# Consumer Deceleration

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People increasingly seek out opportunities to escape from a sped-up pace of life by engaging in slow forms of consumption. Drawing from the theory of social acceleration, we explore how consumers can experience and achieve a slowed-down experience of time through consumption. To do so, we ethnographically study the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain and introduce the concept of consumer deceleration. Consumer deceleration is a perception of a slowed-down temporal experience achieved via a decrease in certain quantities (traveled distance, use of technology, experienced episodes) per unit of time through altering, adopting, or eschewing forms of consumption. Consumers decelerate in three ways: embodied, technological, and episodic. Each is enabled by consumer practices and market characteristics, rules, and norms, and results in time being experienced as passing more slowly and as being an abundant resource. Achieving deceleration is challenging, as it requires resynchronization to a different temporal logic and the ability to manage intrusions from acceleration. Conceptualizing consumer deceleration allows us to enhance our understanding of temporality and consumption, embodied consumption, extraordinary experiences, and the theory of social acceleration. Overall, this study contributes to consumer research by illuminating the role of speed and rhythm in consumer culture.

*Keywords*: speed, consumption, social acceleration, deceleration, pilgrimage, Camino de Santiago

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## INTRODUCTION

> *I've got a lot of stress in my job, and I don't have any time. Time for me is very limited. The world is getting faster and faster and more mobile, with computers. Here* [The Camino de Santiago], *you have time for yourself and you can think over things. This for me was very important.*
>
> —Max

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More and more we see consumers spending their limited vacation time in spiritual or restorative retreats where activities include maintaining silence and reflecting on one's own life; where the mode of living is inspired by Zen principles or monk-like reclusiveness; and where the use of iPhones, tablets, or other personal devices is proactively discouraged. They do so in hopes of reconnecting with something other than Wi-Fi and to experience a respite from their quick-paced, hectic everyday life (Buckley 2015; Graham 2013; Kwong 2018). Some consumers even decide to go on a pilgrimage, defined as an extended geographic journey away from everyday life and detached from one's job, family, and comfort to a sacred site in search of personal, social, or spiritual well-being (Bradley 2009; Scott and Maclaran 2013). It promises a "sense of rest" (Bradley 2009, 20) in a busy and interconnected world. Indeed, in the wake of the success of the film *The Way* (2010), starring Martin Sheen, the popularity of pilgrimages has been increasing. In 2017, more than 300,000 people participated in the world's foremost Christian pilgrimage, the Camino de Santiago in Spain, up from 5,000 participants in 1990 (https://oficinadelperegrino.com/en/statistics/).

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Why have these types of experiences increased in popularity? As suggested above by our respondent Max, a 28-year-old German who has walked the Camino twice, people increasingly feel the need to escape today's fast-paced consumer culture, in which there is an accelerated rhythm of daily life. Daily activities ranging from eating to meditation (do it in three minutes with your meditation app!) happen at an accelerated pace, resulting in little time for reflection.

Research has identified movements such as slow fashion (Pookulangara and Shephard 2013), slow food (Binkley 2008), the slow city (Pink 2008), slow travel (Dickinson, Lumsdon, and Robbins 2011; Lumsdon and McGrath 2011), and even slow academia (Berg and Seeber 2016). Despite the identification of these movements, there has been limited exploration of the process of exactly how people alter their temporal rhythms when engaging in these slower forms of consumption. Woermann and Rokka (2015) have examined temporality as a feature of consumption practices. In their model, performing a practice evokes an experience of fastness or slowness. In contrast to this, we argue that consumers' temporal experiences do not exclusively result from performing practices, but also from immersing into, or escaping from, the broader societal temporal logics that emphasize slowness or fastness. We are, therefore, interested in temporality as a feature of society and the manner in which consumers experience, respond to, and seek out slowness within the sped-up rhythm of contemporary consumer culture.

Rosa (2013) argues that we all live in a socially accelerated society. Social acceleration is "the setting-in-motion of the material, the social, and the cultural world at an ever-increasing speed" (Rosa, Dörre, and Lessenich 2017, 58). Rosa (2013) also identifies oases of deceleration, which exist within the societal state of acceleration as protected spaces where the speed and rhythm of life is temporarily slowed down. In this article, we investigate how and why consumers seek out and utilize these oases. Our research question is: How do consumers experience and achieve deceleration? To answer this question, we ethnographically study consumption along the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, which we conceptualize as an oasis of deceleration. From our analysis, we introduce the concept of consumer deceleration, defined as a perception of a slowed-down temporal experience achieved via a decrease in certain quantities (traveled distance, use of technology, experienced episodes) per unit of time through altering, adopting, or eschewing forms of consumption. Consumers decelerate in three ways—embodied deceleration, technological deceleration, and episodic deceleration—each of which is enabled by consumer practices and market characteristics, rules, and norms, resulting in time being experienced as passing more slowly and as being a more abundant resource.

We contribute to understanding temporality and consumption by identifying and introducing consumer deceleration as a slowed-down temporal experience that consumers seek out as a response to a sped-up culture, and by outlining the process of how consumers experience and achieve it. Achieving successful consumer deceleration results from adapting to, or transitioning into, a slowed-down temporal logic. This understanding of the role of speed and rhythm in consumer research enables us to develop new insights on embodied consumption and extraordinary experiences, expand upon the theory of social acceleration, and offer future research suggestions on how consumer deceleration can be investigated in a variety of contexts. Next, we examine the role of speed in consumer research, and introduce the theory of social acceleration and how it can be utilized to illuminate slowed-down consumption.

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

### The Role of Speed in Consumer Research

There is evidence that consumers seek out opportunities to slow down and escape from "the cult of speed" (Honoré 2005, 3). One example of this is the slow food movement, which has been conceptualized as a consumer practice pushing back against fast life (Binkley 2008). Additionally, Pink (2008) identifies the slow city movement, in which participants create alternative local economies based on slow consumption practices, such as purchasing items primarily produced or grown within the local community. Slow travel has also been identified as a way to address tourism in the age of climate change (Dickinson et al. 2011), and slow fashion is a movement that arose in opposition to fast fashion, which adherents adopt as a lifestyle if affordable (Pookulangara and Shephard 2013).

Consumers may also value slowing down when engaging in experiences. In fact, it may be the slower experience of time that distinguishes the extraordinary from everyday life. For example, participants in the Mountain Man Rendezvous enjoy a "slower and less punctual pace of life," which they describe as "'rendezvous time' or 'mountain man time'" (Belk and Costa 1989, 233). Similarly, river rafting participants refer to "slowtime" as "an altered consciousness and appreciation of the river environment" (Arnould, Price, and Otnes 1999, 41). Surfers also seek out, and are consumed by, a temporality of nature that allows them to experience a "space and time beyond the modern influences of clocks, computers, and urban crowds" (Canniford and Shankar 2012, 1057) that offers the power to liberate them from noise, stress, and hectic work schedules. Arnould et al. (1999, 41) argue that this form of slowing down "signals a readiness to experience transcendence," and demonstrate that participants "have entered a liminal state" ready to experience change. Most

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recently, Bardhi and Eckhardt (2017) refer to Rosa's (2013) notion of oases of deceleration to suggest that during this time of liquidity, in which speed characterizes modern life, consumers are more and more eager to visit Wi-Fi–free spaces and similar oases. Thus, the literature suggests that consumers seek out and value experiences that enable them to slow down in response to the speeding up of everyday life. Yet we do not possess a systematic understanding of the processes and mechanisms that allow them to do so.

Woermann and Rokka's (2015) exploration of consumer perceptions of experiences as fast or slow is the most in-depth examination of temporal experiences within consumer research. They argue that whether consumption experiences are felt as fast or slow is a result of consumer practices. They introduce the concept of timeflow, which yields the experienced temporality for consumers, and is shaped by different constellations of practice elements, which can be aligned or misaligned. Whereas consumers' performance of aligned practices creates unproblematic and smooth temporal experiences of fastness and slowness, when practice elements are misaligned, it can evoke experiences of temporal drag (boredom, dullness) or rush (stress, hecticness). In Rosa's (2013) words, Woermann and Rokka's misaligned practice elements are phenomena of "desynchronization" that appear "where different speeds encounter each other," often leaving individuals with the "impression of [hecticness or] delay" (84). In contrast to Woermann and Rokka (2015), we are not interested in the experienced temporality that emerges from consumers' performance of aligned or misaligned consumption practices, but rather in how consumers experience and achieve deceleration, which they seek out in reaction to social acceleration, as explored next.

## Social Acceleration

For decades, Virilio (1998) emphasized the role of speed in society and politics. The concept, however, has never received as much attention among social scientists as it does today (Crary 2013; Glezos 2012; Rosa 2013; Rosa et al. 2017; Tomlinson 2007). Gottschalk (1999) examined how speed culture manifests itself in television commercials. He demonstrates the ways in which television ads normalize, celebrate, and legitimize a fast pace of life by implying that consumers are always behind and frustratingly slow. In a sped-up society, we have less time to reflect, and end up in a "temporal ghetto," an exhausting physical, social, and mental space due to the emotional and mental energy it exacts and the immediacy it requires (Rifkin 1987, 165). As one of the leading voices of this movement, Rosa (2013) outlines a comprehensive theory of the speeding up of contemporary society: social acceleration. Rosa (2013, 65) defines social acceleration as the "increase in quantity per unit of time," with several variables serving as the quantity measured (e.g., products manufactured, number of intimate partners, number of messages sent). Social acceleration leads to an increased speed and rhythm of life and, subsequently, to contemporary society and its citizens starving for time. People find themselves "increasingly caught in an ever-denser web of deadlines" (Trejo-Mathys 2013, xxiv) imposed upon them by different social spheres, such as work, family, clubs, or charities. Social acceleration takes place in three mutually reinforcing forms: technological acceleration, acceleration of pace of life, and acceleration of the social and cultural rate of change (Rosa 2013).

Technological acceleration refers mainly to machine-based acceleration that speeds up transportation, communication, and production. Following the maxim "time is money," technological acceleration is usually intentional and goal-oriented, and drives the economic motor of society via mechanisms such as computers with ever-increasing internet speeds, smartphones, factories, and high-speed trains (Rosa 2013).

