



# Mapping Dream and Favourite Destinations' Perceptions: The Indian Tourists' Brands Spatial Scales

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## Abstract

Understanding the perceptions of tourists is a key element for predicting their behavior and providing them the tourist experiences that are part of their expectations. This study aims to assess destination preferences of Indian tourists, using a new methodological approach to investigate the brand equity of tourism destinations competing in the globalized world. Using the top-of-mind approach, respondents (N = 697 Indian citizens) were asked through an online questionnaire to inform their “dream destinations” (destination they did not visit yet but they desire to visit in the near future) and their “favorite destinations” (destination they have visited and liked the most). Results confirmed both study hypotheses: (1) “dream destinations” are mostly located far away from India; (2) “favorite destinations” are mostly domestic or located in the neighboring countries. Furthermore, the study shows that local (municipal) scale is more frequently used to categorize destinations related to the following motivations: ecotourism, cultural, rural, mountain, creative tourism, city tourism, and shopping tourism; but sun and sea is more frequently framed by regional scale; however, the country scale is more frequently used to designate dream destinations as well as wellness tourism destinations. Finally, the study delivers useful managerial insights, particularly for DMO aiming to attract repeat Indian tourists.

**Keywords:** Mapping perceptions, Dream and favourite destinations' perceptions, Indian tourists, Brand spatial scales



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## Introduction

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As argued by Buhalis (2000), a tourism destination can be defined as “amalgam of tourism products and services, which are consumed under the brand name of the destination” (p. 98). This definition seems very appropriate, since it allows approaching destinations simultaneously from both market sides –supply and demand. From supply side, destination is a well-defined geographical territory which is promoted as a unique entity, with a political and normative framework for tourism marketing and planning (Buhalis, 2000). It adopts distinct spatial scales, as resorts, cities, regions, countries or even supranational territories (Hall, 2010). Moreover, destination’s stakeholders can benefit from a common destination brand developed under the umbrella of a destination management organization (DMO). From demand side, as stated by Buhalis (2000), de Araújo et al. (2019) and Cardoso et al. (2019a), a destination is a perceptual concept, being interpreted subjectively by the consumers. In addition, the subjectivity of these perceptions depends “on their travel itinerary, cultural background, purpose of visit, educational level and past experience” (Buhalis, 2000, p. 97). Furthermore, tourism destinations can be considered from different criteria: (1) public versus corporate destinations; (2) ranging from very small to very large territories (e.g., local attractions, villages, cities, regions, countries, or even supranational entities) (Cardoso et al., 2019a); (3) and related to different tourist motivations and products (De Araújo et al., 2019; Dias, 2018): cultural tourism, sun & sea, rural, wellness health, sports, nature, religious, medical, food tourism (Cardoso et al., 2019b) among many other.

Recent studies have focused on some variables that influence the choices of tourists considering the geographical context, such as geographical tourist context and other neighbouring tourists, advocated by Cano Guervos et al. (2018) or the role of destinations resources defended by Chekalina, Fuchs and Lexhagen (2018). However, Beritelli et al. (2017) states that “travel decision research still struggles to explain a large portion of the variance in travel choices” (p.1). Actually, facing the myriad of destination brand names existing in all over the world, on the one hand, and the immeasurable number of tourists making their own destination choices, on the other, the following cutting edge question arises: what are the more valuable destination brands for tourists from a certain region of the globe?

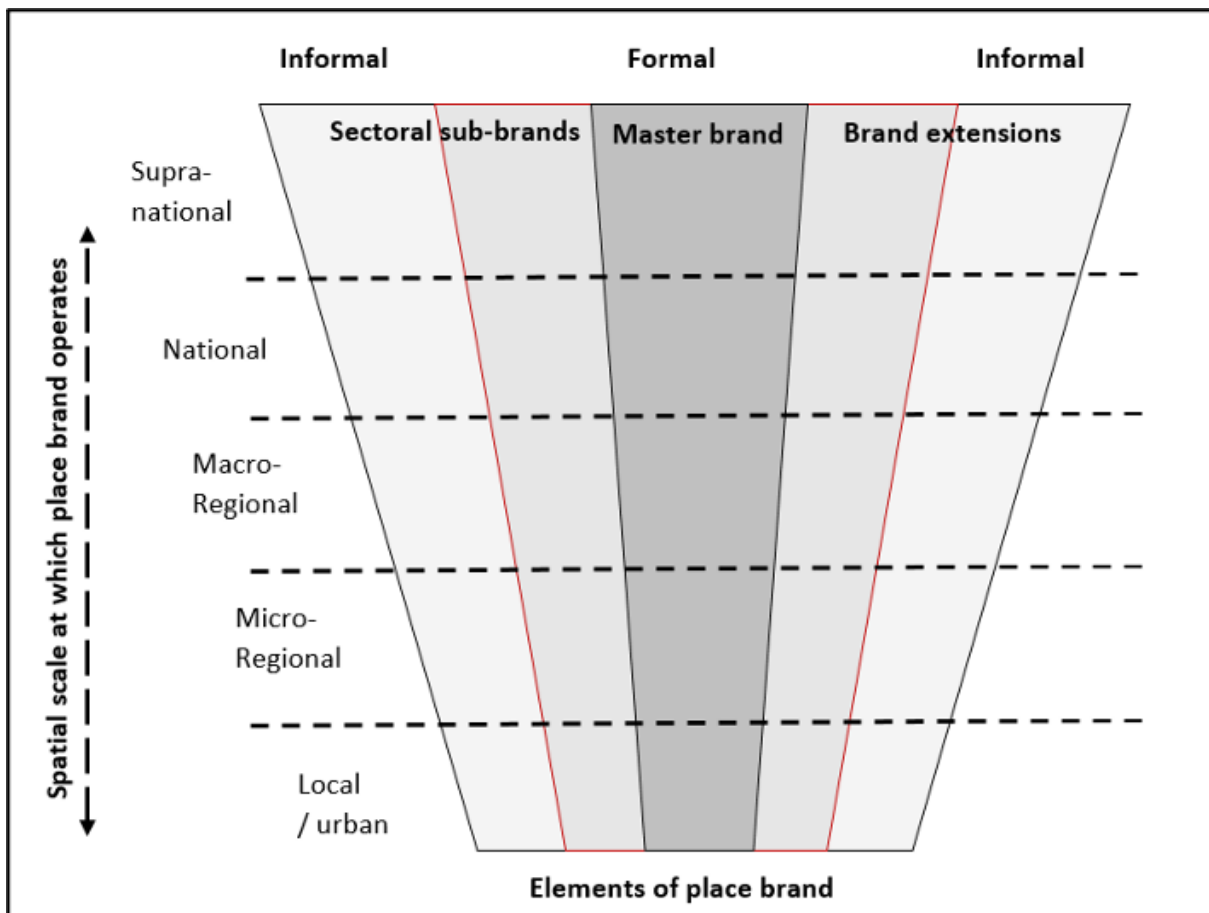
Most of studies addressing the issue of brand equity for tourism destinations do not allow to answer the last question, since they are focused primarily on a given destination or on a small set of destinations. In fact, a more realistic research setting that integrates the free choice of respondents (any respondent can freely consider any destination that have in mind) is a very complex task and therefore almost always avoided by the researchers. Even so, considering that all destinations are competing in the national and international markets, to address the issue of customer-based brand equity for tourism destinations (CBBE-TD) in the context of free destinations choice is a tempting challenge but enormous. Studies carried out by Dias and Cardoso (2017) and Cardoso et al. (2019a) shed some light on this complex matter, allowing to understand why in a given context a person enunciates, for instance, “U.K.”, while in another context he/she enunciates “England”. Thus, starting from the concepts of dream and favourite destination proposed by Cardoso et al. (2019a), the present study maps the Indian tourists’ brands spatial scales, adopting the top-of-mind approach. The present study aimed at understanding the attractiveness of domestic and international destination brands for Indian tourists, by mapping their Dream and Favourite Destinations, both domestic and worldwide.

