available. There is no bus connection, circular one-day tours along the route are unavailable.

Despite difficulties, **Cami de Bones Homes** is a Route-based destination that is developing at a steady rate and the brand is recognised in Catalonia. According to Karina, most visitors are Catalans, around 60%, but after promotion on International Tourism Fairs, they started to receive travellers from Holland, Germany, UK, France and United States. Mainly visitors come in couples or small groups, without children. Lately there was a shift from senior group of visitors towards younger customer segment.

Visitors can be divided into several groups due to their motivation:

- Cultural tourists, interested in Cathar tradition.
- Sportsmen from excursion groups that come in big groups with buses and tend to stay in destination one day.
- Pure active sport people who accomplish the destination in 2-3 days with mountain bikes.

DMO of Cami de Bones Homes helps to resolve conflicts, carries out educational work and stimulates demand by promotion of destination, but does not manage any services directly.

3.3.1.3. Results.

Interview with Señor Rosa y Roca was the first one I have carried out in the course of this investigation. I expected that destination was managed, conserved and promoted by Associations of Friends of Cami de Sant Jaume, as it is done on the French traditional way, but as an outcome of conversation I realized that Association of Girona Province is not aimed at developing and promoting the destination and that there is no DMO in this route at all.

Interview with Josefina Diaz Pascual, Silvia Cassá and Eva M Ferrer confirmed the absence of DMO of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**, and therefore, lack of a complex of activities that have to be done in a route-based destination for its success and development.

According to Deng, King and Bauer (2002), no type of destination can exist and be sustainable in absence of appropriate planning, monitoring, evaluation and management. Report of FEDME: Senderos señalizados y desarrollo rural sostenible (2012) states that lack of program of maintenance and management can cancel tourist impulse in short time. Not only the establishment and inauguration of the itinerary is needed, but the following actions of modification and improvement (same source).

When the lack of overall coordinated touristic product is registered, local businesses and institutions do not take part in promotion and maintenance of the route. Lack of management directly leads to degradation of destination (Report of FEDME: Senderos señalizados y desarrollo rural sostenible, 2012).

Interview with Carme Marsal had a significant value for this investigation. After conversation with Carme Marsal I have conducted a further research of previous academic studies to identify measures in which local authorities supported French traditional way, the "star" destination in its early development stages.

According to Gonzalez and Lopez (2012), **French traditional route** is included into Portfolio of strategic actions of Spanish government from 1980s, in 1985 it was nominated World Heritage site by UNESCO, and in 1987 it was declared first Cultural Itinerary of Europe. In 1993 the whole route was named World Heritage site. Regional governments are increasingly incorporating Route-based tourism into development strategies and provide tourist advice through network of information offices, which complement additional facilities funded by local authorities and Chambers of Commerce. Fostering of rural tourism is promoted and funded under EU initiatives, mostly by LEADER programme on rural development.

Essential actions executed and financed by local and regional governments that influenced **French**

traditional way and fostered its development were:

- 1960: Legal establishment of Associations of Friends of Saint James way, official DMOs.
- 1990: integral restoration and rehabilitation of French traditional route: monasteries, churches, other architectonic structures. Recovery of pavement, bridges and walks through rivers, areas for rest and scenery viewpoints. Full recovery of ancient nucleus of cities and incorporation of a wide network of touristic information points. Support of creation of network of hostels and albergues for visitors and overall dynamisation of the region.

Within **Cami de Sant Jaume** project of Generalitat de Catalunya, executed in 2008, some of these actions were applied to newly born route-based destination, but some were left out.

Conversation with Karina Bejar has outlined a Management strategy of DMO of a successful Route-based destination similar to **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** and has given me a base for further investigation, conclusions and combination of Proposition Model for DMO of destination objective of this study.

I was also interested in personal opinion of Karina Bejar about the reasons that obstacle successful development of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** as a touristic destination. She argued that this route did not emerge from the roots, expressing desire of local community to attract visitors. It was implemented from top, by political directive and there was no integration of municipalities, local communities and private businesses into the project. *"People were not ready for it and it didn't work. Things grow from the bottom, not from the top".*

3.3.2. Orientated customer profile.

Report "Impacto económico y social del Programa de Caminos naturales" (2014) shows evidence that the main visitors of Caminos Naturales trekking network in Spain were **locals**, estimating a total between 24,6 and 35,1 million per year. Two thirds of these visits were generated by inhabitants of the same municipality where itinerary was located. Customer of Caminos Naturales is identified as mainly local male visitor, between 35 and 65 years, employed. **Lately, there was a rise in number of retired visitors reported.**

Touristic centre of Santiago de Compostela states that in 2015, there were 215,516 pilgrims registered accomplishing **French traditional route**, mainly **inward Spanish tourists** (83%), with a wide range of other nationalities in small percentages.

According to Karina Bejar, visitors of **Cami de Bones Homes** are mainly **Catalan** and **Spanish** pedestrian travellers, but they also receive international visitors in small proportions. Majority (80%) are independent travellers that do not use the help of travel agencies.

The study "Estudi Del senderisme com a activitat turística (case of Bergueda), (2016), states that 93, 35% of visitors of analysed routes were **locals** and proceeded from Catalunya, mainly from the city of Barcelona (28%).

According to data from Tourist Office of Port de la Selva (data collected within this study), there were 124 travellers who have left Port de la Selva in 2016 with intention to accomplish **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**. Majority of them (86%) were Catalans with little percentage of international travellers from all over the world.

Basing the reasoning on above data, **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** should primarily focus on travellers from Catalonia and Spain, opening towards worldwide markets with time.