Acceleration of pace of life is defined as the "increase in episodes of action or experience per unit of time" (Rosa 2013, 78). People experience a rising number of episodes (work tasks, family obligations, social activities) on an everyday basis. To fit these episodes into their schedules, people must either increase the speed of action (work faster, eat faster, pray faster), condense the time between action episodes (reduce sleeping time or rest time), or engage in different activities simultaneously (multitasking). The speeding up, condensation, and overlapping of action episodes results in increasingly scarce time resources, which in turn causes the perception that time itself goes by even faster (Rosa 2013).

Finally, the acceleration of social change refers to the increase in the tempo of change of the foundational social and cultural institutions of society, such as the family, the nature of employment, the media, and the government. Examples include the accelerated pace of change in politics, economics, and science, such as fast-changing political leadership, family configurations, and research paradigms. In sum, these three forms of social acceleration lead to what Dossey (1982, 51) calls "time sickness," which refers to a sense of urgency; time is running out, there is not enough of it, and we must run faster and faster just to keep up.

The underlying conceptualization of time is key to understanding social acceleration theory. Time is individually perceived; however, it is determined by the temporal logic that prevails in society. Temporal logic has a "collective nature and a social character" (Rosa 2013, xxxviii) and is characterized by valuing certain speeds (rates of movement) and rhythms (repeated patterns of movements) over others. Consequently, "[t]he rhythm, speed, duration, and sequence of our activities and practices are almost never determined by us as individuals, but rather almost always

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prescribed by the collective temporal patterns and synchronization requirements of society" (e.g., train schedules, working hours, deadlines, contracts) (Rosa 2013, 9). Whereas Woermann and Rokka (2015) understand temporality as a feature of consumption practices, we follow Rosa (2013) and view temporality as a feature of society. Given the diagnosis that the "systemic processes of modern society have become too fast for individuals that live in them" (Rosa 2013, 17), we see urgency in the need to explore how individuals are coping with acceleration, and Rosa suggests it may be through deceleration, which we introduce next.

### Deceleration

Within modern society, forces of deceleration exist. These are, however, no match for the forces of acceleration. On an individual level, people can seek out "territorial and social niches" (Rosa 2013, 83) that resist forces of acceleration and allow people a "slower experience of time" (Rosa 2013, 87). Rosa labels these spaces "oases of deceleration" (Rosa 2013, 83). In these "protected spaces" (Rosa 2013, 87), a different temporal logic prevails. The speed and rhythm of life is slowed down and it appears as though time stands still; slowness is valued over fastness. Although Rosa recognizes that deceleration can function as a propeller of accelerated modernity in that it allows people to refuel or hone their mental capacity to be more successful in daily life (cf. Cederström and Spicer 2015), people also use oases of deceleration as a way to cope with speed in modern life. In Rosa's parlance, the rhythm and speed of activities and practices show a different temporal logic—a slower one—in deceleration as compared to acceleration. Yet Rosa does not address the process of how deceleration occurs in these oases.

We draw on Rosa's (2013) theory of social acceleration and his notion of deceleration to focus our research question: How do consumers experience and achieve deceleration? To answer this question, we study consumers' temporal experiences while in an oasis of deceleration and show the process of how deceleration can be achieved via consumption. Next, we describe the context in which we investigate this: pilgrimage, and specifically the Camino de Santiago.

## PILGRIMAGE AND THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

We investigate this research question in the context of a pilgrimage. Prior marketing/consumer research suggests that pilgrimages are extraordinary experiences, particularly studies using a Turnerian lens (Husemann et al. 2016; Scott and Maclaran 2013). These studies focus on the role of market, commerce, and consumption in hampering and achieving a transformative and communitarian experience that is characterized by antistructure and liminality (Turner and Turner 1978/2011). Consumer research, however, lacks insights into the pilgrimage phenomena as a slowed-down experience in which consumers are "moving more slowly and getting into the rhythm of the "human speed"" (Frey 1998, 74).

The Camino de Santiago is an ancient Christian pilgrimage route (Bradley 2009). It is a walking pilgrimage comprising a vast network of routes crossing through Europe and ending in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, the supposed burial place of Saint James (Bradley 2009). In 2017, 301,036 pilgrims from 161 nations completed the Camino in Santiago de Compostela and received the official pilgrimage certificate, called the "Compostela."

The motives for walking the Camino vary greatly, from Christian devotion and salvation to secular concepts such as self-fulfilling experiences, transcendent spirituality, tourism, physical adventure, and nostalgia (Dunn 2016). The contemporary Camino is a blend of the sacred and the profane; it is not unambiguously religious, secular, or post-secular (Nilsson and Tesfahuney 2016). The Camino has turned into a "first-world experience and adventure" (Greenia 2016, xi), which attracts highly educated, middle-class people coming from urban areas (Frey 1998, 29) in search of meaningful personal experiences (Rasch 2016) and spiritual and emotional well-being (Welch 2009).

Pilgrims are adorned with a scallop shell to identify themselves and carry a backpack that symbolizes their "desire to go 'lightly' in life" (Frey 1998, 62). A walking stick or modern trekking poles, as well as appropriate footwear, are essential parts of the modern pilgrim's uniform (Dunn 2016). Pilgrims carry a Camino passport, an official document that allows access to pilgrimage infrastructure (hostels, cheap meals). Pilgrims must collect two stamps a day from hostels, restaurants, or cafés to receive their official certificate of completion upon their arrival in Santiago.

In 2017, 93% of pilgrims walked, and 7% either bicycled, rode on horseback, or traveled in a wheelchair (https://oficinadelperegrino.com/en/statistics/). Those who walk typically cover between 20 and 30 kilometers each day. The number of days a pilgrim chooses to stay on the Camino varies greatly. Official statistics are not maintained by the Camino; however, based upon our observation, pilgrims tend to spend between one week (the amount of time it takes to complete the last 100 kilometers on any of the routes, and the minimum amount you can walk and still receive your certificate) and six weeks (the length of time needed to complete the Camino Frances in its entirety). Most pilgrims prepare in advance by participating in online forums offering advice on how to best plan for the walk and what to wear or bring, and/or by purchasing a Camino guide to assist them in self-navigating their chosen route. Most pilgrims also bring their phones with them to help navigate.

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Upon arrival in Santiago de Compostela, pilgrims have the opportunity to engage in several rituals. They may enter the Romanesque Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and embrace a statue of Saint James, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, and view his sacred remains. They may also attend a pilgrim's mass, offered every day at noon, before proceeding to the pilgrimage office to present their passport and receive their certificate (Dunn 2016). Approximately 10% of the pilgrims who arrive in Santiago de Compostela choose to continue their journey to Finisterre, a small village 90 kilometers west of Santiago, nicknamed "the end of the world." Here pilgrims burn objects from their journey, such as socks, boots, or walking sticks, as part of a purification ritual (Frey 1998).

## METHOD

We took an ethnographic approach in our study (Geertz 1975; Scott, Cayla, and Cova 2017); that is, we used a multimethod approach to gain an emic perspective (Geertz 1975). Both before engaging in and during fieldwork, we immersed ourselves in understanding the Camino as a phenomenon. We achieved this by reading academic treatments of the Camino from a wide variety of disciplines, watching documentaries, participating in online forums where pilgrims share information (e.g., www.caminodesantiago.me/community/), and visiting organizations where returned pilgrims gather.

Both authors immersed themselves in situ in the field site, as well as in pretrip consumption rituals such as purchasing gear for the Camino. We visited Santiago de Compostela, Spain, five times, both together and alone, and walked the Camino ourselves two different times, together and alone, on two different routes: the Portuguese route and the French route, which we chose because they are the two most popular routes (https://oficinadelperegrino.com/en/statistics/). We engaged in participant observation, conducted semistructured interviews with pilgrims, held informal conversations, recorded extensive field notes, took photos, and maintained video diaries. Both authors deeply immersed themselves in the field site by visiting places such as the bars in Santiago that pilgrims frequent when finishing the Camino, as well as tattoo parlors where some get their commemorative post-Camino ink.

As researchers, it was important for us to experience the Camino in an embodied way. Sharing the experience of pain and blisters, for example, afforded us the opportunity to bond with our fellow pilgrims, and conduct interviews during and after our pilgrimage from the position of embodied understanding (Scott and Uncles 2018). On the Portuguese route, we began our pilgrimage in Porto, Portugal, and ended in Santiago de Compostela, Spain (235 kilometers). Completion of this route took 11 days. We walked the French route for 250 kilometers over the course of 10 days. By walking alone, as well as together, on both routes, we bonded with each other and with other pilgrims, and also experienced the solitary, introspective nature of the pilgrimage.

We conducted semistructured interviews (Bernard 2011), both together and alone, with pilgrims in Santiago prior to our pilgrimages, during our pilgrimages, and in Santiago after completing our pilgrimages. Interviews were also conducted via Skype and in person in London. During the pilgrimage the interviews took place in sites such as cafés, the albergues (hostels) where pilgrims sleep, on the trail itself, and in the main square in Santiago. We interviewed some respondents by themselves and some along with their travel companion. We began the in-depth interviews by asking grand tour questions (McCracken 1988), followed by specific questions regarding their preparation for the Camino. We then asked respondents to describe their experiences along the Camino. We focused on understanding the motivations behind their decision to embark upon the Camino, the nuances of their daily routines, the rituals they engaged in, their relationship to other pilgrims, the relationship between the pilgrimage and their daily life, their impression of the commerciality and materiality of the pilgrimage, and finally, their overall feelings about the Camino.

As the interviews progressed, and before we embarked upon our second pilgrimage, we modified our interview format to reflect our focus on deceleration. The interviews spanned between 30 minutes and an hour and a half, and were conducted primarily in English, with some interviews conducted in German. Respondents had a wide variety of motives for undertaking the Camino, from communing with God to taking a scenic hike to seeking a physical challenge. Regardless of their initial objective, all respondents expressed the sentiment that the experience was meaningful to them in some way, and all discussed various aspects of deceleration (although they did not use that term) as being a key element in their Camino experience. This common experience of deceleration was the strongest narrative to emerge from the interviews. Although all respondents discussed their desire to escape their stressful and busy lives—characterized by work deadlines, running clocks, family obligations, laptops, and cell phones—not all were necessarily seeking out a "slow" experience. Some pilgrims simply sought a spiritual or tourist experience and discovered the benefits of deceleration as they progressed on their journey.

