Achieving Resonance in Liquid Consumption via Deceleration on the Camino de Santiago

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ABSTRACT

Recent research has suggested that in liquid consumption, consumers find it increasingly difficult to build meaningful, safe, durable, and trustworthy connections to the social, cultural and material world that usually prevails in more solid consumer lifestyles (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2017). Using the theory of social acceleration (Rosa 2013), we investigate the role of speed in this. We find, based on ethnographic data from the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain, that (1) consumption is liquid on the pilgrimage. (2) The pilgrimage is an oasis of deceleration (Rosa 2013), with deceleration happening in three ways: embodied, technological and episodic. This allows consumers to (3) experience meaningful and resonating (Rosa 2016), although temporary, relationships to themselves, to others, to materiality, to the environment, and to the sacred. Both liquid consumption and deceleration are needed to facilitate resonance, although they do so in different ways. Thus, we demonstrate how the nature of liquid consumption changes when slowed down, we unpack the process of how deceleration and experiencing resonances occurs, and we highlight the embodied nature of consumption. Overall, this study contributes to consumer research by emphasizing the role of pace and speed in liquid consumption.

Keywords: liquid consumption, social acceleration, deceleration, resonance, pilgrimage, Camino de Santiago