Global report on adventure tourism, UNWTO (2015) states that adventure tourists are passionate, risk taking and willing to pay premium for exciting and authentic experiences. Adventure operators have reported an **average of 3 000 US dollars spent with trip length of 8 days**. Small portion of adventure tourists travel alone, 21% travel with friends, **37% travel with their spouse or partner** and **30% travel with their families including children**. Adventure tourists rank areas of natural beauty as the dominant factor in choosing destination, followed by activities. Motivation for adventure tourists were: relaxation, exploring new places, time with family and learning about new cultures.

Yurtseven and Kaya (2011) distinguish following profile of **Slow tourists**: they were reported to be

mainly **male** (38%), **married** (36%), with **University level of education** (29%), in the age frames **from 25 to 44 years** (43%), **occupied with intellectual labour** (manager, executive, teacher, engineer, doctor). 60% reported to be **independent travellers**, that travel with **family** (75%). 26% have stayed in destination **for 7 days or more** and 21% stayed for **less than 3 days**. 25% travelled **less than 250 km** to get to destination.

The study "Estudi del senderisme com a activitat turística (case of Bergueda), (2016), establishes the following profile for visitors of trekking destinations: The age range observed was from 15 to 85 years, 47,33% of visitors were in the range between **31 and 45 years old**. Gender profile was proved insignificant. 52% of visitors have **University level of education**, 32% secondary level of education. 71% have reported to be **occupied** with prevalence of **service sector** in labour (72%).

Basing the reasoning on the above data, the customer of Cami **de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is likely to be local, from Catalonia, within a range from 25 to 45 years old, with University level of education, occupied in intellectual labour or service sector, mainly independent traveller, who stays in destination either more than 7 days or less than 3 days.

As to motivations, according to Yurtseven and Kaya (2011), main attractions of destination for **slow tourists** are:

- Variety of things to see in the region.
- Protected traditional architecture.
- Variety of cultural events.
- Existence of tasting local and drink opportunity.
- Opportunity to see natural life.
- Protected local culture.

In literature review section of my Thesis I have established that motivations of a **contemporary visitor of route-based cultural touristic destination with religious theme** lie within a wide range of reasons:

- Desire for aesthetic pleasure through contemplation of landscapes and discovering local gastronomy.
- Need to execute sports activity in search of adrenaline and pure challenge of stamina.
- Crusade for sacred answers to authentic religious concerns.
- Escape from routine through converting into a pilgrim for a period of time.
- Wish to experience adventure in its original frightening, challenging and amazing form.
- Need to be alone or meet new people.

Main demographic factors identified by EU Commission of Tourism and WTO (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2016) for future are:

- Shorter leisure breaks with more intensive experiences.
- Demand for international and cosmopolitan attitudes.
- Concerns about ethical and environmental questions.
- Greater demand for adventure and desire to experience new things and unique experiences;
- Fragmentation of tastes.
- Movement from traditional “horizontal” families with many members of same generation to “vertical” families, with greater difference of age in between generations.
- Urbanization of population.

Above data suggests **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** a strategy of creation of differentiated space for visitors disregarding personal beliefs and lifestyles, drawing inspiration from tradition and authenticity of the region and offering a range of poli-facetic touristic products to niche customer groups. A variety of products may be particularly attractive to fragmented tastes of contemporary customers.

Technical characteristics of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** allow the possibility to offer a number of touristic products of different intensity with various focuses to a variety of customer segments within the same destination.

3.3.3. Benchmarking.

Objective: Detect interesting initiatives that could be adapted to **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** for its improvement and development.

Route-based destinations evaluated:

- El Cinque Llac, Catalunya.
- La Ruta Del Cister Catalunya.
- Cami de Cavalls, Menorca, Balearic islands.
- Itineraria, Catalunya.
- Via Alpina, Alps, international project.
- La Loire à vélo, France.

Parameters of evaluation:

- Short description of the route, stages.
 - Type of DMO.
 - Best practise of destination.
 - Official web site.
-

El Cinque Llac: is a circular route at a distance of 200 km from Barcelona with starting and finishing point in Pobla de Segur. It's a route of 100 km, divided into 5 stages, in middle Pirineus, accessible for all levels of trekking affiliates (data from official website). It goes through National Parc d'Aigüestortes i Sant Maurici, well known for its abundant flora and fauna. Cinque Llac is an authentic rural location, villages maintain their original gastronomy, customs and traditions. Recommended period of activity: spring and autumn.

DMO: **l'Associació Marques de Pastor**, type of organization: private. Formed by local accommodation businesses and a local travel agency.

Best practices:

- **Local receiving travel agency:** ensuring services of high quality on the route.
- Possibility to contract a **guide**.
- Branding within the concepts of slow **tourism** destination.
- **Legends of the way:** branding of each day of the route is dedicated to one local legend. During the walk, visitor gets acquainted with legend and sees places where it happened.
- Focus of flora, fauna and geology: **information boards** along the route.
- Wide offer of adventure **activities**, including BTT, horseback riding and donkey riding.
- **Gastronomy:** authentic traditional cuisine with local ingredients of supreme quality.
- **Souvenir of accomplishment:** visitor is given a walking stick in the beginning of the route, where he has to put 5 shepherd cuts each day of the journey (done in special places). Upon accomplishment of the route, shepherd's hook (a traditional decoration) is put on top of stick.

<http://www.elcinquellac.com>

La Ruta Del Cister: Created in 1989, Ruta Del Cister connects 3 Cistercian Monasteries in Urgell, Conca de Barbera and Alt Camp. It's a circular route of 105 kilometres, officially registered as GR 175, with religious branding theme. During 25 years of existence it was visited by almost 7 million people. Numerous rural houses, restaurants, museum and sites have emerged due to the existence of the route. Visitors of the route enjoy discounts in services and products along the route with presentation of Pilgrim passport.

The route is signed with red and white marks, usual for GR routes and posts with information about the place and its altitude. Although it is officially divided into three stages, it is recommended to accomplish it in more days to enjoy the visits to monasteries.