## Theoretical Perspective

### The spatial multidimensionality of destination brand concept

Comparing destination brands with the brands for manufactured products, at least four important features become evident, making destination branding a complex matter: (1) Being destination brands a subset of place brands (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010; Gnoth, 2002; Hudson & Ritchie, 2009; Pike, 2005), they can adopt very diverse spatial scales, ranging from local to supranational territories (Figure 1). For example, India, Maharashtra and Jaipur, despite their distinct scales, all they are tourism destinations; (2) Destination brands can be formal (registered brands, trademarks) or informal (overall image), that is, destination brands can be owned by administrative entities and governed by a DMO or they can be just toponymical names used to designate a place that tourists usually visit. Both formal and informal brands interact with each other over time (Hall, 2010).

**Figure 1:** Architecture of place brands model



Source: Adapted from Hall (2010).

For example, the informal portrayal of such informal destinations like Himalaya, Caribe, and Baltic Countries can be influenced by the strategies of the national states related to these territories; (3) Each tourism product influence in a specific way the configuration of the spatial scale of destinations and their administrative borders. For example, mountain destinations are often large regional spaces without well-defined borders (e.g., Alps, Pyrenees or Himalaya), while city tourism or shopping tourism take place at urban destinations; other types of tourism (e.g., religious, cultural or adventure tourism) are routes crossing long distances in the territories (e.g., Route 66 in the USA, or Kedarnath in India); (4) Differently from the branding of common products or

services, the focalization of visual identity in logos or other visual signs is not so effective in the case of destination branding. Who among tourists that visit Paris or London knows the logos of these city brands?

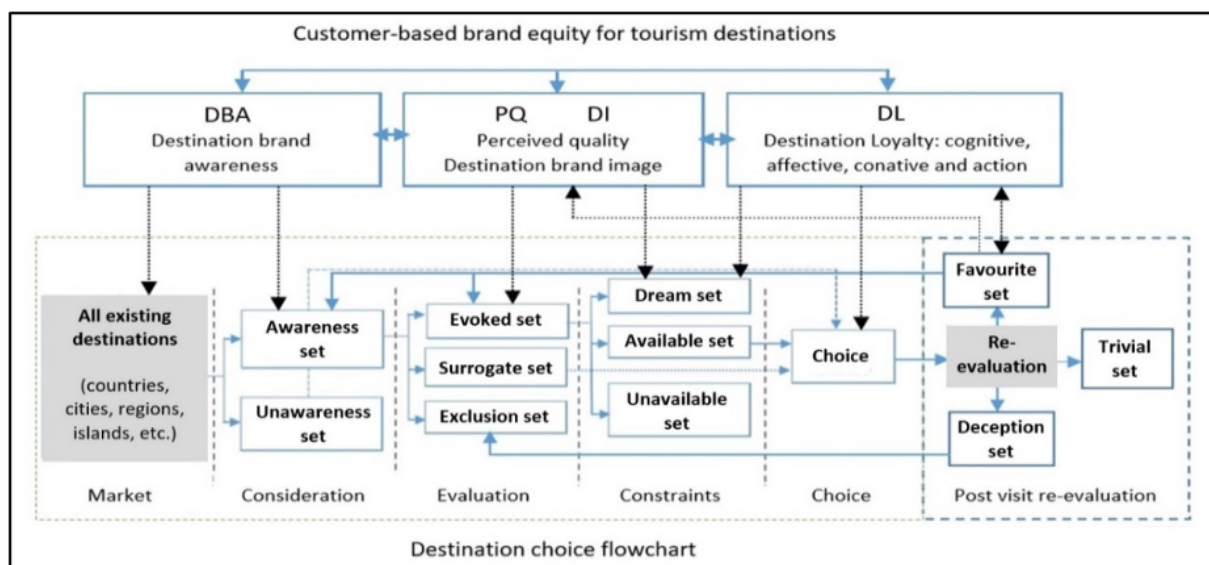
## Understanding and consolidating destination brand choices

The pre-trip anticipation is a crucial moment, since it determines the experience *in situ*. Before deciding where to go, each tourist/s consider distinct alternatives (Decrop, 2010; Um & Crompton, 1990), and the likelihood of a given destination being considered as a possible choice depends on tourist's knowledge and beliefs (Martins, 2015), and also on more subjective elements such as emotions, attitudes and images of destinations (Um & Crompton, 1990) and previous experiences (De Araujo *et al.*, 2019; Cardoso *et al.*, 2019a). Consequently, the likeliness of a destination being the tourist's final choice depends on its relative brand equity, when compared with its competitors (Dias & Cardoso, 2017).

As a second step, the experience at destination is a kind of "test of reality", since it provides cognitive and emotional elements to confirm or revise previous expectations, based on the pre-visit image of the destination, that was formed under the influence of organic and/or induced sources or agents (Gartner, 1994). This "test of reality" originates the consumer's satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which in turn determines the level of consumer's loyalty. This way, the experience at the destination is the main factor determining the post-trip destination image, judgements regarding destination quality, and future intentions of visit and/or recommendation. That is, in this case, as argued by Gretzel *et al.* (2018), the experience lived in destination becomes the key concept.