Respondents reflect a balance of gender, age, and nationality, but do not reflect various socioeconomic levels, as pilgrims are almost exclusively middle class. Despite cheap accommodation and food along the Camino, the cost of the Camino is prohibitive to those below middle class. Due to the expense of flights to and from Santiago, the cost of hiking gear, and the cost of taking long periods of time

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off from work, the pilgrimage is expensive, thus the lack of economic diversity. In total, we interviewed 28 pilgrims. See table 1 for a summary of our respondents.

We engaged in a continual hermeneutic and iterative analysis process throughout the period of immersion described previously (Spiggle 1994). Moving between theory and various forms of data, we identified emerging codes and categories (Fischer and Otnes 2006), which became our eventual themes. We also moved back and forth between the individual and joint analysis, using triangulation between authors to strengthen our interpretations. Our goal was to produce thick description of our themes (Geertz 1975), and to represent the trustworthiness of our interpretation (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). Next, we outline our findings.

## CONSUMER DECELERATION

Our findings reveal how consumers experience and achieve deceleration on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, which we conceptualize as an oasis of deceleration (Rosa 2013). We define consumer deceleration as a perception of a slowed-down temporal experience achieved via a decrease in certain quantities (traveled distance, use of technology, experienced episodes) per unit of time through altering, adopting, or eschewing forms of consumption. In oases of deceleration, consumers experience time as passing more slowly (than in social acceleration) and as being an abundant resource. We identify three forms of deceleration—embodied, technological, and episodic—each of which is enabled by consumer practices and market characteristics, rules, and norms. See figure 1 for a depiction of this process. Experiencing and achieving deceleration is challenging because it requires pilgrims to resynchronize themselves to a new temporal logic, which occurs when they transition in and out of deceleration, as well as to manage intrusions from social acceleration. Thus, we also demonstrate the complexities and obstacles that can emerge in consumer deceleration.

### Experiencing Consumer Deceleration

Social acceleration and deceleration have different temporal logics, constituting different speeds and rhythms (Rosa 2013). The slowness, steadiness, and repetitiveness of deceleration allow consumers to experience time as passing more slowly and as being an abundant resource. Pilgrims on the Camino often use speed as a metaphor to distinguish between their daily life and their pilgrimage life. Bob explains:

> It's totally different, like they've slowed the clock down. When you walk through a city, you're aware of time because you're going to catch a particular train or bus, or you're going for a meeting, or you've got a deadline to do something in your work, or you look at your phone because you want to know how long it is before you can go home, you know. But this [the Camino experience], it's going to happen in its own good time. There's something at the end, we know where the end is, we'll get there when we get there.

Bob illustrates how pilgrimage (decelerated) time has a different temporal logic than everyday (accelerated) time. This "time signature [. . .] is difficult to ignore" (Canniford and Shankar 2013, 1056). In his everyday life in London, Bob feels rushed and is required to adhere to and synchronize his schedule in accordance with other people's tempos (e.g., work-related deadlines) or societal timeframes (e.g., train schedules). In contrast, the Camino allows pilgrims a "slower experience of time" (Rosa 2013, 87). Pilgrims perceive the Camino as existing "out of time" where "[n]ormal time (daily life) is inverted" (Frey 1998, 73).

In addition to experiencing time as passing more slowly, consumers also experience time as an abundant resource. Our respondents engage in deep reflection about themselves; establishing priorities and making important life decisions are recurrent themes in our data set. The perception of having endless time with "no clock ticking, [. . .] no timetable" (Jaqueline) contributes to a pilgrim's ability to think and reflect. Chiara describes her experience of time as an abundant resource:

> While you are at home, and you are at your job and you are focused on the things you have to do and the time flies, you never stop to reflect or think about your life, what you're doing. Now in these five days [that I have been on the Camino] I have all the time possible, and so I use time to think. In this way, for me it's a spiritual experience first because I had the time finally to go very deep inside of me on my thoughts.

The experience of slowness is associated with being "calm, careful, receptive, still, intuitive, unhurried, patient, [and] reflective" (Honoré 2005, 13). Like Chiara, many of our respondents experience the Camino as meaningful, whether they sought to do so or not. Our analysis indicates that the experience of deceleration is a central aspect of the Camino's power to "elicit a more authentic sense of self in today's fast-paced, globalized, and neoliberal world" (Rasch 2016, 209). Pilgrims experience a physical, social, and mental space, and additional emotional and mental energy via their experience of time passing more slowly and as an abundant resource, enabling them to escape the temporal ghetto (Rifkin 1987) that exists in social acceleration.

In sum, pilgrims perceive the Camino as a territorial niche that allows them a slower experience of time—an oasis of deceleration (Rosa 2013). This occurs because the Camino offers a different temporal logic than their lives at home. Next, we identify the process of how consumer deceleration is achieved. It is important to note, however, that deceleration is not necessarily a conscious process.

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**TABLE 1**

PILGRIM INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

| Name | Age | Gender | Nationality;country of residence | Occupation | Camino route | Motivation for pilgrimage | Number of times on the Camino | Number of days on the Camino | Organization of pilgrimage | Place and time of the interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adrian | 22 | Male | German; Germany | Student | Camino Frances | Touristy interests; personal reorientation in life | 1 | 20 | Self-organized, with one friend | Santiago, at the end of his pilgrimage |
| Ulrike | 23 | Female | German; Germany | Student | Camino Frances | Touristy interests; personal reorientation in life | 1 | 20 | Self-organized, with one friend | Santiago, at the end of her pilgrimage |
| Harald | 52 | Male | Dutch; The Netherlands | Entrepreneur | Camino Primitivo | Deepening friendship with walking companion; interest in physical challenge | 1 | 10 | Self-organized, with one friend | Santiago, at the end of his pilgrimage |
| Pete | 51 | Male | Dutch; The Netherlands | Entrepreneur | Camino Primitivo | Deepening friendship with walking companion; interest in physical challenge | 1 | 10 | Self-organized, with one friend | Santiago, at the end of his pilgrimage |
| Suzanne | 46 | Female | Belgium; Belgium | Social worker | Camino Frances, Camino Ingles, Camino Catalan, Camino Portuguese, Santiago to Finisterra | Seeking time out from stressful job; spiritual interests; touristy interests | 6 | 72 | Self-organized, alone | Santiago, at the end of her pilgrimage |
| Anna | 32 | Female | German; Germany | Key account manager | Camino Frances | Seeking time out from stressful job; interest in physical challenge | 1 | 9 | Self-organized, with one friend | Santiago, at the end of her pilgrimage |
| Tina | 37 | Female | German; Germany | Marketing manager | Camino Frances | Seeking time out from stressful job; interest in physical challenge | 1 | 9 | Self-organized, with one friend | Santiago, at the end of her pilgrimage |
| Nico | 26 | Male | German; Germany | Social market analyst | Camino Portuguese | Interest in physical challenge; touristy interests; emotional support for his mum who was walking too | 1 | 7 | Self-organized, alone | Santiago, at the end of his pilgrimage |
| Rita | 62 | Female | Swiss; Switzerland | Head of housekeeping | Camino del Norte, Camino Primitivo, Camino Frances, Camino Portuguese, Via de la Plata, various others | Religious and spiritual interests; celebrating cancer survival | At least 8 | 200 | Self-organized, alone | Barcelos, along the Camino |
| Lisa | 61 | Female | German; Germany | Head of a care facility | Camino Portuguese | Interest in physical challenge; touristy interest | 1 | 7 | Organized tour package, with one friend | Redondela, along the Camino |

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**TABLE 1** (*CONTINUED*)

| Name | Age | Gender | Nationality;country of residence | Occupation | Camino route | Motivation for pilgrimage | Number of times on the Camino | Number of days on the Camino | Organization of pilgrimage | Place and time of the interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Birgit | 48 | Female | German; Germany | Supermarket cashier | Camino Portuguese | Interest in physical challenge; touristy interests | 1 | 7 | Organized tour package, with one friend | Redondela, along the Camino |
| Jaqueline | 40 | Female | Irish; Ireland | Business analyst | Camino Portuguese | Recovery from a surgery; fundraising for a charity | 1 | 6 | Organized tour package, with her mum | Redondela, along the Camino |
| Bob | 55 | Male | British; UK | Construction manager | Camino Portuguese | Interest in physical challenge; touristy interests | 1 | 6 | Organized tour package, with his wife | Caldas de Reis, along the Camino |
| Tracey | 41 | Female | British; UK | Self-employed, head of data management company | Camino Portuguese | Interest in physical challenge; touristy interests | 1 | 6 | Organized tour package, with her husband | Caldas de Reis, along the Camino |
| Piedro | 42 | Male | Portuguese; Portugal | Accountant | Camino Portuguese | Religious and spiritual interests; interest in physical challenge | 2 | 10 | Self-organized, with two friends | Padron, along the Camino |
| Josh | 57 | Male | Australian; Australia | IT project manager | Camino Frances | Religious and spiritual interests; personal reorientation in life | 1 | 33 | Self-organized, with his wife | Santiago, at the end of his pilgrimage |
| Nathan | 65 | Male | British; UK | Minister in a Protestant church | Camino Frances | Religious and spiritual interests | 3 | 30 | Self-organized, mostly alone, 3 days with his daughter | Santiago, at the end of his pilgrimage |
| Eve | 45 | Female | Polish; UK | Pharmacist | Camino Portuguese, Camino Primitivo | Religious and spiritual interests | 2 | 24 | Self-organized, alone | Skype interview, two weeks after she has finished her second pilgrimage |
| Ronald | 57 | Male | American; USA | Lawyer | Camino Frances | Religious and spiritual interests; personal reorientation in life; touristy interests | 3 | 95 | Self-organized, alone | Skype interview, one year after he has finished his third pilgrimage |
| Hugo | 67 | Male | Dutch; The Netherlands | Architect | Camino de la Plata, Camino Frances | Religious and spiritual interests | 2 | 105 | Self-organized, alone | Rabanal, along the Camino |
| Raphael | 35 | Male | American; USA | Yoga and meditation instructor, sound healer | Camino Frances | Spiritual interests | 1 | 21 | Self-organized, 14 days with his brother, 7 days alone | Ponferrada, along the Camino |
| Chiara | 29 | Female | Italian; Italy | Retail merchandiser | Camino Frances | Seeking time out from stressful job | 1 | 5 | Self-organized, alone | O Pedrouzo, along the Camino |
| Max | 28 | Male | German; Germany | Demand planner for alternative energies | Camino Portuguese, Camino Frances | Personal reorientation in life; interest in physical challenge; spiritual interests | 2 | 54 | Self-organized, alone | Santiago, at the end of his pilgrimage |