DMO: **Office of management of Ruta Del Cister**; type - public initiative.

Best practices:

- Good and easy to use **website**, with possibilities to book accommodation online, clear and detailed information about services, places to stay and eat.
- **Differentiated touristic products** connected to the route: Bike and wine nature tours, horseback riding, adventure, enotourism, route in 4x4, route in bicycle, family trips, trekking, music and wines, wellness.
- **Gastronomic experiences** - traditional seasonal gastronomic events, such as spring onion festival; cooking classes, medieval gastronomic experiences.
- **Cultural events with medieval theme:** music concerts, expositions, guided tours of heritage sites in municipalities along the route during the high season.

<https://www.larutadelcister.info>

Cami de Cavalls, Menorca: A historic circular route (GR 223) that goes around the island of Menorca, with the length of 185 or 225 km, divided into 10 stages with easy/medium difficulty. Route forms part of cultural and historic heritage of Menorca, a Biosphere Reserve of UNESCO itself, going along mainly virgin coastline with almost every existing ecosystem in Mediterranean present, with admirable diversity of flora and fauna and a wide variety of species with substantial ecological value.

DMO: done by initiative of **40*Nord**, a small private travel agency that offers self-guided tours around the island, services of accommodation, transfer and transport.

Best practices:

- **Maintenance** is financed by voluntary donations by visitors, in change of commemorative t-shirts. **40*Nord** donates 2 euros from each visitor for conservation and maintenance.
- Due to low offer of services available in most of the starting points of stages, **touristic products** include accommodation, transfers from/to the hotels and transportation of luggage.

<http://www.camidecavalls360.com>

Itinerànnia: a network of hiking treks that stretches out over 2,500 km and joins counties of Ripollès, Garrotxa and Alt Emporda, that allows to walk from any place to any other place through natural and safe environment.

DMO: **Council of Itinerànnia** is a public initiative formed by 3 County Councils: Consorci Ripollès, Turisme Garrotxa and Alt Empordà Turisme.

Best practices:

- **Interactive website** with integrated **Google maps** that shows in detail every spot of network.
- **Organized touristic products** that include accommodation, restaurants and transport of luggage.
- Possibility to create **customized route on-line** with recommendation of hotels.
- **Mobile application** that localizes the visitor and shows his location on the map.

<http://www.itinerannia.net>

Via Alpina: a network of 5 international trails, through Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, France and Participate of Monaco, with 342 stages and over 5 000 km, between 0 to 3000 m above sea level, that invites to discover natural and cultural heritage of Alps, largest natural space in Europe. The route offers all the ingredients to organize a trip for a weekend, a week or the whole summer. Trails are not technically difficult and are accessible to all walkers, from June to October.

DMO: **Via Alpina** - European project, public/private players from 8 Alpine countries.

Best practices:

- Along clearly marked paths there are **welcoming stop points with Via Alpina logo**, that invite to eat, stay or conduct supplementary activities.
- Via Alpina is not organizing tours, but it **collaborates** with travel agencies and tour operators.
- **Transfer of luggage** is available within prepaid organized tours. Some accommodation spots also provide the service of luggage transfer.
- Service of **Digital maps with GPS devices** is currently being introduced in the areas that have mobile coverage.

<http://www.via-alpina.org>

La Loire a Velo: Cycling route in France of 800 km, from Cuffy (near Nevers) to Saint-Brevin-les-Pins (opposite Saint-Nazaire), or vice versa. It runs along Loire River to discover natural riches of the region. Accessible to all ages and levels of physical shape. The route invites to see the Castles of Loire, Loire-Anjou-Touraine Regional Nature Reserve, gardens of the Loire Valley, and many more sites of historic and cultural heritage.

DMO: **The Loire valley tourist board**, under authority of **Centre-Val de Loire Regional Council** and **Public regional society of Loire County**, (public-private initiative).

Best practices:

- Belongs to UNESCO world heritage list as "living cultural landscape".
- Offers the possibility to contract **bike hire**, **transfer of luggage** or **specialist guide** without the necessity to buy prepaid touristic packages.
- A wide range of "**surprises and curiosities**" additional attractions apart from the well-known heritage, such as: canal bridge close to Briare, Troglodyte valley of Goupillières at Azay-le-Rideau - caves, where visitors can spend the night in a bizarre house carved in the rock, see how the wines and fruits are preserved in ideal natural conditions and white mushrooms are grown.

<http://www.cycling-loire.com>

Adaptation of some of the best practises applied in the route-based destinations, objectives of benchmarking to **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** would be beneficial:

- **Local receiving travel agency:** ensuring services of high quality on the route.
- Branding within the concepts of slow **tourism** destination.
- **Application of local legends** and **legends connected to Saint James the Apostle** in branding of destination and certain peculiar parts of the route.
- Installation of **information boards and panels** with data about flora, fauna, geology, history of the region and some interesting facts about local communities.
- **Collaboration** with local touristic agencies and providers to offer **adventure activities** (horseback riding, rides of touristic trains, fisherman boats trips, gas balloon sightseeing trips, trips on Segway and electric bikes, guided visits to Garrotxa volcanoes, etc.) and **surprise and curiosities** activities (visit of prehistoric caves in Moia, La Fageda farm o participation in gathering of pees in Santa Pau).
- Elaboration a **wide offer of differentiated touristic products** aimed at varied customer niches.
- **Gastronomic experiences** with seasonal food events and festivals, invitations to participate in local food markets with degustation, visits to wineries and farms that produce local artisan products.
- Offering a possibility to **contract services and guidance** with or without a prepaid tour.
- Providing information about **cultural events** in municipalities located close to the route: music concerts, expositions, etc.
- Use of **technologies**: easy to use **website**, with possibilities to book accommodation online, clear and detailed information about services, places to stay and eat; **interactive map boards** connected to Google maps; mobile **applications**, **Digital maps** with GPS devices, etc.
- Application of **Certificate of accomplishment** of the route.
- Management of maintenance of the route and installation of **stop points on the route** with information about places to stop, rest and stay.