Aiming to focus on the role of destination brand equity into the destination choice process, Dias and Cardoso (2017) and Cardoso *et al.* (2019a), supported by Um and Crompton (1990) and Decrop (2010) proposed the Destination Brand Choice Integrative (BDCI) model (Figure 2), describing destination choices as a flowchart based on a funnel selection. The BDCI model integrates two parallel but almost isolated research traditions: the studies of brand equity assessment (Aaker, 1991; 1996; Keller, 1993; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007), and the studies of destination choice (Um & Crompton, 1990; Decrop, 2010).

**Figure 2:** Destination brand choice integrative model (BDCI model)



Source: Cardoso *et al.* (2019a)

The DBCI model integrates Keller's (1993) construct of customer-based brand equity for tourism destinations (CBBE-TD) and the multi-steps destination choice process flowchart proposed by Decrop (2010). As shown in the Figure 2, CBBE-TD includes the following dimensions: destination brand awareness (DBA), perceived quality (PQ), destination image (DI) and destination loyalty (DL). In turn, the destination choice flowchart is composed of four sequential stages: consideration, evaluation, constraints, choice and post-visit re-evaluation. According to the DBCI model, in each stage of destination choice flowchart the components of the CBBE-TD have a determinant influence:

- **Consideration stage:** The leading role is played by DBA at this stage. It reflects the salience of a destination brand in the tourists' mind (Aaker, 1996). There are two different empirical approaches to assess DBA: free recall and recognition. DBA plays a crucial role at the first stage of destination choice, since only destinations with high level of awareness can be considered in a future choice.
- **Evaluation stage:** Destinations included in the awareness set are then submitted to the scrutiny of DI and PQ. Concerning DI, it is the starting point for the purchase decision and for brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991) and it embraces all the brand associations existing in tourists' mind. According to Keller (1993), these associations correspond to attributes, benefits and attitudes. Attributes consist of what a tourist thinks the destination brand is or has to offer and what is involved in its purchase or consumption. Benefits are the personal values consumers associate to the brand. Attitudes towards destination brand are tourists' overall evaluations of the destination brand and have a crucial role in the destination choice. Regarding PQ, it refers to the customers' overall perception of quality of products or services in comparison with the rivalry offering (Aaker, 1991). When the intangible attributes acquire high predominance, as it is the case in tourism, the quality assessment depends almost exclusively on perceived quality. According to the DBCI model, both DI and PQ determine how a given destination can fail or win at the evaluation stage. Only destinations highly scored in these both dimensions can progress to the next step.
- **Dealing with constraints:** At this stage, when final decision has to be made, consumers have to deal with constraints. According to Oliver (1997, 1999) and Blut et al. (2007), the ability to overcome inertia and to achieve the repeated purchase, even if it is necessary to overcome constraints, reflects the consumers' action loyalty. However, DL goes beyond the action loyalty and repeated purchase, since loyalty has also cognitive, affective and conative dimensions (Oliver, 1997, 1999). Cognitive loyalty occurs whenever a brand appears first in the consumers' mind as their first choice. Affective loyalty consists of a favourable attitude towards a particular brand, and it is an outcome of the consumer's satisfaction. Conative loyalty expresses the consumer's commitment with a future purchase, but without conclusive fulfilment, being usually expressed as recommendation to friends and relatives or positive word-of-mouth.
- **Post-visit re-evaluation:** There is a causal relationship between tourists' satisfaction at destination, perceived quality, positive image and loyalty. Consequently, DBCI model (Figure 2) includes a post-visit re-evaluation stage, where visited destinations are sorted in three distinct sets: *favourite set*, if the experience *in situ* was enjoyable; *deception set*, if the experience was frustrating; and *trivial set*, if the experience generated neutral or ambivalent feelings.

## Dream versus favourite destinations' perceptions

In order to differentiate the structural perceptions of the two categories of destination (favourites versus dream), Cardoso et al. (2019a) argued that destinations included in both dream set and favourite set are relatively strong destination brands since they have high CBBE-TD ratings, i.e., top-of-mind awareness, high perceived quality, positive image and strong loyalty. However, they are distinct in one crucial aspect: the existence or the lack of personal experience at the destination. Although dream destinations are rooted in the tourist imaginary, being generated by organic and/or induced sources of influence, they have high brand salience and correspond to the ideal preferences of consumers; in turn, as argued by Dias and Cardoso (2017), favourite destinations refer to those places that have already been visited and have aroused positive emotions on tourists, and still remain in their minds as memorable experiences.

Dream destinations are highly desirable places deserving to be visited someday in the future, rooted in the collective imaginary and built on discourse (Cherifi et al. 2014) or on shared images by the cinema and/or literature (Best, 2006). Moreover, they reflect tourists' behavioural intentions towards future experiences, and therefore they are elaborated in the framework of the prospective memory (Graf & Uttl, 2011; McFarland & Glisky, 2012). However, they are connected to the episodic system of memory, more specifically they are part of what Atance and O'Neill (2001) designated as episodic future thinking – an ability to project the self forward in time to pre-experience an event.

Favourite destinations, in turn, refers to a place the tourist has already visited and considers the best destination for a specific type of travel (De Araújo et al., 2019; Cardoso et al. 2019b; Dias & Cardoso, 2017), being rooted on the tourist's retrospective memory (Cardoso et al., 2019a). In fact, it's worthy to stress that favourite destinations are *specific for each type of travel*, since for different types of tourism (for instance, cruise, nautical, religious, cultural, rural, shopping, mountain or sport) and depending on tourist's previous experiences and motivations. Moreover, favourite destinations are deeply grounded on the autobiographical (retrospective) memory, as they are related to previous behaviours and associated with memorable experiences (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). More precisely, they are associated with the semantic memory system, which is broadly defined as our knowledge of the world (Atance & O'Neill, 2001).

## Research aims and hypothesis

As states Cardoso et al. (2019a, p. 83), the “comparative analysis of Dream and Favourite Destinations has the specific merit of focusing on an important, but never examined, issue in tourism studies: the dynamics of auto-noetic consciousness during the destination choice process”. Tulving (1985, p. 1) defined auto-noetic consciousness as “the kind of consciousness that mediates an individual's awareness of his/her existence and identity in subjective time extending from the personal past through the present to the personal future”. Tourists' auto-noetic consciousness allow them to develop intentions regarding places to visit in the future, and also allow them to make trade-offs between their retrospective and prospective memories. Also known as “memory of the future” (McDaniel & Einstein, 2000), prospective memory embraces all cognitive processes involved in the formation and execution of future intentions (McFarland & Glisky, 2012). This double focus of auto-noetic consciousness (past versus future) is never studied in tourism destination choice.