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**TABLE 1** (*CONTINUED*)

| Name | Age | Gender | Nationality;coun-try of residence | Occupation | Camino route | Motivation for pilgrimage | Number of times on the Camino | Number of days on the Camino | Organization of pilgrimage | Place and time of the interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Margrethe | 68 | Female | British; UK | Teacher, retired | Camino Frances | Interest in physical challenge; religious and spiritual interests; touristy interests | 2 | 37 | Organized tour package, with her husband | Santiago, at the end of her pilgrimage |
| Rupert | 69 | Male | British; UK | Civil engineer, retired | Camino Frances | Interest in physical challenge; religious and spiritual interests; touristy interests | 2 | 37 | Organized tour package, with his wife | Santiago, at the end of his pilgrimage |
| Linda | 57 | Female | American; USA | Professor of Spanish culture | Camino Frances | Interest in cultural aspects of the Camino | 2 | 47 | Self-organized, alone | Santiago, while she was volunteering |
| Christian | 35 | Male | Canadian; Canada | Physical therapist | Camino Portuguese, Camino Frances | Interest in meeting people | 2 | 40 | Self-organized, alone | Santiago, at the end of his pilgrimage |
| George | 62 | Male | British/Maltese; UK | Medical doctor, retired | Camino Ingles, Camino Frances, Camino de la Plata | Religious interests | 19 | ca. 266 | Self-organized, organized tour package, alone, together with a friend | London, while he was volunteering |

Although the notion of escaping hectic everyday life prevails in our data set, deceleration was not something all respondents consciously set out to do; some simply intended to physically challenge themselves, but all experienced deceleration and the realization that it was occurring along the way.

## Achieving Consumer Deceleration

We identify and outline three forms of consumer deceleration evident on the Camino: embodied, technological, and episodic. For each form, we identify consumer practices that allow the decreases in quantity per unit of time (traveled distance, use of technology, experienced episodes) to occur, which are enabled by, and encouraged through, marketplace characteristics, rules, and norms that emphasize slowness. We also show in our analysis that oases of deceleration are not necessarily "acceleration-immune" spaces (Rosa 2013, 83). Acceleration can intrude in these oases, and we demonstrate some of the complexities in the management of this intrusion. Finally, we describe the challenging transitions in, and out of, an oasis of deceleration.

## Embodied Deceleration

The first form of deceleration we identify is embodied. We define it as the decrease in traveled distance per unit of time. Embodied deceleration occurs as a result of engaging in a slow mode of transportation (walking), and experiencing physical pain that inhibits or punishes speed.

*Engaging in Slow Modes of Transportation.* Pilgrims adapt their mode of transportation when they begin to walk. Walking as a routine mode of transportation is atypical in speed culture, where planes, cars, and trains offer significantly faster results. Walking is slow movement (it is not stopping), and movement itself is a significant part of the pilgrimage experience (Coleman and Eade 2004). Pilgrims walk between 20 kilometers and 30 kilometers per day, requiring up to 10 hours of time. This lengthy, but slow and steady, way of moving forward provides pilgrims with a specific rhythm that slows them down physically, as well as mentally. Nathan describes the manner in which walking enables him to decelerate on the Camino:

> Personally, I think walking slows you down and gives you more time to reflect as you're walking along like this, rather than rushing. [. . .] I think there is a certain rhythm with walking that you need. It gives you more time to reflect. [. . .] Because when I think of it as a Christian, I think of how Jesus lived his life. [. . .] He would visit a town or a village, but he would spend a lot of time walking between the two. And there would have been time to reflect and talk and so on. I think there is a natural rhythm in the walking.

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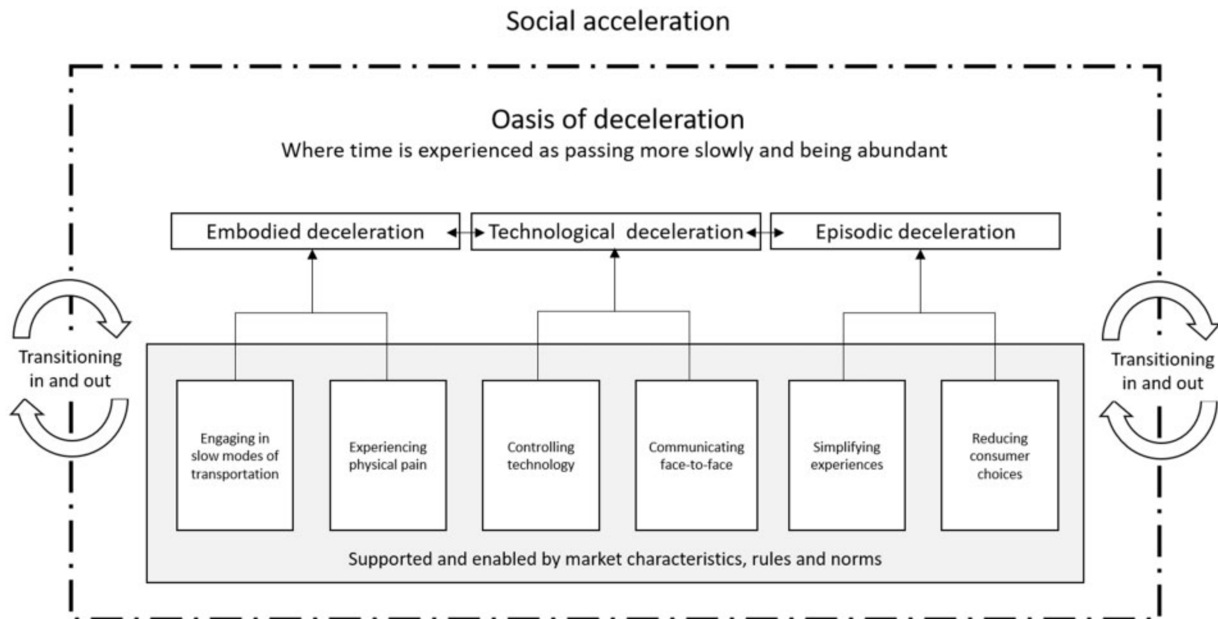
**FIGURE 1**

PROCESS OF CONSUMER DECELERATION




Analyzing the manner in which people experience the world begins with an investigation of the body (Scott and Uncles 2018). Pilgrims develop a powerful sensation in their body by feeling how it acquires a natural rhythm as it decelerates. The slowed-down body is a central part of the decelerated Camino experience. While walking, pilgrims pay careful attention to their bodies and find new appreciation for their bodies' performance. Pilgrims allow their bodies to rest if necessary. This field note from the second author, written after walking 30 kilometers for two consecutive days, is illustrative:

> I am truly amazed by the body. I will always appreciate the feet from here on out. We have decided to only do 18km today to give our bodies a rest. I am happy with this decision. I got my first blister yesterday. So far so good today but need to be kinder to my feet and remember it's not a race.

As part of the heightened focus on their slowed-down body, pilgrims "elevate feet, removing them from the category of hidden objects" (Frey 1998, 113). The knowledge that our feet touch the ground and allow us to stand straight in this world is part of humans' fundamental idea of ontological security (Rosa 2016). Body and feet become a conduit to the slowed-down experience.

The rules and norms prevailing in society also influence the experience of time (Rosa 2013). Rules and norms encourage, or occasionally force, pilgrims to move slowly and thus reinforce embodied deceleration. The phrase "It's not a race, it's a reset" is a mantra that pilgrims regularly tell themselves and each other. This mantra reminds pilgrims that speed is not the criterion that defines a successful pilgrimage. On the contrary, speed while on the pilgrimage is punished. Albergues, for example, only grant bicyclists access to their beds after 4:00 p.m. By reinforcing this rule, hostels allow walking pilgrims to walk at their own slow pace without being concerned about bed availability. Christian's quote illustrates the normative superiority of slowness as compared to speed on the Camino and the rules that reinforce this attitude:

> I'm happy there are rules for albergues, not allowing the cyclists to get all the beds, because they always get there first. [. . .] It happens that they show up, 40 of them, asking for beds, and then the walkers are really suffering, they're struggling.

The notion that a pilgrimage should be about slowing down and finding your own rhythm is prevalent on the Camino. As Christian notes, marketplace and albergues' rules are designed to reinforce and support slowness. Pilgrims (should) choose "to engage in bodily and temporal modes" to overcome the "mechanized world of modernity and postmodernity" (Coleman and Eade 2004, 11).

Another Camino norm that facilitates embodied deceleration is the popular advice (e.g., on the Camino Forum) that one's backpack should not weigh more than 10% of one's body weight. Heavy backpacks, bulky boots, and

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hiking gear weigh down the body, making it difficult to move forward. Yet the experience of wearing or carrying heavy gear may also facilitate embodied deceleration. Linda describes how her mud-covered boots make it difficult for her to move forward, causing physical pain and prompting deep reflection:

> You know I've just got to keep on going and deal with the hail and the snow one day, and thick mud on your boots, 3 kilos' worth of mud on your boots. [This] is giving you knee trouble [...] You know, being in nature, the physical, what you experience physically makes you think about your body and how it functions and its role in life.

It is easy to imagine Linda leaning into the wind, the rain, and the hail, and the strenuousness of each step. The heaviness of her hiking boots adds to the intense physical and mental exercise. The appropriate gear to use in specific weather conditions, and how much gear to bring with you, is an ongoing conversation topic on the Camino, which demonstrates how nature, the body, and material objects interact in consumer deceleration.

The relevance of these rules and norms in facilitating consumer deceleration is most evident when we contrast our findings to research conducted on the Mount Everest mountaineering experience. Tumbat and Belk (2011, 52) show that "going slow and looking tired are objectified evidence of not belonging on Everest." Even though pilgrimage and mountaineering both occur in remote spaces and involve a similar physical activity, Mount Everest cannot be conceptualized as an oasis of deceleration since speed is valued over slowness.