3.3.4. Investigation. Interviews with supply side of the route.

3.3.4.1. Methodology of investigation.

According to UNWTO: Global report on adventure tourism (2015), prior to any tourism development, a network of potentially affected stakeholders or communities should give their input. "Social license" is critical to the success of any project. The first step towards acquiring social licence for a destination is a study of level of interest of supply side of destination in its development.

In course of my investigation I have conducted short interviews with representatives of hospitality enterprises along **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**. Survey examined level of interest to collaborate and participate in development of destination.

On the 7th, 10th and 13th of July, 2017 I conducted a journey with car along **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**, stopping in urbanizations marked in the guide, walking along signed itinerary and entering every bar, restaurant, hotel or tourist office that was located right on the route, could be seen from it, or had its commercial sign present on the itinerary. Short interviews were taken without previous arrangements, but within concrete geographical dimension - along **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**, so the method of sampling is considered to be **intentional**. Some businesses were closed, due to summer vacations or unusual working schedules. There was also a slight number of rejections to communicate due to busy working graphic during high season, but representatives of majority of businesses were eager to communicate and in most situations the owner or the manager walked out to talk to me. Interviews were done in Spanish.

There were **72 short interviews** taken during investigation. Out of 72 people interviewed, 22 represented accommodation businesses, 22 - local bars or cafes, 9 - restaurants, 15 - touristic offices, points of interest, museums or religious institutions and 4 - city halls of small municipalities. This sample is considered to be reasonably representative in terms of spread along the route and diversity of businesses interviewed, although in bigger cities number of interviews were limited once the point of saturation was reached.

"Surprise" methodology of interviewing was chosen for investigation intentionally, with the objective to grasp a sample of first impressions about the route and level of interest for its development.

Interviews were carried out along a questionnaire, but each short conversation developed liberally, allowing the interviewed to express personal opinions. Each interview was written down right after discussion.

Topics of discussion examined:

- Evidence of development and demand for active and adventure tourism in municipality.
- Awareness of proximity of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**.
- Whether visitors enter the establishment, presenting pilgrim passport and asking for stamps.
- Whether the establishment possessed a special stamp.
- Interest of interviewed representative of a private business in development of destination.
- Willingness to participate in economic terms to support DMO in case it was created.

3.3.4.2. Analysis of data.

Mixed method of analysis was used to proceed data. First of all, interviews were translated into English, and processed into printed texts. Then, they were examined with content analysis and coded into themes. An excel table was used to transform this information into accountable data. Most popular answers in each topic were recounted and a percentage of each type of answer was established over of a number of answers received.

3.3.4.3. Results of investigation.

Is there evidence of development of active tourism (trekking, biking) in municipality, do you agree that demand for active tourism is growing?

78 % of interviewed responded yes; 22 % responded no.

There is clear evidence that active tourism in natural environments is going through a stage of development in the region.

Are you aware of existence of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat?

79 % responded yes; 20 % responded no.

This result is considered to reflect a low awareness of existence of destination, as only the businesses that have destination in front of their door within a visible distance were taken into account, a 100% awareness was expected in these circumstances.

Do the visitors of the route enter your establishment, present pilgrim passport and ask for a stamp?

32 % responded yes; 68 % responded no.

Attractiveness of certain establishments for pedestrian travellers had a direct impact on reflections of the owner about destination. The more visitors entered, the more they were interested in its development.

Do you have a special stamp for pilgrims?

36 % of interviewed neglected to answer; 13 % responded yes; 51 % responded no.

Majority of establishments do not have a symbolic stamp of the route. Pilgrim stamp is a branding touristic ingredient. Businesses are allowed to put their official stamp in passports, but the beauty of collection vanishes if stamps are not especially designed for the route.

Do you consider development of this destination to be beneficial and desirable for your business?

24 % of respondents neglected to answer; 60 % responded yes; 16 % responded no.

Majority of interviewed people showed interest towards development of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** as a touristic destination.

I have noted a certain mistrust towards the figure of pilgrim in some respondents. Image of pedestrian traveller over a long route is somewhat erroneous. Respondents explained that pilgrims' don't have money, so they are not the right type of clients for their business. On the contrary, respondents who had contacts with such travellers were excited to meet more of them.

Would you pay a quote to support DMO of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat in economic terms if it was created?

This question was intentionally provocative, the objective was to reveal the level of real interest in development of destination. It provoked more emotional answers and reflection in comparison to previous one.

30 % of respondents neglected to answer; 29 % responded no; 6 % responded yes; 21 % asked for a clear plan of actions of DMO to consider participation, accepting the possibility; 8 % accepted the possibility of financial support in case of evidence of positive trend; 3 % were willing to participate in organizing special services for pilgrims and giving special discounts, but not paying a monthly quote; 3 % stated that they already pay a quote to Vias Verdes and Turisme Garrotxa (part of the path between Girona and Olot) and recommended to come to an agreement with these management bodies.

Negative answers to this question ascend to 69 %, positive answers with various circumstances ascend to 31 %. Taking into consideration a "surprise" methodology of investigation and absence of any documentation revealing the strategy or business plan of DMO, result is considered to be positive, but needs to be verified by further studies.

Current image of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat:

Discussion of current image of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** was not prearranged in this investigation, theme was projected by interviewed people.