Moreover, these two destination categories (dream *versus* favourite) express distinct meanings of brand loyalty: when a person evokes a toponymical name as dream destination, he/she just expresses his/her cognitive and affective loyalty towards that destination (that is, a favourable attitude and a positive feelings); however, when a person designates a destination as favourite, he/she goes beyond cognitive and affective loyalty, since it also means conative loyalty and (in many cases) action loyalty. In other words, when one says: “X is my favourite destination”, it also means: “I recommend X”.

The first attempts to compare and distinguish dream and favourite destinations were undertaken by Dias and Cardoso (2017), Cardoso et al. (2019a), Cardoso et al. (2019b) and Araújo et al. (2019). These studies found out significant differences between dream and favourite destinations in following dimensions:

### 1. Distance between tourists' place of residence and evoked destinations:

Dream destinations are located too far away from the tourists' place of residence, mostly in other continents; while favourite destinations consist of domestic destinations or foreign destinations located in neighbouring countries. As referred above, due to constraints of money or time, or both, dream destinations have a very low likelihood to be chosen in the near future. To visit these psychologically desirable but economically inaccessible destinations, one has to book long-haul or ultra-long-haul flights, that are more expensive and requiring longer trips. It's not surprising that around 85% – 90% of all international arrivals worldwide are intracontinental (corresponding

to short-haul or medium-haul flights), against a too small part of international tourist flows that are related to intercontinental, long-haul flights (UNWTO, 2018). Drawing on the existing evidence, the following hypotheses are formulated:

**H<sub>1a</sub>:** Indian tourists' favourite destinations are located not too far away from their place of residence (in their state of residence or in neighbouring countries).

**H<sub>1b</sub>:** Indian tourists' dream destinations are far away from their place of residence, in other continents, and located mostly in Europe or America.

## 2. The spatial scale used to categorize destinations:

Most of dream destinations are very strong and globalized brands, such as influential countries or famous cities that achieved high cognitive salience in the people's mind in all over the world. In turn, favourite destinations are chosen among all destination individual already visited, and consequently they are experience-specific and depend on several personal factors such as tourist personal profile, motivation to a specific kind of tourism (cultural, mountain, religious, etc.) and personal experience (portfolio of visited destinations), etc. Due to these circumstances, favourite destinations have higher likeliness of adopting more diverse spatial scales: local, regional, national or supranational destinations. For example, favourite beach destinations are expected to entail the local scale; while favourite mountain destinations are likely regional territories; however, favourite cruise destinations are supposedly supranational regions. On the basis of already existing empirical evidence (Dias & Cardoso, 2017; Cardoso *et al.*, 2019a; de Araujo *et al.*, 2019), it is expected that the country brand categories appear more frequently associated with dream destinations than with favourite ones; likewise, the local and regional brand categories are more characteristic of favourite destinations than of dream ones.

That understanding leads to the following hypotheses:

**H<sub>2a</sub>:** Dream destinations of Indian tourists are mostly shaped as country brands.

**H<sub>2b</sub>:** Favourite destinations correspond more frequently to urban/local and regional or provincial place brands.

## Research Methodology

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### Data collection

Data collection was part of a larger scale, qualitative surveys that was carried out in the framework of the Favourite Destinations Worldwide project – <http://favouritedestinations.com/en/> – a purpose developed online multilingual platform that was conceived to assess destination brands from all over the world, using an unstructured questionnaire with open-end questions. Three Indian researchers, members of the research team, were responsible for the data collection in India, which took place during the second semester of 2018. To collect textual dream and favourite perceptions, we adopted the top-of-mind approach that refers to a brand or specific product being first in customers' minds (Buyunitri & Putri, 2016; Šerić *et al.*, 2016). The technique applied to access the top-of-mind was the free recall technique, such as Cardoso *et al.* (2019a) and similar studies that mapped destinations perceptions (Stepchenkova & Li, 2013; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008). Free recall is a mental process that allows one to collect information from memory, since the memory has the ability to create important associations and the ability to unite associative representations to evoke them at a later date (Ofen, Yu, & Chen, 2016). The Dream Destination construct was operationalised through the following question: "*Bearing in mind all tourism destinations existing all over the world, please indicate your dream destination in general*". This instruction was accompanied by the following note: "*The expression «Dream*

*Destination» refers to destinations that you did not visit but desire and hope to visit someday". Concerning Favourite Destination, the questionnaire included a two-step approach: (1) First, each respondent was invited to indicate the type (of types) of tourism he/she prefer (respondent could choose one or more items from a list of 15 tourism products – e.g., seaside, cultural, gastronomic, shopping, etc.); (2) Then, the following statement was presented: "Please indicate your Favourite Destination for this type of tourism". Each respondent could choose a Favourite Destination for each chosen tourism product. This was accompanied by the note: "The expression «Favourite Destination» refers to destinations you have already visited and loved the most".*

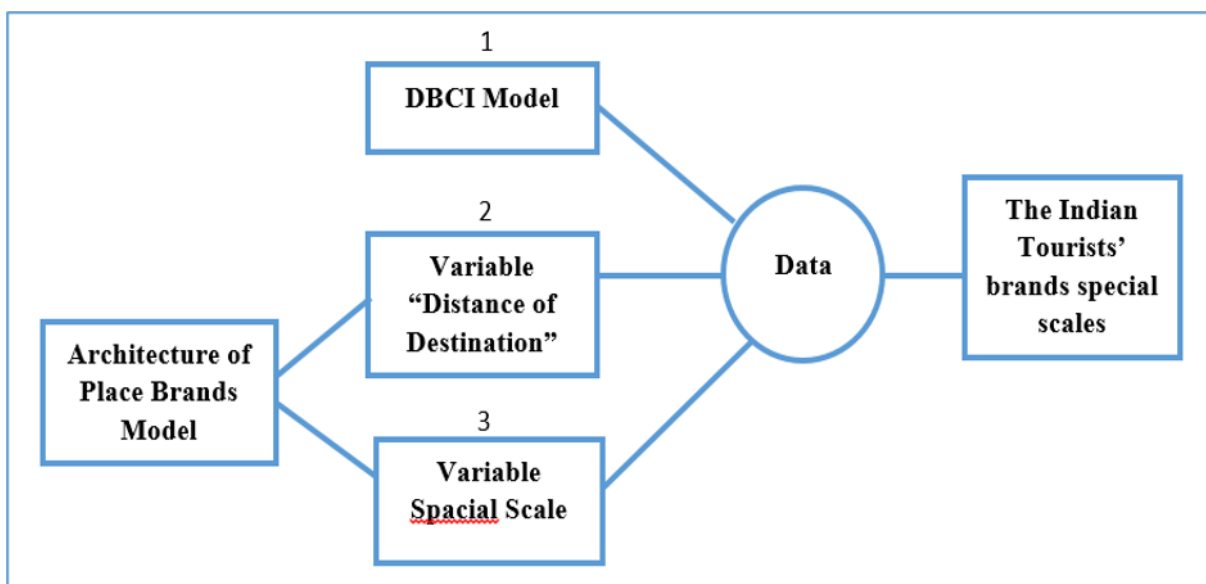
It's crucial to note that the questionnaire did not restrict the destination choice to any specific geographical or administrative category, such as city, region, country, island, etc. The lack of geographic cues was meant to avoid influencing respondents' free recall. Moreover, the exact wording of questionnaire questions was based on the literature on prospective and retrospective memories (Atance & O'Neill, 2001). In this context, when respondents should evoke their top-of-mind favourite destinations, they had to invoke previous experiences in those destinations, and their choice was clearly based on their retrospective memory. Likewise, when respondents should evoke their top-of-mind dream destinations, they were expected to project themselves forward in time to pre-experience the event of travelling to such place.