*Experiencing Physical Pain.* Embodied deceleration emerges not only due to pilgrims' slower mode of transportation, but also due to pain. The pain usually stems from blisters, muscle inflammations, or knee issues. Pain slows a pilgrim down physically and mentally, and also punishes attempts at acceleration. Adrian explains:

> At the beginning, we thought we wanted to go around 25 kilometers every day. But after a couple of days we recognized it's not really possible to plan. Because, for example, after five days I had a muscle inflammation. So I had two days where I couldn't walk that long. So we said every day, we can't plan for tomorrow, we have to see. First we will go 10 kilometers; then, if it is possible, we will go 20. And if more is possible, we will go around 30. But most of the time we said we don't want to go more than 30 kilometers, because then the next day will be very hard for us.

Adrian's quote aptly illustrates how muscle inflammation slowed him down physically. It also emphasizes how a pilgrim's experience, anticipation, and fear of pain brings body and mind together. Pilgrims must think "very clearly" while also listening to their bodies in order to master the challenges of the Camino, or they will be punished. Adrian further explains:

> Your mind says you can do 30 or 40 kilometers per day. Sometimes you don't recognize that the body says a totally different thing. Sometimes the mind is really stronger than your body. So and you just go, go, go, go, go, and then on the next day you recognize [...] oh my God, it was really too much.

The experience of pain forces pilgrims to engage in embodied deceleration. Attempts to accelerate are punished, or as Josh describes, "The Camino will find you out. The Camino will teach you." The following excerpts from the first author's and the second author's field notes, respectively, support the role of pain in embodied deceleration; the type of pain experienced on the Camino physically slows down the body, and offers time and space to think and reflect:

> Today we had two really exhausting days behind us. The 23km feel worse than the 30 felt yesterday. It is interesting that every day something new hurts. You are super conscious about your body while you're walking. You are basically listening to what your body tells you. The first day it was the right shoulder that hurt. I adjusted my backpack, and... the other day... it became better. Yesterday I had trouble with my two blisters. I put bandages on them; today it is fine. Today it was my right ankle that didn't feel well. I'm sure tomorrow it will be something different.
>
> The hyper-embodied nature of the Camino—a huge focus on your body, what hurts, every second—is what allows you to free your other thoughts and clear your mind.

Our experiences reveal that pain is a vehicle that allows pilgrims to slow down and concentrate on themselves. It is interesting to note that this observation is in contrast to Scott et al. (2017), who describe intense and fleeting pain as relieving the burden of self-awareness. In our context, the pain is dull and throbbing, lasting days and even weeks, which may explain its role in achieving a meditative state. Pilgrims experience the painful body as alive and talking, facilitating a dialogue between body and mind (Rosa 2016).

It is important to note that the Camino is not "acceleration-immune" (Rosa 2013, 83). Pain and physical exhaustion may force pilgrims to engage in short-term embodied acceleration via their consumption. For example, pilgrims will occasionally take taxis or buses to jump over stages of the Camino (see figure 2). As you can see from the figure, the marketplace infrastructure supports these shortcuts, as there are flyers placed at strategic locations directly on the Camino offering weary pilgrims the convenience of a taxi. Taking a taxi or bus allows pilgrims to complete their pilgrimage and arrive into Santiago within the allotted amount of time they have off from work, which is imposed from everyday accelerated life. Hugo explains:

> I had problems with my back and I had to take the bus for a few stops...You may have trouble with your back and you

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**FIGURE 2**

LOCAL TAXI COMPANIES ADVERTISING ALONG THE CAMINO; PILGRIMS UTILIZE THIS ACCELERATED FORM OF TRANSPORTATION WHEN THEIR DECELERATION BECOMES DISRUPTED FOR VARIOUS REASONS

> take the bus for a few days. It's no problem. But I think if you want to meet people, if you want to have the real experience, you should not take the bus or the taxi so many times.

Used in moderation and for physical reasons, accelerated transportation may be viewed as a deceleration through acceleration strategy (Rosa 2013, 87). Pilgrims engage in short-term acceleration in order to successfully continue their decelerated journey. However, taking a bus or taxi too often prevents the body from physically slowing down and can impede deceleration. Ronald explains:

> I met this surgeon from Pennsylvania. And he had planned his entire Camino. He had booked all 42 rooms from Saint Jean to Santiago. And he had everything laid out [...] and within two days he fell into a Camino family [a group of people that meet on the Camino and decide to walk together], and there was a woman in the group; she was from Eastern Europe. And he liked her and she liked him. And the Camino family would stop wherever they thought they should stop for the day [...] And that was rarely where he'd already booked a room. So he would walk with them, stop where they stopped, get in a cab, race to his hotel, either forwards or backwards, drop his backpack, take a shower, change clothes, get in a cab, race back to where they were, have dinner with them, get in a cab, race back to his hotel and go to sleep. Get in a cab, and race back to them and start walking the next day.

Ronald describes a pilgrim who is racing from point A to B to adhere to his preplanned hotel reservations at the expense of deceleration because he had engaged in too much preplanning.

In summary, embodied deceleration is the decrease in traveled distance per unit of time that results from consumers' slow mode of transportation (walking), and their suffering from physical pain that inhibits or punishes speed. Embodied deceleration fosters consumer deceleration by providing a physical slowness through which consumers can escape the time sickness (Dossey 1982) and temporal ghetto (Rifkin 1987) of social acceleration.

## Technological Deceleration

Technological deceleration is defined as the decrease in use of technology per unit of time, which renders a sense of disconnection from the accelerated world and results from controlling technology and communicating face-to-face. While embodied deceleration focuses on the body itself slowing down, technological deceleration focuses on maintaining a distance from social acceleration via controlled usage of the devices that connect us to others and the world at large.

*Controlling Technology.* Technological deceleration is not about abandoning phones, social media platforms, or TV. Pilgrims do utilize these conveniences along the Camino. Rather, it is about limiting and controlling usage in a way that does not occur in daily life. Eve describes this as follows:

> I didn't have roaming on my telephone [...] I was using Facebook only when I stayed in an albergue with a Wi-Fi connection. And I was just texting my daughter to say where I am and what's going on. And didn't have much information back. So it was just one way. [...] I tried not to [read the newspaper]. I tried not to. I preferred to be disconnected. [...] And to be honest, you are much healthier, happier without news from the world. So after coming home, my TV is my enemy. I don't like watching TV to be honest.

The marketplace supports technological deceleration. High roaming fees for international pilgrims and the availability of free Wi-Fi in albergues, bars, and restaurants along the Camino encourage pilgrims to control their use of technology accordingly. While on the Camino and walking in nature, pilgrims mostly refrain from using their phones, checking their email, and texting. During lunch breaks in cafés and in the evenings in hostels, however, pilgrims often take advantage of free Wi-Fi.

Still, technological deceleration is relative. Harald and Pete, who are walking the Camino together, are both entrepreneurs. While on the pilgrimage, they are checking their emails 10 to 20 times a day. Nevertheless, they feel "disconnected" and "relaxed" because back home they need to be "on top of the business 24/7." The role of control is crucial in achieving the mental benefits of deceleration. Harald and Pete explain that "they connect when they want" and this is what makes them feel "disconnected." In this case, autonomy—having control over one's own time—allows consumers to feel more relaxed and less

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stressed and hurried (Honoré 2005). Here we see pilgrims controlling time by keeping acceleration distant via technology. Similarly, Ronald, who works as a lawyer in the United States, highlights the importance of being in control of the disruptions from outside to keep his Camino time protected and his thoughts focused. He describes the strategies that allow him to technologically decelerate:

> I'm here at my house [back home in the States], and people know where I live, and they can stop by and interrupt my thoughts. When I prepared for the Camino, I told judges and prosecutors and other attorneys that I would be in email contact, but please don't call me. I did all sorts of things to insulate myself from the practice of law. [...] I actually left this phone that you're calling me on with someone, so when potential clients would call, they got a different attorney. And then if they were still wanting my services after finding out that I wouldn't be back for a few weeks, they were sending me emails. And, being able to control when my life was interrupted by checking emails, was much better [...] On the Camino I didn't want to be interrupted by a cell phone.

Even though pilgrims try to shield their Camino time from outside intrusions, interruptions do occur. Pilgrims perceive their technological deceleration as most compromised when they lose control over disruptions through technology, rather than when they use (too much) technology. Josh experiences an uncontrolled disruption when his daughter called him on his phone:

> I had a phone call from my daughter and I should not have taken that phone call. Because with emails and with a blog, okay, you can choose when and how much you can respond. Much harder to do that with a phone call [...] The phone call put me right back into that mind-set [accelerated, daily life]. And it took me 3/4 of the rest of that day to get back into that [decelerated] mind-set again.

These acceleration intrusions happen unexpectedly. Breaking news, such as the Brussels terrorist attack or Prince's death, both of which took place during parts of our field work, infiltrated the Camino through TV stations or newspapers displayed in cafés along the Camino. Deceleration can be compromised when pilgrims consume this media. One of these technological intrusions is captured in the second author's field notes:

> I found out that Prince died while walking today, via a TV set in a café which was all in Portuguese. I had to confirm via phone. I feel pretty affected by this, especially finding out two days late due to lack of internet out on the Camino. It brings to the fore this sense of disconnect. While it is mostly wanted, when something of this importance happens, you feel you are missing out. Similar to what our respondents said about the Brussels bombing.

Oases of deceleration are not insulated places that exclude forces of social acceleration, nor is consumer deceleration a linear process. Intrusions can and do occur, often unexpectedly, via technology, which interrupts the reverie of deceleration.

*Communicating Face-to-Face.* In everyday, accelerated life, communication and interaction with others is often technologically mediated (Rosa 2013). On the Camino, pilgrims rediscover face-to-face communication, which is the second mechanism allowing technological deceleration to occur. Linda describes her practice of proactively limiting her use of technology to disconnect from home and to focus instead on the face-to-face interactions offered on the Camino:

> For me the idea is disconnect from that [phone] and, yeah, it's okay to be in contact with home, but take advantage of being with all these people from all over the world that you can gain so much from by interacting with them.

Similar to other pilgrims who view the Camino as a "golden opportunity" (Nathan) for human interaction, Linda sees interacting with fellow pilgrims face-to-face as an important facet of her experience. Pilgrims such as Christian also praise the quality of face-to-face conversations on the Camino, and the difficulty of holding this form of communication in a world where people communicate via text:

> The quality of conversations that you can have with strangers... People you haven't met, that you've known for maybe a day or half a day, and you can have a deep conversation with them, something you don't always do with people back home. I think people back home, they live with walls around them, and they don't... they're not necessarily prepared to open up to anyone. Whereas when you come here, people are. They don't necessarily expect it [...] And people, especially nowadays, people are texting; they don't have face-to-face interactions [as] much. Then they come here and they get the experience. It's like magical, which is weird, because it shouldn't be.