Owner of Bar and Hostal El Fluvia, Bascara has stated that: *"Visitors complain about the condition of the path. There has been reconstruction of the railroad and N-II, so the signage has to be reviewed."*

Similar opinion was noted in Hostal Can Massot, Angles: *"Pilgrims have been saying that the way is poorly marked and they got lost."*

Owner of Bar and Restaurant Can Matilde, Sant Feliu de Pallerols said: *"Visitors of Cami de Sant Jaume are usually lost, they lack information, complain that the route is not properly marked and don't know where to sleep. I feel sorry for them and usually help them, driving to the closest accommodation. Cami de Sant Jaume has to be managed, visitors can't be badly informed and get lost. It creates a wrong image of Catalonia."*

A similar opinion was expressed by the owner of Bar and Restaurant Hostal Grau, L'Estany: *"Lots of people are disappointed, because the route is marked badly and they get lost. Destination must be managed, otherwise the image for tourists is very bad. If it was created, it can't be abandoned. It's a responsibility: people can't get lost and left without roof above their heads."*

DMO of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat has to be created to comply with minimum responsibilities and ensure safe environment for visitors and support positive image of Catalonia as a touristic destination.

3.3.4.4. Discussion of the results.

Study of level of interest of supply side of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** in its development has revealed the following facts:

- There is evidence that demand for active tourism in natural environments is growing in municipalities where the route is located (78%).
- There is low awareness of existence of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** in municipalities it goes through.
- There is evidence of visitors accomplishing the route, who present pilgrim passport and ask for stamp, but the number of visitors is small.
- Establishments along the route do not possess a special stamp for pilgrims (only 13% gave a positive answer).
- Representatives of local businesses and administrations consider development of this destination to be beneficial and desirable (60%).
- 31% of interviewed representatives of local businesses were willing to consider economic participation in creation and support of DMO under a variety of conditions. Taking into consideration a "surprise" methodology of investigation and absence of any documentation revealing the strategy or business plan of DMO, this result is considered to be positive.

Investigation revealed interest in improvement and development of destination, with 60% of respondents considering development of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** desirable and beneficial, and 31% considering economic inputs for the support of DMO under a variety of conditions. **Social license** may be achieved along the destination objective of this study, if it is managed correctly focusing on quality rather than quantity and taking concerns of local community and conservation of resources as the main objectives of development.

3.3.5. SWOT analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Excellent Natural and Cultural resources in good state of conservation.</p> <p>Proximity and targeting to Monastery of Montserrat.</p> <p>Build infrastructure and signage.</p> <p>Iconic tourist attractions along the route.</p> <p>Region with superior level of tourism infrastructure, attractions and gastronomy.</p> <p>Possibility to offer supplementary adventure activities to the visitors.</p> <p>Possibility to offer accomplishment of the route in bicycles, horses, etc.</p>	<p>Unsatisfactory infrastructure within walking distance from the route.</p> <p>Long stages of more than 20 km limit the number of potential visitors.</p> <p>Lack of DMO.</p> <p>Lack of essential services for visitors.</p> <p>Lack of Touristic products.</p> <p>Lack of albergues.</p> <p>Lack of information about the services on the route.</p> <p>Lack of promotion and branding activities.</p> <p>Few visitors.</p> <p>Lack of Travel agencies and Tour operators.</p> <p>Low awareness of the existence of the route in local communities, trekking associations, affiliates.</p> <p>Erroneous negative image of pedestrian travellers in the supply side of destination.</p> <p>Competition with other DMO's between Girona and Olot (Vies Verdes, Turisme Garrotxa)</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Emerging interest for trekking and active tourism in Natural environments.</p> <p>Mild Mediterranean climate.</p> <p>All-year non-seasonal sustainable activity.</p> <p>Easy/medium difficulty of the route - accessible for wide range of visitors.</p> <p>Strong branding of Catalonia, Costa Brava, Figueres, Girona and Monastery of Montserrat.</p> <p>High value of national culture for inward visitors.</p> <p>Being part of well-known Saint James Network.</p> <p>Niche market marketing opportunities for well-being, spiritual, adventure, slow, environmentally friendly tourism.</p> <p>Undisturbed local communities eager for development of tourism.</p> <p>Interest of the supply side of destination development of the route.</p>	<p>Lack of maintenance of the route.</p> <p>Lack of interest, implication and economic support from Generalitat de Catalunya towards destination.</p> <p>Lack of Network of collaboration and communication along the route.</p> <p>Lack of Investments.</p> <p>Lack of subsidies from local authorities in terms of economic and legal support.</p> <p>Lack of collaboration among the Associations of Friends of Saint Jaume.</p> <p>Lack of easy association with the brand of Saint James.</p> <p>Lack of support from DMO's of French traditional route, competition with a legendary destination.</p>

SWOT analysis of destination reveals that **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** can become a successful tourist destination, as Strengths and Opportunities blocks are significant and some of them are unique. On the other hand, Threats and Weaknesses of this destination are also significant. Lack of investments and subsidies from authorities lead to lack of DMO, which leads to lack of basic services and lack of visitors of destination.

"It is a vicious circle, where lack of infrastructure causes lack of demand and vice versa..." direct citation of Carme Marsal, Association of Friends of Sant Jaume of Sabadell.