All the three Indian team-mates used the same tutorial of guidelines for data collection, including specific requirements for sampling and advices about the importance of a one-to-one approach, in order to avoid spreading the questionnaire through social media and to diversify the sample, aiming to ensure a satisfactory level of control and sample representativeness.

### Data analysis procedures

To obtain the Indian tourists' brand special scales, the data were mapped considering two theoretical models, favourite and dream destinations choice of DBCI model proposed by Cardoso et al. (2019a) and then the Indian perceptions' were mapped in tourist's brands special scales based on Brand architecture issues of place brands model developed by Hall (2010) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3:** Theoretical model of analysis procedures





The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> steps of Hall model were performed in two steps, the first one comprised the categorization of evoked information concerning the destinations into two distinct variables:

- Variable “distance of destination”, with four categories: (1) located in the respondent’s state; (2) in another Indian state; (3) in neighbouring country; (4) in another continent.
- Variable “spatial scale”, with five categories: (1) urban/local; (2) sub-regional; (3) regional (4) national; (5) supranational or continental.

The second step was the use of statistical procedures using SPSS.24, assessing the frequencies of destinations and testing the hypotheses using the non-parametric test of chi-square.

Table 1 shows the sample’s distribution regarding geographical location and gender. The total amount of responses was 736, but 39 were invalidated due to lack of necessary information or not appropriate content. The 697 valid responses count for 2.921 top-of-mind evoked destinations (697 dream destinations and 2.224 favourite destinations).

**Table 1:** Sample description

Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%
<b>State of residence</b>			<b>Gender</b>		
Delhi	224	33,1	Male	390	56
Maharashtra	198	28,4	Female	307	44
Himachal Pradesh	28	4,1	<b>Age</b>		
Karnataka	25	3,5	From 18 to 25	153	22
Gujarat	24	3,4	From 26 to 35	160	23
Punjab	23	3,3	From 36 to 45	181	26
Haryana	23	3,3	From 46 to 55	119	17
Madhya Pradesh	20	2,9	More than 56	84	12
Uttarakhand	14	2,0	<b>Mother tongue</b>		
Kerala	14	2,0	Hindi	291	41,9
Bengal	13	1,9	Marathi	205	29,0
Uttar Pradesh	13	1,9	Punjabi	22	3,3
Odisha	11	1,6	Kannada	21	3,1
Bhubaneswar	11	1,6	Malayalam	20	2,9
Rajasthan	10	1,2	Gujarati	25	4,0
Tamil Nadu	9	1,0	Bengali	31	3,9
Bihar	9	1,0	Urdu	22	3,0
Andhra Pradesh	8	1,0	Tamil	18	3,0
Jammu	8	1,1	Odiya	16	2,0
Jharkhand	7	1,0	<b>Other languages</b>		
Other states	5	0,7		26	4,0
Total	697	100			

## Results and findings

### *Indian dream destination's perceptions results*

Table 2 presents the top 30 dream destinations of Indian tourists, accounting for 73.6% of all distribution. In the top 10 of more desirable destinations for a future experience appear seven country brands (Switzerland, U.S.A., Australia, Dubai, Japan, Germany and New Zealand), two city brands (Paris and London) and one continental brand (Europe). It's worthy to note that in the top 30 there are just two regional brands: Jammu & Kashmir and Goa.

**Table 2:** Top 30 dream destinations of Indian tourists (weigh value = 73.6%)

Rank	Destination	N	%	Rank	Destination	N	%	Rank	Destination	N	%
1	Switzerland	72	10,3	11	Las Vegas	18	2,5	21	Rome	9	1,3
2	U.S.A.	50	7,1	12	Singapore	16	2,3	22	Spain	9	1,3
3	Europe	35	5,0	13	Jammu & Kashmir	15	2,1	23	Brazil	7	1,0
4	Paris	34	4,8	14	Thailand	12	1,7	24	Goa	7	1,0
5	Australia	29	4,2	15	France	10	1,5	25	Greece	7	1,0
6	London	25	3,6	16	Egypt	9	1,3	26	New York	7	1,0
7	Dubai	24	3,4	17	India	9	1,3	27	Venice	7	1,0
8	Japan	19	3,1	18	Italy	9	1,3	28	China	6	0,8
9	Germany	19	2,7	19	Malaysia	9	1,3	29	Ecuador	6	0,8
10	New Zealand	19	2,7	20	Maldives	9	1,3	30	Ireland	6	0,8

The top 30 favourite destinations of Indian tourists (Table 3) accounts for 54.4% of all distribution. Compared this last ranking with the previous one, it presents a diametrically opposite scenario: eight destinations in the top 10 favourite destinations are domestic brands, and Goa, Mumbai and Kerala stand out clearly as the most favourite destinations for Indian tourists. Moreover, in the ranking of Indians' favourite destinations there are many other domestic destinations, although some foreign destination brands are also represented in the list, namely: Dubai, USA, Maldives, Paris, Singapore, Switzerland, Australia, Japan, London and Bali.