Sharing this sentiment, Eve too praises face-to-face communication:

> I think all the relationships on the Camino are special because you are opening to each other in a special way, without boundaries [...] I think compared to people talking on the internet when you are faceless and you can say all the bad things, on the Camino you have your face and you are so open and so true.

In sum, technological deceleration is the decrease in use of technology per unit of time that results from consumers' exacting more control over their technology use, and rediscovering the benefits of communicating face-to-face. Technological deceleration fosters consumer deceleration by enabling consumers to connect deeply with others in a way that is difficult to achieve in their everyday

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accelerated life by a more limited use of technology-mediated communication.

## Episodic Deceleration

Episodic deceleration refers to a decrease in the number of episodes of action per unit of time (Rosa 2013) and results from simplifying experiences and reducing consumer choices.

*Simplifying Experiences.* Pilgrims on the Camino pursue a highly repetitive, routinized, and simply structured lifestyle. The repetitiveness and sameness in episodic deceleration enables them to slow down and destress mentally. Bob explains the limited number of activities he engages in while on the Camino:

> It's got its own routine and its own rhythm. And it's probably not much different than a guy doing this a thousand years ago. Walk, eat, sleep; walk, eat, sleep. I mean it [. . .] boils down to the sort of human existence, which is basically eat, sleep, some sort of activity, repeat, ad infinitum.

In this particular case, it is interesting to note what Bob is not saying. He does not describe his experiences and activities as sped-up, condensed, or overlapping, which would be typical in social acceleration (Rosa 2013). Rather, Bob experiences activities on the Camino as consecutive and repetitive, which facilitates temporal decompression.

Suzanne also emphasizes the repetition of the limited number of activities. She provides a detailed account of her daily routines while walking the Camino.

> I'm a late riser [. . .] I would [get up at] 7:30. [. . .] I would start walking around 7:45, 8:00, walk to the next village, 5 kilometers more or less, have my first breakfast, walk another 10 kilometers and around, 10:30, 11:00, I would have my second breakfast, and then more or less I would arrive around 2:00 in the afternoon [. . .] And first of all, wash my own clothes, put them on a line outside [. . .] And then I went to shower myself, and then just lie down on my bunkbed or in the hotel room. Wandering around the village or the town. But you know, some of these [villages] are so small that you have three streets and then there's one shop and one bar and that's it. And then around 7:00 [dinner] [because pilgrims] have to be back in the albergue at 10:00. If I was in an albergue, where there was a kitchen and pots and pans available, I would cook with my friend. [. . .] And then around 9:00 I was already dreaming and sleeping. So, the repetitiveness, doing everything exactly the same every day, is kind of nice. It also destresses. You know you don't have any other options other than just wake up, walk, eat, drink, drink enough water, and in the afternoons also sitting at an outside terrace on a patio and just watching the people come by.

Suzanne's narrative emphasizes a simply structured, repetitive experience that allows sufficient time for each individual activity (Husemann et al. 2016). Each activity is assigned its own time slot, which makes hurrying or multitasking unnecessary. Pilgrims perceive this structure as liberating and destressing rather than constraining. The activities are also low in complexity. Deceleration occurs due to this simple structure of daily activities.

*Reducing Consumer Choices.* Pilgrims reduce their consumption activities as compared to everyday life due to a lack of choice in the marketplace, and also due to practical considerations that relate to the ease of walking and the prevention of physical pain.

Pilgrims perceive the lack of consumer choice on the Camino as mentally freeing. Josh describes the attractiveness of this lack of choice:

> It's a simple life. Fairly routine [. . .] Only three or four decisions that you need to make. Nice simple ones. [. . .] I think that's one of the big attractions of the Camino that many people like is just that simple life. [. . .] [You decide] where you're gonna finish, what you're gonna have for breakfast. And where you're going to—which albergue, [and] [. . .] what you're gonna have for dinner that night. That's about it.

Pilgrims experience the beauty of non-decision-making in a marketplace that is characterized by lack of choice. In the small villages along the Camino, pilgrims find a limited number of albergues and few restaurants offering pilgrimage menus: a simple three-course meal and bottle of wine for a low price, further reducing choice. The pilgrimage infrastructure and marketplace also embrace rules and norms that reinforce episodic deceleration. Pilgrims staying in public albergues share a room with approximately four to 50 fellow pilgrims and, according to hostel policies, pilgrims may stay only for one night, lights are out by 10:00 p.m., and they must leave the albergue no later than 8:00 a.m. Decisions regarding how many days to spend in a town or village or how to organize their stay—typical tourist questions—are rendered irrelevant through marketplace rules. The market and infrastructure of the Camino allow pilgrims to follow, rather than to actively decide. This control is epitomized in the yellow arrows that adorn the Camino and guide pilgrims along the way to Santiago (see figure 3). By simply following these arrows, pilgrims find everything they need along the way. Nico did not preplan his pilgrimage journey, and instead uses the simple infrastructure of the Camino to guide him:

> I didn't plan anything else here. There are the little arrows that you follow. That was my entire preparation. I just follow the arrows and see how far I can go. And if I can't go anymore I stop and look for a hotel or hostel or something else.

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**FIGURE 3**

PILGRIMS FOLLOW ARROWS AND SHELLS TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

In addition to drawing from a simply structured marketplace and infrastructure to organize his journey, Nico also reduces his buying and consumption activities while walking:

> Money...I spent on nothing that I had to carry [...] Especially in Porto, you have so many nice souvenirs that [...] actually I would like to buy, but I have to carry everything on the way. So I didn't. And I spent most of the money on hostels and food. That's basically the only thing. Yeah, because I didn't have to carry it.

While pilgrims often engage in shopping prior to the pilgrimage journey (purchasing equipment such as hiking gear and guidebooks; see figure 4 for a depiction of the important material objects most pilgrims bring on the Camino), this changes the moment their journey begins. As he describes above, Nico simplifies and reduces his consumption in line with a dematerialized consumer lifestyle (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2017). Although downsizing has practical implications on a walking pilgrimage ("I didn't have to carry it"), it is also what ideologically attracts people to embark upon a pilgrimage. Adrian emphasizes the liberating potential in this form of dematerialization:

> Most [pilgrims] said, "I want a journey, I want a break, I want to live completely [...] without a car, without the computer, without my smartphone."

Pilgrimage is about living a simple life (Bradley 2009), and a preference for consuming less is a typical pilgrimage characteristic. Even the most luxurious pilgrimage journeys utilizing nice hotels and gourmet meals requires "some doing without—at the least, living out of a suitcase

**FIGURE 4**

THE MATERIAL OBJECTS OF A PILGRIMAGE: A WALKING STICK, BACKPACK, SHOES, A HAT, AND A GUIDE BOOK

and having many fewer options and luxuries at every point of the day" (Weiss Ozorak 2006, 69). The idea that less is more and the rejection of materiality as a source of happiness are recurring themes in our data set. Ronald summarizes this mind-set when he describes how pilgrims typically reduce their consumption activities while in the oasis of deceleration:

> It's amazing how many women put on makeup the first few days, and within a week are not putting on makeup anymore. Two things: it takes time, and it's an extra weight. You know, by the 7th day, everybody's gone through their backpack, and I mean if you're not literally using it, constantly, and it is [not] absolutely completely necessary, it gets thrown out. And even just something as simple as eyeliner. How many grams it is, I don't know, but you're like, that's going.

As Ronald nicely summarizes, pilgrims find the reduction and simplification of their consumption as a positive. Consuming less frees time resources. In other words, in simplicity, there is slowness (Rosa 2013). The reduction of consumption and consumer choices is strong on the Camino as multiple aspects assertively guide it in this direction. Pilgrims' practical and ideological considerations, as well as the simply structured marketplace, all facilitate this reduction in consumption choices and practices, which in turn facilitates episodic deceleration.

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As we have seen, however, with embodied and technological deceleration, acceleration can intrude and challenge the ability of pilgrims to achieve deceleration. An informal discussion with a "bus pilgrim" from Italy illustrates this point. This pilgrim participated in a Camino bus tour organized by his local church in Italy. As described in the first author's field notes, this pilgrim has conflicting feelings about the pilgrimage experience given his observation of walking pilgrims and his very busy schedule:

> He does not really perceive himself as a pilgrim because he sees all the walking pilgrims and how they suffer. But he thinks that this week on the bus is a good opportunity to get an idea about the pilgrimage. [. . .] The group walks only very few kilometers each day. The bus stops, for example, 3 km before the village, and then they walk to the village. But he also emphasizes that it can be stressful. The group is always traveling forward, and they have a very busy schedule.

By riding on the bus rather than walking, and due to the schedule that the tour keeps, there are many episodes of action per day. As a result, there is no resynchronization to a decelerated temporal rhythm for the bus pilgrim, and the stress typical of social acceleration remains.

In sum, we have identified episodic deceleration, which is a decrease in the number of episodes of action per unit of time, and results from simplifying experiences and reducing consumer choices. Episodic deceleration facilitates consumer deceleration by allowing for a slowed-down experience of time via living a simplified life and making fewer choices in the marketplace.

## Transitioning into and out of Oases of Deceleration

Accelerated and decelerated time have different temporal logics constituting different speeds and rhythms (Rosa 2013). We have shown how consumers achieve three forms of deceleration—embodied, technological, and episodic—by engaging with six interrelated consumer practices encouraged and enabled by market characteristics, rules, and norms that emphasize slowness. Beginning and ending these processes, however, is challenging. As consumers transition in and out of oases of deceleration, decelerated and accelerated temporal logics often clash, or, in Rosa's parlance (2013, 84) "different speeds encounter each other." Similar to Woermann and Rokka (2015), we find that the temporal misalignments that occur in these encounters lead to suboptimal experiences. While pilgrims are immersing into or moving out of deceleration, they may feel stressed, irritated, or even depressed. Here we show how consumers can skillfully adapt and resynchronize themselves to a new temporal logic when transitioning into and out of an oasis of deceleration.