4. Discussion.

The objective of this business report is to identify reasons why is **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** not attracting as much visitors as needed for successful development and dynamisation of the region and to propose a model for its improvement and development.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat has superb cultural and natural resources, but it lacks essential services for pedestrian travellers, that were identified throughout the investigation as:

- **Maintenance of the path:** last maintenance was done in 2015. There was reconstruction of N-II and the railroad executed since then, in some places there is clear evidence of poor maintenance. Sample group during the work in the field got lost two times. Representatives of supply side of destination expressed their disappointment with abandonment of the route. They stated that destination does not comply with minimum responsibilities and does not ensure safe environment for visitors. Current state of trail has a negative impact on the image of Catalonia as a touristic destination.
- **Accommodation:** The route goes through a region with well-developed tourist infrastructure and there is a variety of hotels, pensions and rural houses, but there are no albergues available (low cost accommodation), in contrast with concepts of a religious cultural route.
- **Alimentation:** Catalonia is well-known for its gastronomy and enology and there is a variety of bars and restaurants in relative closeness that offer superb cuisine with the use of local ingredients of highest quality. But there is not enough visible information on the itinerary about the offer. There are no specially designed menus for pilgrims or sportsmen.
- **Information:** destination lacks the whole complex of information, branding and promotion activities. Tourist office in Vilajuiga constructed to inform the visitors of this route is closed.
- **Sanitation facilities:** There is a lack of sanitation facilities along the route.
- **Transport:** Transfer of luggage, transport and rescue transportation can only be done by the means of taxi at an elevated cost.

Lack of a complex of essential activities that has to be executed in a route-based destination for its success and development is caused by the lack of **DMO**.

4.1. Proposition Model of DMO.

The first and essential step would be the creation of **Destination Management Organization (DMO)**. No improvement and development is possible without a management body.

Objective for DMO Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat:

Creation of a functional mechanism of communication and collaboration of organizations along the route with the aim to provide experiences of supreme quality to travellers with highest priority of sustainability of destination.

Structure of DMO:

DMO can function with just one constant employee, as it is done in Cami de Bones Homes, with bigger teams combined for certain activities. *"I think it is a mistake to hire huge number of people to get a complicated job done. Numbers will never compensate for talent in getting the right answer, will tend to slow progress, and will make the task incredibly expensive"*, direct citation of Elon Musk, the founder of PayPal and current CEO of Tesla & SpaceX.

In perfect conditions, **DMO of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** would be structured as a **Public-private partnership**, where part of economic support would come from **Public sector**, in this case Generalitat de Catalunya, County Councils and City Halls of municipalities, to ensure minimum monthly income basis for employing the manager and pay off basic costs.

The rest of investments would be drawn from **Private sector** - supply side of the route or other entities that may have benefits from its development and success. Trimester quotes would ensure enough investments to carry out maintenance, promotion and branding activities. DMO would also seek financial help from European Union initiatives, such as LEADER programme on rural development.

But, these perfect conditions are not seen as very probable, due to lack of interest from authorities and investments. So, **realistic model of structure for DMO of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is a **Private company** that would act as an agent for dynamization of the route and sell touristic products connected to it. It should be financed by proper initial investments and benefits from sales and be supported by trimester inputs from supply side of destination.

According to Carme Marsal, initial objective of Generalitat de Catalunya was to create Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat and keep its maintenance. Constant maintenance on a daily basis can be financed by DMO, but the initial recovery of the path after several years of abandonment, taking into consideration reconstruction of railroad and N-II would have to be financed by authorities. Current state of itinerary has negative impact in the image of Catalonia as touristic destination, recovery of the path is necessary to comply with minimum responsibilities and ensure safe environment for visitors.

Primary activities of DMO.

Product development.

In a route-based destination ensuring high standards of products includes:

- **Taking care of natural and cultural heritage attractions of destination:**
 - Conservation of superb natural resources of the region where the route is located;
 - Focus of restoration/conservation of cultural and architectonic heritage of the region, especially in certain remote inward areas.
- **Day-to-day physical maintenance of trek:**
 - Ensuring safe environment for visitors by constant maintenance of the route and its signage;
 - Installation of stop points with information about places to stop, rest and stay.
 - Additional signage.
 - Adaptation of the route to be accessible by bicycles and horses.
- **Providing necessary services for travellers:**
 - Stimulation of local transport companies to provide transportation of visitors, transfer of luggage and rescue transportation at fair prices.
 - Amplification of the range of reach of pedestrian traveller by organization of free transport from/to the route to hospitality businesses by their own means.
 - Renovation of guides and maps. Adding information about products and services with direct contacts.
 - Organization of special places for rest.
 - Introduction of special food in bars and restaurants: pilgrim menus, healthy protein menus, snacks and cereal bars.

- Installation of sanitation units where needed.
- Organization of a network of special low-cost accommodation for pilgrims with local communities, under constant control of quality of service and complying with legal regulations.
- Offering a possibility to contract services and guidance with or without a prepaid tour.
- Creation and management of poli-facetic touristic products aimed at niche segments with possibility to adapt packages to individual necessities and their international marketing.
- Creation and support of mobile apps with digital maps of the route.
- Provision of GPS devices.
- Integrating medical services, such as physiotherapy, massage and consultations with therapists and dietitian on the route.
- Installation of interactive map boards connected to Google maps to provide information on site.

Constant improvement and expansion of high quality products is essential for being in accordance with new trends and developments.

Product packaging.

Packaging for intangible tourism products consists of a range of attractions, experiences, products and services, including the complex of vibrant branding activities. A number of poli-facetic touristic products aimed at variated marked niches must be presented in the same style as destination to compliment both venues.

- **Public relations:**

- Creation, support and continuous renovation of easy to use website, with possibilities to book accommodation online, clear and detailed information about services, places to

stay and eat;

- Management of longer opening hours for attractions, adjusted to rhythms of pedestrian travellers.
- Creation of differentiated space for visitors disregarding personal beliefs and lifestyles; balancing personal, sacred and spiritual, drawing inspiration from tradition and authenticity of the region and offering a range of poli-facetic touristic products to niche customer groups.
- Collaboration with Vies Verdes and Turisme Garrotxa between Girona and Olot, where the routes are merged together.
- Introduction of competition and concourses to stimulate interest and spirit of challenge.
- Creation of special touristic products for teambuilding.
- Providing information about cultural events in municipalities located close to the route: music concerts, expositions, etc.