**Table 3:** Top 30 favourite destinations of Indian tourists (weigh value = 54.4%)

Top 10	N	%	Top 11 – 20	N	%	Top 21 – 30	N	%
Goa	175	7,9	Jammu & Kashmir	37	1,6	Bangalore	19	0,9
Mumbai	121	5,5	Pune	34	1,5	Mahabaleshwar	19	0,9
Kerala	117	5,3	Himalaya	26	1,2	Australia	18	0,8
India	85	3,8	Uttara hand	26	1,2	Andaman/Nicobar	16	0,7
Dubai	60	2,7	U.S.A.	25	1,1	Japan	16	0,7
Rajasthan	54	2,4	Maldives	23	1,1	London	16	0,7
Delhi	53	2,4	Paris	23	1,1	Maharashtra	16	0,7
Thailand	45	2,0	Singapore	23	1,1	Ajanta & Ellora	15	0,7
Himachal Pradesh	39	1,8	Switzerland	22	1,0	Bali	15	0,7
Hyderabad	37	1,6	Jaipur	20	0,9	Chennai	15	0,7

Bearing in mind that respondents were asked to identify their favourite destination for specific tourism products, Table 4 presents a segmentation of the top 10 favourite destinations for each of these products.

**Table 4:** Top 10 favourite brand destinations for different segments of tourist experiences

<b>Top 10</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Top 10</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Top 10</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Top 10</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Seaside (N = 269)</b>		<b>Cultural (N = 204)</b>		<b>Mountain (N = 181)</b>		<b>Religious (N=142)</b>	
Goa	40,5	Rajasthan	12,7	Himalaya	10,6	India	9,2
Kerala	6,3	India	10,8	Jammu/Kashmir	7,3	Thailand *	6,3
Maldives *	5,6	Ajanta & Ellora	4,4	Himachal Pradesh	6,6	Vaishno Devi	5,6
Mumbai	5,2	Jaipur	3,9	Manali	6,0	Shirdi	4,9
Konkan	2,6	Ajanta Caves	3,4	Uttarakhand	6,0	Bodhgaya	4,2
Australia	2,2	Kerala	2,9	Switzerland *	5,3	Char Dham	2,8
Bali *	2,2	Maharashtra	2,5	Mahabaleshwar	3,3	Tirupati	2,8
Ganapatipule	2,2	Himachal Pradesh	2,0	Shimla	3,3	Diksh Bhumi	2,1
Andaman/Nicobar	1,9	Pune	2,0	Ladakh	2,6	Ellora Caves	2,1
Miami *	1,5	Egypt *	1,5	Leh	2,6	Gaya	2,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>70,2</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>46,1</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>53,6</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42,1</b>
<b>City tourism (N=137)</b>		<b>Ecotourism (N=115)</b>		<b>Shopping (N=103)</b>		<b>Business (N=91)</b>	
Mumbai	17,5	Kerala	19,0	Dubai *	24,3	Mumbai	22,0
Delhi	10,9	Mahabaleshwar	6,0	Mumbai	14,6	Pune	5,5
New York *	5,8	Himachal Pradesh	4,3	Delhi	11,7	U.S.A. *	5,5
Hyderabad	5,1	Switzerland *	4,3	Thailand *	6,8	Bangalore	4,4
Paris *	5,1	Lonar Lake	3,4	London *	5,8	Chennai	4,4
Bangalore	4,4	Jammu/Kashmir	2,6	Paris *	5,8	Delhi	4,4
Dubai *	3,6	North East India	2,6	Pune	5,8	Dubai *	4,4
Chandigarh	2,9	Tadoba Nat. Park	2,6	Hyderabad	2,9	Germany *	4,4
Jaipur	2,9	Africa *	1,7	Bangkok	1,9	Himachal Pradesh	3,3
Pune	2,9	Ajanta	1,7	Chandigarh	1,9	Singapore *	3,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>61,1</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>48,2</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>81,5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>61,6</b>

*Continue in the next page*

<b>Gastronomy (N=72)</b>		<b>Rural tourism (N=72)</b>		<b>Wellness (N=70)</b>		<b>Sport (N=58)</b>	
Hyderabad	16,7	Assam	5,6	Kerala	42,9	England *	9,5
India	8,3	Maharashtra	5,6	India	7,1	London *	9,5
Italy *	8,3	Rajasthan	5,6	Igatpuri	5,4	Australia *	7,1
Kerala	5,6	Hemalkasa	4,2	Haridwar	3,6	Pune	7,1
Kolhapur	5,6	India	4,2	Lavasa	3,6	China *	4,8
France *	4,2	Punjab	4,2	New Zealand *	3,6	Goa	4,8
Mumbai	4,2	Sri Lanka	4,2	Alleppey	1,8	Sunderban	4,8
Spain *	4,2	Andaman/ Nicobar	2,8	Bali *	1,8	U.S.A. *	4,8
Amritsar	2,8	Bihar	2,8	Bhutan *	1,8	Bali *	2,4
Delhi	2,8	Gujarat	2,8	China *	1,8	Brazil *	2,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,7</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42,0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>73,4</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>57,2</b>

\* Foreign destinations

An overall appreciation of the favourite destinations ranked at the top 10 of all these 12 product-based destinations allows to highlight the following findings:

- There is a clear predominance of domestic (Indian) destinations brands among the favourite destinations;
- Most of the favourite destinations are regional or local/city brands;
- Domestic destinations are most frequently associated with the following specific products: cultural tourism, rural tourism, mountain tourism, ecotourism, religious tourism, coastal tourism and health and wellness tourism;
- However, there is no clear predominance of domestic destinations when it concerns the following four products: urban tourism, gastronomic tourism, shopping tourism and business tourism;
- Finally, regarding sport destinations brands, the favourite tourist destinations are predominantly located abroad.

Summing up, it comes evident that there is a sharp differentiation between dream destinations and favourite destinations in terms of their special scales (Hypothesis 2<sub>(a-b)</sub>) and distance from respondents' place of residence (Hypothesis 1<sub>(a-b)</sub>).

As it is shown in the Table 5, dream destinations are mostly located far away in other continents, clearly confirming the Hypothesis 1<sub>(a-b)</sub>. Moreover, 89.7% of toponymical names evoked as dream destination correspond to international destination brands, located out of India. In contrast, just 38.8% of favourite destinations are located abroad.