*Transitioning into an Oasis of Deceleration.* At the beginning of their journey, pilgrims often have difficulties overcoming their competitive mind-set and finding their own speed and rhythm of walking, a key to achieving embodied deceleration. Raphael describes how walking felt like racing at the beginning of his pilgrimage:

> There's a little bit of like a race at the beginning. And it took some time to let go of the race feeling. Like I have to get in front of them [fellow pilgrims]. It goes away. Yeah, it definitely goes away.

Several pilgrims discussed how they learned early on the aforementioned mantra that "it's not a race, it's a reset." Adapting to a slow rhythm requires pilgrims to realize and accept that slowness, rather than fastness, is valued on the Camino. Raphael's desire to get in front of others fades the more he transitions into deceleration. Other pilgrims report difficulties adapting to, and trusting, the simply structured and limited marketplace, which is the key to achieving episodic deceleration. Suzanne explains how, at the beginning of her journey, she reserved her accommodations in advance:

> Only for the first night I booked my hostel beforehand, just to make sure that I had a room. I know some people just try and find it out at the moment, but that's just me. I'm kind of obsessive. (Laugh) Lesser now, but you know, the first nights I always try to organize my room. I always do it that way.

Most pilgrims, once they are embedded in the oasis of deceleration, do not preplan their accommodations or research their consumption choices. They allow themselves maximum flexibility to accommodate for physical pain or the option to join a Camino family. They trust that the Camino marketplace will provide them with whatever they need along the way, which, as we have seen in episodic deceleration, is minimalistic. When Suzanne explains that she prebooked her hostel "just to make sure," she reveals her lack of trust in the marketplace. Transitioning into deceleration requires pilgrims to abandon detailed preplanning, scheduling of consumption, and making informed consumer choices since these consumer practices stem from social acceleration and "misalign" (Woermann and Rokka 2015) with the decelerated temporal logic of the oasis of deceleration. Over time, pilgrims build up trust in the sufficiency of the market and surrender to its limits.

*Transitioning out of an Oasis of Deceleration.* Transitioning out of deceleration can also be challenging. Pilgrims often realize the intensity of their embodied deceleration at the moment their body becomes accelerated again. After arriving in Santiago de Compostela, pilgrims typically take a bus or taxi to the airport or to other locations they wish to visit. The mode of transportation suddenly changes, and pilgrims move at an accelerated pace once again. Pilgrims often have difficulty adjusting to the speed of everyday life, and may report

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confusion, disorientation, or even panic. Ronald's quote captures the moment in which embodied deceleration becomes interrupted:

> I guess there's something very therapeutic about walking which I didn't realize. There's something incredibly important about moving at that speed, rather than the speed of a car. I remember when [. . .] I got to Santiago, and I took the bus back to Madrid, and the bus started to leave the bus station [. . .] it was going 25 miles an hour, and that felt so strange to be moving that fast [. . .] And it got out on the freeway, and I was actually kind of having a small panic attack. Because the bus was now moving at 70 miles an hour, and that feeling was just so disorienting. It just was a horrible feeling to be moving that fast.

Similar to Ronald, Mountain Man Rendezvous participants often have difficulty readjusting to speed culture. Belk and Costa (1998) report the moment they left the rendezvous site and encountered traffic again for the first time. Driving overly slow—still being physically decelerated—they suddenly had "to shift [their] pace back to that of our normally fast-paced lives" (233).

Some pilgrims suffer from what is often called "Post-Camino Syndrome," which describes a state of perceived void, disorientation, and purposelessness after completing the pilgrimage, compounded by the fear of returning to reality. The moment of arrival in Santiago de Compostela, in particular, often bears an anticlimactic sense of loss and disappointment (Frey 1998). George, an experienced pilgrim and volunteer at a pilgrimage association based in London, mentors pilgrims before and after their journey, and shares tips with pilgrims on how to counteract Post-Camino Syndrome:

> And then sometimes one has a reaction which we call Post-Camino Syndrome, that after having reached Santiago, sometimes you start feeling sad. One thing we suggested was to try to return slowly, not too suddenly. Instead of getting a plane from Santiago, see if you could take the ship from Santander, which takes one or two days to get to England. This gives you a little time to adapt.

George recommends mitigating the shock of returning into speed culture by intentionally prolonging embodied slowness and gradually transitioning out of the oasis of deceleration. In other words, he suggests pilgrims find ways to slowly realign themselves to an accelerated temporal logic.

Transitioning out of the oasis of deceleration is also influenced by the marketplace. Toward the end of the Camino, the marketplace begins to emphasize consumption, and appears more similar to the accelerated world. Ulrike describes how the end of the Camino differs from the simple, limited-choice marketplace found in the beginning and middle of the pilgrimage:

> The last, yeah, the last hundred kilometers, the feeling was different because there were so many people and then you had so many shops to buy everywhere the same stuff. [. . .] And the people who worked in the shops asked you directly, "You want to come in? We have so much stuff, come in, look, look, look." And the prices, they got higher on the last hundred [kilometers], because they know that there are more people doing the last part.

The need to adapt to different temporal logics and the blurry boundaries between social acceleration and deceleration illustrate the challenges associated with consumer deceleration, and complexifies Turner's notion of liminality (Turner and Turner 1978/2011). Liminality does not begin or end with the antistructural space of pilgrimage; it can be extended beyond its physical boundaries.

In sum, oases of deceleration possess their own temporal logic with their own speeds and rhythms that emphasize slowness. While all our respondents successfully transitioned in and out of deceleration, it requires consumers to (re-)synchronize themselves to different temporal logics, which can be difficult and is not always an automatic and smooth process. Misalignments between consumer practices and the overriding temporal logic, such as preplanning or racing—practices that are beneficial in managing scarce time resources in social acceleration—can jeopardize achieving consumer deceleration.

## DISCUSSION

Consumer deceleration is a perception of a slowed-down temporal experience achieved via a decrease in certain quantities per unit of time (less traveled distance, less use of technology, fewer experienced episodes) through altering, adopting, or eschewing forms of consumption. It is a response to, or escape from, speed culture. Consumers decelerate in three ways—embodied deceleration, technological deceleration, and episodic deceleration—each of which is enabled by consumer practices and market characteristics, rules, and norms, resulting in time being experienced as passing more slowly and as an abundant resource.

Key to understanding our framework is that all three forms of deceleration must be present for consumer deceleration to successfully occur. Our framework suggests that consumers may go to the beach for a weekend and engage in embodied deceleration via long walks on the beach, but if they check their emails, find the best restaurant via Yelp, and shop in the local boutiques for souvenirs, they may feel relaxed, but have not resynchronized to a decelerated temporal logic and escaped the temporal ghetto of social acceleration that relentlessly gobbles up emotional and mental energies (Rifkin 1987). The consumer practices underlying the three forms of consumer deceleration can vary based on context, though. One example is embodied deceleration, which could occur through gardening, rather than

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walking, for example. Research has shown that consumers seek out slowness (Binkley 2008; Pookulungara and Shephard 2013); we show the process and mechanisms of how this happens. Specifically, we provide a process-based explanation of why and how slow movements and technological "detoxes" are becoming more prevalent in society. We are able to understand, for example, why slow travel (Dickinson et al. 2011) emphasizes embodied deceleration, why tech detoxes focus on technological deceleration (Kharpal 2016), and why the voluntary simplicity (Cherrier 2009) movement utilizes episodic deceleration.

It is important to articulate what consumer deceleration is not. In contrast to the drag that Woermann and Rokka (2015) describe, deceleration does not result from misaligned practice elements and is not perceived as boredom. Rather, deceleration requires consumers to skillfully adapt, and gradually align themselves, to a slowed-down temporal logic that allows them to perceive time as slow and abundant. This decelerated temporal experience frees up emotional and mental energies that are difficult to bring out in social acceleration (Rifkin 1987). Consumers enjoy the slowed-down temporal experience and assign it added significance. Supporting the idea that deceleration is not drag, and thus does not result in boredom, Myöhänen and Hietanen (2013) make the point that when consumers pursue pleasure as a goal, the result is often, and ironically, boredom. That is, boredom stems from a pleasure-seeking consumer culture where "people are like rats trained to run all the time" (Myöhänen and Hietanen 2013). A pilgrimage is not about achieving pleasure, which may explain why the slowness and the lack of anything to do except eat, walk, and sleep do not result in boredom.

Deceleration is more than simply being still. While being at home watching Netflix on the couch may be relaxing, it is not decelerating, as resynchronization to a slower temporal logic has not occurred. Consumers must engage in something, physically and mentally, to achieve deceleration via the three routes we describe. This is supported by Seregina and Weijo (2017), who attest that it is physicality, not inactivity, that leads to engagement. Indeed, our respondents do not see their pilgrimage as a holiday, where they would be "doing nothing." Tracey explains:

> It's not a holiday. Because for us a holiday would be not doing anything. [Laughs] On a holiday, we read books, we play Sudoku from a sun lounger. And then have some beers. This [the Camino] isn't a holiday, but it is relaxing.

## Temporality

We contribute to the understanding of temporality in consumer research by demonstrating that consumers' temporal experiences can result from the particular societal-level temporal logics in which they are immersed, as compared to being a result of consumption practices (Woermann and Rokka 2015). We argue that consumers' temporal experiences do not exclusively result from performing practices, but also from immersing into, or escaping from, societal temporal logics that emphasize slowness or fastness. Experiencing and achieving deceleration results from escaping speed culture and adapting to a slowed-down temporal logic via the three types of deceleration we have outlined, rather than from performing aligned or misaligned consumption practices. We also demonstrate that entering and leaving a decelerated temporal logic may pose challenges to consumers due to temporal misalignments that resemble Woermann and Rokka's (2015) rush and drag. These challenges occur as a result of a misalignment between consumer practices and the overall temporal logic, such as when consumers engage in preplanning, scheduling, and racing while on the Camino. Thus, we extend the concept of temporal misalignment, which allows us to contribute to a nascent understanding of temporality within consumer research.