- **Branding:**

- Application of local legends and legends connected to Saint James the Apostle in branding of destination and certain peculiar parts of the route through storytelling.
- Storytelling marketing strategy with Theatrical acts, Wax figure scenes, Cultural events and Reality Quest games in municipalities along the route.
- Integration of branding into hotels, bars restaurants and shops.
- Installation of information boards with data about flora, fauna, geology, history of the region and some interesting facts about local communities.
- Use of augmented reality techniques on site with easy access to Wi-Fi and Social media.

- **Certificate of accomplishment of the route:**

- Application of Certificate of accomplishment of the route, stamps must be available in all sites, even when they are closed for visit.

- **Additional adventure and gastronomic activities:**

- Gastronomic experiences with seasonal food events and festivals, invitations to participate in local food markets with degustation, visits to wineries and farms that produce local artisan products, "high food focus" of the route.
 - Implementation of Slow tourism concepts and principles to destination.
 - Collaboration with local touristic agencies and providers to offer adventure activities (horseback riding, rides of touristic trains, fisherman boats trips, gas balloon sightseeing trips, trips on Segway and electric bikes, guided visits to Garrotxa volcanoes, etc.) and surprise and curiosities activities (visit of prehistoric caves in Moia, La Fageda farm o participation in gathering of pees in Santa Pau).
-

Promotion, distribution and sales.

Promotion is to be done directly to the customer through Internet and Social Media, and to intermediaries using a range of promotional methods. Distribution of generic and commercial information is to be done through most appropriate channels:

- Internet and Social media.
- Presence and promotion at local and international fairs and networking activities.
- Collaboration with travel agencies and Tour Operators.
- Collaboration with local promotion networks.
- Promotion in active sports associations worldwide.
- Mailing and distribution of information about destination to final customers and intermediaries.
- Personal contacts. Be out of the office and make as many visits as possible.

Sales are to be done online at official web-site or through intermediaries. Sales of additional services and activities must be available on the route in touristic services and hospitality businesses.

In and outbound logistics.

It is important to have in consideration all factors of access and availability that may influence the choice of destination. Constant work on improvement of inbound logistics and ensuring easy access to destination from outside is needed. **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is situated in a region with well-developed infrastructure and there is easy access by means of transport to the majority of spots along the route. Activities of DMO must include:

- Stimulate development of new businesses along the route, such as: travel agencies, guides, transport companies, private transport services, etc.
 - Stimulate adoption of services offered by local businesses to specific necessities of pedestrian travellers.
-

Destination operations and services.

Main part of tourist experience happens at the destination. Coordination of all units with high rate of response to inquiries and ensuring high standards of services and products is the primary objective of DMO.

Aftercare.

Client care and follow-up of clients is to be done to establish loyalty and re-visit. Route-based experience can be re-visited if some new features or experiences are offered, if Certificate of accomplishment is re-designed every year and there is a competition issue present in the destination, if differentiated products can be applied to other family members or a variety of experiences are available on the same route. DMO is to undertake periodic investigations of mentalities of existing visitors of destination with a view to tailor services to their desired experiences, aiming for loyalty and re-visit.

Establishing competitive edge.

Competitive advantage over rivals is achieved by: establishing a strong and unique positioning and delivering excellent quality experiences and superior value for money.

Ensuring tourism sustainability.

- Correct management with focus of quality that quantity.
- Maintenance of environmental integrity and restoration of resources.
- Management of destination capacity and spread of visitors with the aim to distribute economic flows and minimizing influence on local lifestyles, traditions and values.

In case of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** this activity must include collaboration with Natural Parks, municipalities and local communities on conservation of resources while ensuring development of tourism, and educational activities both for residents and visitors.

Integral management of sustainable destination may be controlled and validated by external auditors, which can be done within EMAS certification program.

Supply side of destination must be informed about the benefits of ECO certification and slowly persuaded to comply with contemporary ECO standards and get accreditations. These activities will ensure sustainable development of destination and strengthen its image for visitors concerned with environmental issues.

Spreading the benefits of tourism.

Spreading the benefits of tourism along **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** must include development of community-based products and experiences, advancing rural and experiential tourism, exploring potential of local arts and crafts.

All services, from transport, accommodation and alimentation, till production of souvenirs should be locally produced with the use of local materials and environmentally friendly techniques. Existence of authentic and unique services and products on the route will boost and spread tourism expenditure and will be beneficial for wider clusters of local communities.

Improving tourism yield.

Focused spatial development and targeted marketing must lengthen the average visitor stay, boost expenditure and reduce seasonality of arrivals. **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is a non-seasonal trekking destination, that is capable to attract wide range of visitors to inward territories and municipalities all year round.

Building a strong and vibrant brand identity.

Value and power of strong destination brand is the force that drives to success. **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** forms part of **Saint James way network**, but due to geographical position and lack of historical base it is not easily associated with the brand.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat should take a competitive strategy of marketing, emphasising its own local brand: **Montserrat**. Monastery of Montserrat and the Mare de Deu de Montserrat are important touristic brands recognized worldwide. If the visitors of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** in the end of pilgrimage would receive a **Certificate of accomplishment of peregrination of Montserrat**, it would add meaning to trekking activity and give them a tangible memory of experience.

Another important part of branding activities of DMO of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is collaboration and communication with Association of Friends of Sant Jaume of Catalonia, which must result in combination of a common strategy that will lead to positive outcomes in terms of communication with authorities of Catalonia in order to get financial and economic support for development of destination.

Branding also includes constant delivery of high quality experiences to visitors. DMO must: stimulate, provide help, guidance and training for local businesses and control quality of services and products delivered. Vivid and effective Network of communication and collaboration of units of the route with high rate of response to inquiries is the primary objective of DMO.