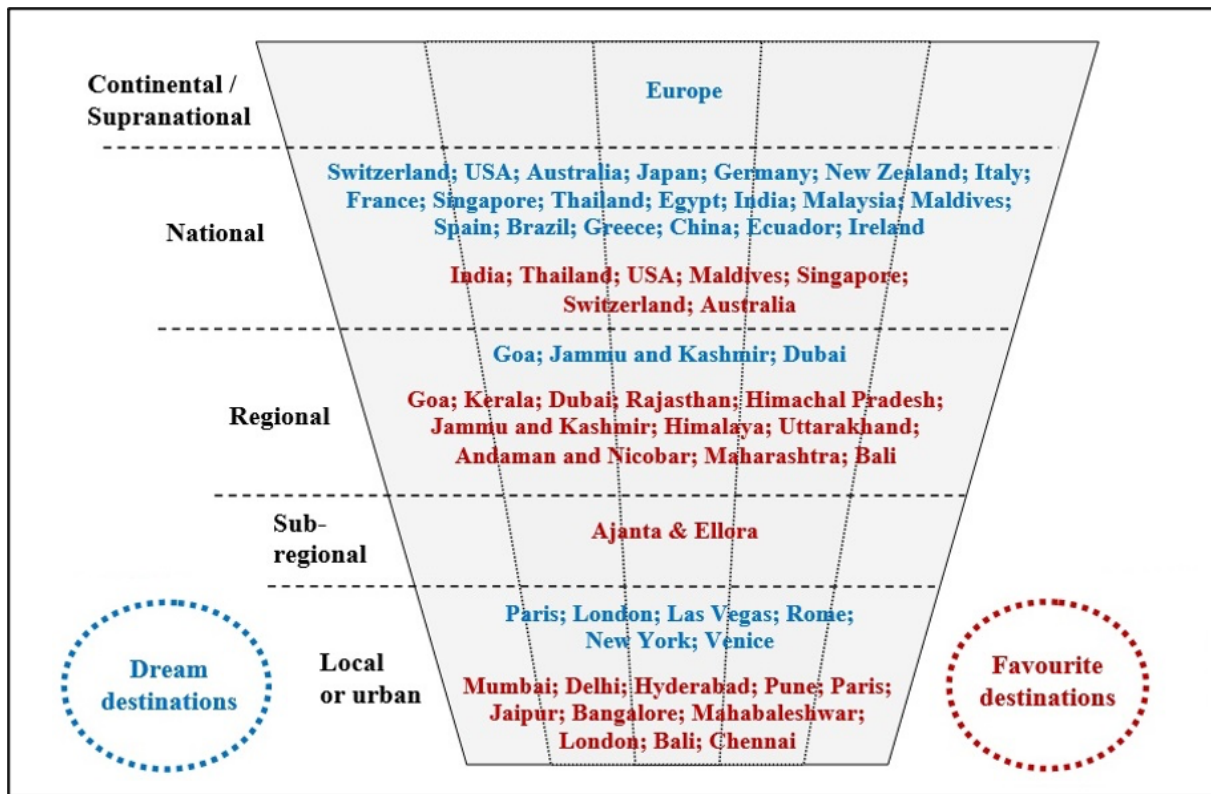
**Table 5:** Distance categorization of evoked destinations

<b>Type destinations</b>	<b>The evoked destination is located at:</b>				
	<b>of</b>	<b>Home's state</b>	<b>Another Indian state</b>	<b>Neighbouring country</b>	<b>Another continent</b>
<b>Dream</b>		0,4%	10,0%	14,2%	75,3%
<b>Favourite</b>		17,2%	43,9%	18,0%	20,9%

Chi square = 791.48; p <0,001

Based on the architecture of Hall's (2010) place branding model, it is also evident a sharp differentiation between dream and favourite destinations regarding the spatial scale of destinations.

**Figure 4:** Spatial scales of Indians' dream and favourite destinations



Source: authors' elaboration based on research findings

Figure 4 and Table 6 present clear evidence confirming the Hypothesis 2 (a-b) regarding the geographic scales used to categorize dream and favourite destinations: the former are predominantly related to country brands, in turn the latter are mostly local/city brands.

**Table 6:** Geographic scale of the destination

	Local	Sub-regional	Regional	National	Supranational
<b>Dream destinations (%)</b>	24.6	0.2	13.1	54.9	7.1
<b>Favourite destinations (%)</b>	43.3	3.7	31.1	19.6	2.2

Chi-square = 947.43; p < 0.001

## Discussion and conclusion

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The convergence and integration of two research issues (destination choice and customer-based brand equity for tourism destinations) into one more global approach can be a useful and heuristic solution to go further in the knowledge of tourists' destination preferences, on one hand, and to develop a monitoring system to assess the attractiveness of tourism destinations in a comparative setting, on the other. However, the referred integration requires a deep changing of the way to assess the CBBE-TD construct: instead of studying destination brand equity in isolation, focussing the research on a given tourism destination (or on a small set of destinations) chosen a priori by the researcher, the research focus should be how to grasp the mental processes through which destinations brands are chosen by consumers, according to their own criteria.

Changing the focus of research and asking tourists to inform their own preferred destinations (in terms of their favourite and dream destinations) and not limiting them to a specific geographic category or to a defined spatial scale, the task becomes a complex challenge that only can be approached using free-recall technics in the data collection. In counterpart, the benefits of this new approach largely compensate the enhanced effort to deal with the complexity of data collecting and processing a huge amount of semantic material. Actually, using dream and favourite destinations as triggers to assess the stronger destination brands for a given nationality of tourists (as it is the case of Indian tourists), it becomes possible to measure and mapping the comparative attractiveness of destination competing in the world market, using the brand equity construct; moreover, it allows to shed light on the structural differences in the imagery processing of destination images related to different kinds of tourist experiences.

Findings confirm previous studies (Dias & Cardoso, 2017; Cardoso *et al.*, 2019a) regarding some basic structural differences between dream and favourite destinations, as two desirable and strong brand categories, namely:

- Dream Destination are mostly located too far away from tourists' home (just 10.4% of Indian respondents located their dream destination in the domestic market) and, even more significantly, 75.3% of dream destinations require long-haul flights since they are located in Europe and Americas. In turn, as it was expected, favourite destinations are predominantly domestic destinations (around 60%), and just 20.9% of them are located in other continents
- Dream Destination are mostly related to the country brand category (54.9% of Indian respondents evoked countries as their dream destinations, and 24.6% referred local/city destinations; in turn, the regional scale corresponds just to 13.1%). In turn, geographic scales of favourite destinations are predominantly related to local and regional levels (74.3%), and just 19.6% of favourite destinations correspond to countries' names.

Although this study presents an evident limitation related to the representativeness of the sample, this research presents a new methodology to map tourists' brands spatial scales, a useful tool since, DMOs that are interested in monitoring the attractiveness of their own destinations can adopt the DBCI model and the proposed methodological tool as a useful framework for assessing brand equity for all competing destinations. In such comparative setting, they will achieve a better understanding of the outcomes of their own branding policy.