As a result, when participants of the Mountain Man Rendezvous live according to "rendezvous time" (Belk and Costa 1989, 233), river rafting participants enjoy the "slowtime" of their river environments (Arnould et al. 1999, 41), and surfers acknowledge the "time signature" of [their] surroundings" (Canniford and Shankar, 2013, 1056), their experience of time is shaped by the temporal logic into which they are immersed. Canniford and Shankar (2013, 1056) conclude that within "isolated spaces" consumers may align themselves to the "features of material geography [that] enable [them] to live according to different temporal schedules from those familiar in [. . .] working life." We agree with this assertion and reveal the process through which these alignments occur: consumer deceleration. In this way we also contribute to Bardhi and Eckhardt (2017), who suggest that consumers will increasingly seek out oases of deceleration in liquid and sped-up times and illustrate how consumers do so via altering, adopting, or eschewing their consumption. Given the significance and necessity of an isolated space that fosters a decelerated temporal logic, it is not clear that in daily life, controlling technology use or engaging in fewer consumption episodes or slowing down the body in a one-hour yoga class would successfully result in deceleration. Deceleration occurs intensely in an oasis of deceleration given the market characteristics, rules, and norms that emphasize slowness and allow the decelerated temporal logic to prevail. Future research can examine whether consumers may successfully transfer their acquired deceleration skills into daily life and experience deceleration in a place where an accelerated temporal logic dominates. Our findings suggest this is not the case, as many of our respondents spoke about the need to "top up"—come back to the Camino again—after a couple of years, when the effects have faded away.

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## Embodiment

This study also advances our understanding of the embodied nature of consumption (Canniford and Shankar 2013; Scott et al. 2017) by demonstrating that different types of pain have different consequences for consumers. Scott et al. (2017) demonstrate that pain is a crucial aspect of the experience of extreme racing because participants cannot ignore it. The body comes to the fore and people "rediscover their corporality" (37). Our study supports this insight. The sensation of physical pain is a key aspect of the pilgrimage experience and allows pilgrims to experience their body more intensely. However, whereas Scott et al. (2017) find that pain enables a temporary dismissal of the self, our analysis reveals that pain fosters a rediscovery of the self. Pilgrims experience chronic pain, whereas the extreme racers studied by Scott et al. (2017) experience acute pain. These different types of pain have different consequences. Extreme sports foster intense, short-lived physical pain that may cause a state of shock. The self is "blown up into pieces floating in the air" (Scott et al. 2017, 9). In contrast, pilgrims experience a much less intense, but continual, pain. The pain is not extreme enough to cause a state of shock, but it is strong enough to remind pilgrims of their (physical) existence. Through this type of pain, a pilgrim's self-focus moves from the outside to the inside. Pilgrims slow down physically and mentally, leading to a mental state of self-reflection. In sum, Scott et al. (2017) show that acute pain places consumers in shock, and enables a dismissal of the self, whereas we show that steady pain reminds consumers of their physical existence and provides them with valuable time to think and reflect.

## Extraordinary Experiences

Our study also sheds light on extraordinary consumer experiences (Canniford and Shankar 2013; Husemann et al. 2016; Tumbat and Belk 2011). In line with Husemann et al. (2016) and Tumbat and Belk (2011), we concur that extraordinary experiences are not inherently romantic, celebratory, and self-strengthening episodes that allow consumers to return home "cleansed and renewed" (Turner and Turner 1978/2011, 30). Rather, they are complex experiences that may cause tensions. We build upon this insight by demonstrating that tensions can result from consumers' difficulties in transitioning in and out of extraordinary experiences, which possess a different temporal logic than everyday life experiences. Acknowledging that acceleration can intrude on deceleration is a further step in Husemann et al.'s (2016, 3368) endeavor "to break down the binary of the sacred and profane, structure and antistructure that is prevalent in consumer research."

Our analysis also allows us to further examine the notion of transformation and liminality in extraordinary consumer experiences. We suggest that deceleration is a key variable in facilitating transformation. Arnould et al. (1999, 41) argue that slowing down "signals a readiness to experience transcendence" and shows that participants "have entered a liminal state" and are ready to experience change. Our study adds to this by demonstrating how slowing down occurs and adds complexities to Turner's notion of liminality (Turner and Turner 1978/2011). Challenges associated with transitioning in and out of deceleration suggest that liminality does not necessarily begin or end with the antistructural space of pilgrimage. Consumers may never achieve liminality in antistructure, or liminality may level out prior to the consumers' return to structure, or liminality may even become a burden when consumers return to structure, as cases of Post-Camino Syndrome imply.

## Social Acceleration

Next, our study contributes to Rosa's theory of social acceleration (Rosa 2013; Rosa et al. 2016) by examining the notion of deceleration from a consumption perspective. While Rosa (2013) suggests that one can seek out oases of deceleration and engage in deceleration as a means of coping with social acceleration, he does not explain how people experience these spaces and how they achieve deceleration within them. We show how people explicitly alter, eschew, or adopt their consumption to facilitate deceleration.

Rosa (2013) recognizes how societal temporal logics determine how individuals perceive time and, given their increasingly accelerated character, become more and more difficult for individuals to live within. Our study demonstrates how people can leave the accelerated societal logic of time temporarily by achieving deceleration via altered consumption. Achieving consumer deceleration, however, is not without challenges, and we point out the (re-)synchronization that must occur as one enters and leaves the oasis. In sum, we show some of the complexities that occur when people travel between different temporal logics and use consumption to do so. Thus, we contribute to Rosa (2013), who has not written about the transitions between acceleration and deceleration and how they might occur.

Lastly, we contribute to Rosa's (2013) theory of acceleration by showing that oases of deceleration are not romantic and acceleration-immune hideaways and that deceleration is not a linear process. We find several instances in our data in which unexpected intrusions threaten to compromise consumer deceleration, such as when pilgrims are forced to take taxis or buses, or a day of rest, due to pain or physical exhaustion. Intrusions may also occur when global news viewed or heard in a café unveils the illusion of disconnection from the real world. We show that oases of deceleration are not isolated places that exhaustively exclude forces of social acceleration. Intrusions can and do occur, as oases of deceleration can be tenuous and permeable. Our research enables us to take a first step in

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illuminating the complex interactions between deceleration and acceleration processes, which Rosa (2013) does not touch upon, and which highlights the complexity of consumer deceleration.

## Implications

We have demonstrated how consumer deceleration occurs within oases of deceleration, where consumers align themselves with a decelerated temporal logic to experience time as passing by more slowly and as being abundant. There is evidence that consumers increasingly seek out these oases, to the extent that some are willing to pay large sums of money to live in solitary confinement prison cells for a week or more (Kwong 2018). This desire for oases has implications for public policy and businesses, as it suggests that spaces that can be used as oases should be actively created and designed to facilitate consumer deceleration in daily life. Experiencing deceleration is not merely about having "more time," but also about investing the material, social, and cultural world with significance through attention and deliberation (Parkins and Craig 2006). The Cittaslow (Slow City) movement aims to accomplish this task. Slow cities strive to create spaces—oases—that vary from global consumer culture by offering more sidewalks, closing some streets to traffic to promote walking rather than driving (which in turn can result in embodied deceleration), and limiting available food options, none of which are fast food (which may result in episodic deceleration) (Honoré 2005; Osbaldiston 2013; Pink 2008). We also see a rise in slow tourism, which allows consumers to seek out oases in which they can immerse themselves (Osbaldiston 2013), as well as suggestions about how universities can revert to being spaces that facilitate a slow rhythm (Berg and Seeber 2016), both of which allow for contemplation. Along with Parkins and Craig (2006) and Osbaldiston (2013), we suggest that more of these slow spaces are needed. We agree with Tomlinson (2007), who points out that those who are most fully engaged in the fast capitalist system in their everyday lives are the ones who need these spaces the most—spaces where one can pursue slowness and where practices can be reconfigured to provide meaning, contemplation, and authenticity (Parkins and Craig 2006).

## Future Research

Our study raises several interesting issues about what precisely constitutes deceleration, its boundary conditions, and its politics, suggesting a variety of future research questions. Oases of deceleration are not an antidote to social acceleration, but rather a temporary respite from it. Are oases of deceleration simply "refueling" opportunities, enabling an even faster pace upon return to daily life (Cederström and Spicer 2015)? In line with this, we reflect on whether pilgrims benefit in the long run from having walked the Camino. Or do they suffer more after experiencing deceleration, because they have experienced the benefits of deceleration, yet are unable to escape acceleration in their daily lives? Our findings also suggest that movement is necessary to decelerate. Is the sense of achievement that accompanies moving forward—even if done slowly—needed to alleviate the sense that when you are standing still, others are moving forward? Additionally, consumption on the Camino can be characterized as liquid (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2017), as it is dematerial, ephemeral, and access-based. Therefore, participating in a pilgrimage is not a nostalgic return to solid consumption. Does consuming in a decelerated manner alter the form of liquid consumption, and, if so, how? It is also worth exploring how deceleration might operate differently for consumers seeking to decelerate, as compared to those who are not seeking to decelerate. Additionally, can oases of deceleration be accessed only via the market? Also, do practices such as mindfulness facilitate deceleration? It is not simply practices associated with mindfulness, such as meditation, that may facilitate deceleration, but also the context of the practice. For example, if one meditates for five minutes a day via a meditation app on the phone, this will most likely not result in deceleration, as the rhythm and speed of life has not changed, and the person has not resynchronized to a decelerated temporal logic. If, however, one visits an ashram for two weeks to meditate with monks, the practice of meditation would most likely facilitate deceleration.

Bellezza, Paharia, and Keinan (2017) have argued that being time-poor is a new status symbol in a society that values busyness and a lack of leisure time. In contrast, we suggest that deceleration is becoming a new status symbol. People are overworked and time-poor, and only a fortunate few can afford to escape to oases of deceleration, making them the status symbols of tomorrow. This speaks to the politics of deceleration, which would be a fruitful area to further explore. Indeed, Friedman (2016) suggests that the perception that social change in the age of acceleration is moving too fast is a primary reason why many people are drawn to politics promising a return to the past. It would be interesting to research consumption's role in this desire to slow down via politics. Finally, is deceleration a new post-secular form of spirituality? Honoré (2005) suggests that people are seeking refuge from speed in the safe harbor of spirituality, as its core nature is slow. He argues that the sense that something is missing from our lives underpins the yearning for slowness, and slowing down therefore offers a spiritual dimension. Future research can examine whether consumers shopping for enlightenment in the spiritual supermarket will view deceleration as a viable and desired option.

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## DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

Both authors jointly collected the data along the Camino de Santiago in 2016 and 2017. The data were analyzed by both authors. The final coding of categories and the final written ethnography were developed and written by both authors.

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