DMO must ensure viability of Network of private businesses along the route, minimize economic leakages and maximize benefits, provide strong leadership, aim for strategy of achieving competitive edge and delivery quality to visitors. DMO is responsible for achieving return on investment, market growth, quality products, strong brand and benefits to all stakeholders, but it does not own the destination, neither it employs people that work there, nor it has direct control over its processes.

4.2. Limitations of study and further steps.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat: technical characteristics: Data about technical characteristics and hospitality businesses of the route was taken from the official guide of destination, published in 2008. Some information may not be accurate. Further investigation could examine the viability of data and widen the list of hospitality services available to visitors of destination by list of local bars, medical institutions and transportation companies.

Work in the field. Personal trekking experience: Work in the field was carried out in a small sample group that cannot be considered representative for a viable academic investigation. Although sample group was compound by individuals of different ages, life styles, professions and experiences, they were all of the same nationality - Russians and representatives of upper-middle class, which could influence perception. Further investigations could repeat the experience with other sample groups that would represent distinct market segments. New investigators could amplify the list of weaknesses of destination and needs of pilgrims according to their necessities.

Correct trend for DMO once it's created is to continuously carry out studies of reflections of real visitors of destination to keep up to date with their emerging necessities.

Current situation of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat: Interviews in depth: Second part of investigation, interviews in depth, was limited to few interviews, just enough to get the essence of current situation of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat.

It would be beneficial for this study to carry out interviews with:

- Representatives of Associations of Friends of Sant Jaume of Catalonia.
- Heads of municipalities located along the route.
- Representatives of Associations of Friends of Saint James of French traditional way, "star" destination to understand in full how they work.

Interviews in depth with Jaume Font Garollera, creator of Cami de Sant Jaume project and Padre Josep Maria, Pastor of Monastery of Montserrat are considered to be highly important for constructing a full image of current situation of destination and its future possibilities.

It also would be interesting to speak to Miquel Sunyer, the founder of Vies Bravas of Costa Brava project to see how management, branding and promotion of this destination is carried out, and Joan

Cortadellas, historian, writer and expert in local Catalan legends, to start working on implementation of Legends of the way theme into branding from the first steps of the project.

List of people to be interviewed will continue growing along with investigation as a snowball, but these interviews and many more are essential for creation a solid base of knowledge that will become the basis for creation of touristic experiences of superb quality.

Investigation: Survey of supply side of destination. Investigation of level of interest of supply side in development of destination had a surprise nature of methodology, that is considered viable for collection of samples of immediate reflections and creation of Grounded theory, but it should be repeated in end of September - beginning of October, out of high season, arranging interviews with concrete people who make decisions in businesses and presenting them Dossier of DMO in printed form with clear plan of actions.

This study is a combination of academic and business investigation. Further studies of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** are further practical steps towards it recuperation and development.

5. Conclusion.

Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is a route-based trekking tourism destination with religious branding theme located in natural environment. It can be referred to as a **nature-based tourist destination**, **adventure tourism destination** and a **cultural route**. It has potential to develop as an effective **sustainable destination**. Application of **slow tourism** concepts is a possible segmentation of market-quality products and services aimed at ethical conscious consumers.

The route is able to establish **economic and cultural connections** between locations with diverse intensity of touristic demand in the region. Touristic activity along **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat**, if well managed, can provide **economic flows** in these inward locations helping them to **boost development** and become more attractive both for visitors and residents. It can become the perfect **stage to develop ethic cautiousness about environmental problems** and possible ways to contribute to their resolution.

Technical characteristics of **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** allow the possibility to offer a number of touristic products of different intensity with various focuses to a variety of customer segments within the same destination. Investigation of level of interest of supply side of destination was proved as positive with 60% claiming their interest, and 31% eager to participate in economic terms under a variety of conditions. **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** has superb cultural and natural resources, but it lacks essential services for pedestrian travellers.

The reason why **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** is not attracting as much visitors as needed for successful development and dynamization of the region is the lack of **Destination Management Organization (DMO)** and the whole range of activities that are needed to provide products and services to the visitors of the route, including maintenance of the route, promotion, sanitation facilities and transportation.

Creation of DMO is necessary to comply with minimum responsibilities and ensure safe environment for visitors. Current state of trail in abandonment has negative impact on the image of Catalonia as a touristic destination.

Proposition model for DMO of Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat is presented in detail in Discussion chapter of this Master Thesis.

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Epilogue.

My personal motivation for this study was to examine if **Cami de Sant Jaume till Montserrat** can become a possibility to develop my own business. After investigation I can say that it's tempting, but frightening, challenging and amazing, just like travelling experience in old times. I need some time to proceed information received throughout this study and take a decision if I want to try the project out or not. My decision will depend on possibility to come to agreement with authorities of Monastery of Montserrat about issuing Certificate of accomplishment of the route and with authorities of Generalitat de Catalunya to finance the initial physical recovery of the trek after several years of abandonment.

To conclude this study I would like to cite my friend and one of the members of my sample group, Natalia Burykina: *"For me, most important in travelling by foot is to see if I'm capable of doing it, physically, emotionally and in team; meet new people; observe how travellers are being changed on their way. Long way is the possibility to understand that the most important principle of life is "Don't run, walk." It's applicable to everything. Routes attract me as a different landscape of life. No-transport journey give me health and joy."*

Throughout my investigation I was told many stories about people crossing Europe accomplishing long non-transport journeys. I believe that creation and maintenance of routes is a way to open up our country to the world and have a better image. **Cami de Sant Jaume de Montserrat** can become one of pedestrian routes that will unite Europe for travellers of future.

Although I am not truly religious, I sometimes talk to Saint Mary asking her to show me the Way. Now I have a Cami in front of me that leads to Mare de Deu de Montserrat. I am almost ready to be patient, persistent and brave, be ready to fail, learn, adapt and go on in order to achieve my goals by recuperation of a magnificent but abandoned destination.