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# **Religious Tourism as a Factor in the Development of the Territory of Fátima – from the Island of Sicily to Fátima.**

**João Caldeira Heitor<sup>1</sup>, Eunice Duarte<sup>2</sup>**

## **Abstract**

Tourism materializes the movement of people to a destination. This article deals with the groups of pilgrims that travel from the island of Sicily to Fátima, after a journey of the pilgrim image of Our Lady of Fátima in their territory. Religious tourism suffered an increase in demand, causing challenges in terms of the development of the territories that have sanctuaries. In recent decades, on the island of Sicily and throughout Italy occurred several journeys of the pilgrim image of Our Lady of Fatima. We will analyse the routes of the images number 8, 13 and 6 in this island. We want to understand the relationship that exists between the passing of the pilgrim image of Our Lady of Fatima in the island of Sicily, and the subsequent visit of Sicilians in Fátima and its impacts to the development of this territory. In order to verify this relationship, the authors developed a survey of statistics data. We identified an increase in the number of groups of Sicilians in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fátima after the passage of the image on the island of Sicily. Through the number of nights that these organized groups remain in Fátima, above the average of international visitors the authors that these flows contribute to the economic development of this religious tourism destination.

**Keywords:** Religious Tourism, Territory Development, Fátima, Sicily Island



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## Introduction

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The World Tourism Organization (WTO), through the Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai, considers that the “Religious tourism can be one of the most effective tools to promote inclusive and sustainable development “(Rifai, 2015). Religious tourism assumes, itself, as the main product of all destinations that have sanctuaries. The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima presents itself as the largest European Marian sanctuary in the world. In 1947, the authorities of the Sanctuary of Fátima created the Pilgrim Image of Our Lady de Fátima. This image make a reverse movement of the traditional pilgrimages, visiting the people in their own territories, fostering, latter, if they go to the Sanctuary of Fátima. Since the creation of the Pilgrim Image, there has been an increase in the flow of visitors to the Sanctuary, coming from the places of these pilgrimages (Heitor, 2019). Due to the growing demand for this destination, new challenges arise in terms of development of this territory, with part of this demand arising due to the passage of the pilgrim image elsewhere.

This study aims to assess whether the incursions of the pilgrim image on the island of Sicily, generate, or not, motivations in the populations, leading them to visit the Sanctuary of Fátima. Considering that religious tourism and pilgrimage are motivating elements for the movement of people (Griffi & Raj, 2017), we analyse the flows of visitors from the island of Sicilia for the development of the territory of Fátima.

Methodologically, we analyse the travels of pilgrim images on the island of Sicily and the registers of pilgrims from the parishes of this island in the Sanctuary of Fátima, during the period 2010-2019. We use the registers of the authorities of the Sanctuary related to the pilgrim images and the organized groups that integrate the religious ceremonies of the Sanctuary, because they are the only registers that exist. In this way, we validate the reliability of the information and the objective intention of those who integrate these groups. Analysing the number of groups that comes to Fátima from many countries, after the passage of the pilgrim image, we found many groups that come from Sicilia. This study investigates the number of days they pass in this city and the period of the year, they come, establishing its importance to the development of the territory, as international visitors. Through these data we support the investigation, looking for useful information that allow to trigger other analyses (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 2008), which, in this case, allow support the present study.

## Pilgrimage, Religious Tourism and development territorial

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### From pilgrimage to religious tourism

The pilgrimage arrogates a phenomenon of a spiritual nature, representing Man’s approach to God, allowing the pilgrim’s baptismal renewal, by exposing his weaknesses, by challenging his physical strengths, justifying sacrifice, in a process of reconciliation with divine strength (Heitor, 2019).

As the experience of faith materializes in places where believers feel they are closer to their divinities, the sanctuaries assume themselves as places that invite people to wander in their direction, to visit them and to establish an individual encounter, in the connection between heaven and earth, motivating, tendently, the devotees to these places (Eliade, 1999; Di Giovine and Elsner, 2015; Griffin & Razaq, 2017).

Constituting religious motivation as the main cause that leads a person to leave home, making trips driven by faith, fuelled by belief, looking for answers and inner reflections, pilgrimage is assumed to be “a universal phenomenon and of all religions”, which expresses “a time of strong spirituality, a transition from the ephemeral to the real, from death to life, from man to divinity” (Dantas, 2007, p. 93).

For Tomljenović & Dukić, 2017 the pilgrimage can be defined as a replacement of the profane through spiritual life, with individuals interconnecting with other pilgrims (Smith, 2013). Presently, places, forms and desires for pilgrimage are multiplying “not only to satisfy the appetite for novelty”, nor for the pleasure of joy and the delight of the beautiful, but with the objective of “re-inscribing the unity of the human being walking through, arriving, leaving, always beyond afterlife” (Lima, 2009, p. 411).

In addition to the traditional religious pilgrimage (Ross, 2010), there is a new pilgrimage, “not necessarily related to religion”, with the “traveller” looking for “spiritual transformation through experience, learning new and different things” (Tomljenović & Dukić, 2017, p. 6).

In this way, pilgrimages became the genesis of religious tourism. However, religious tourism and pilgrimage are distinguished. “In all religions, pilgrimages have always been high points for obtaining the expression of faith”, even throughout what human history tells us, with people leaving their homes and walking, becoming pilgrims, returning the house with “somehow, a new identity” (Padilha, 1993, p. 14). As such, Dantas (2007, p. 93) puts the focus on the pilgrim by arguing, “every pilgrim is or can be, at the same a tourist, but a tourist is not a pilgrim”.

Religious tourism had its origin as a designation when it was used by “tourism agents and many elements of the Church to characterize movements that combine tourism and religion”, where the “main motivation is based on the assets of the Church (whether material or spiritual)” (Tomljenović & Dukić, 2017, p. 1).

Religious tourism is being a new form of religious mobility, distinct from the pilgrimage that nevertheless assumes a form of tourist mobility. Indeed, tourists with sacred and profane motivations visit thousands of places that have an important artistic and architectural legacy, resulting from the existence of religions and beliefs (Dias, 2010).

According to Heitor (2019, p. 64) religious tourism comes from motivated tourist activities by spiritual search and religious practice in places that are related to official religions, these range from the oriental, Afro-Brazilian, Spiritistic, Protestant, Catholic origin. These religions support religious practice through “rituals and the priesthood, in churches, in temples and in places of worship”. With the movement of people to these places, we can consider that it is through the understanding of their motivations for traveling that we understand classifying if they are or not religious tourists.

From a more general point of view, it is consensual to say that this product covers all types of trips that the individual makes, having as its main motivation religion, the final destination a religious place (Souza and Corrêa, 2000; Ray & Morpeht, 2007; Santos, 2008; Durán-Sánchez, 2018).

It should also be noted that according to Griffin & Raj (2017) during the tourism conference religious event of WTO, in Fatima, in 2017, a new vision emerged about the growing recognition of the religious tourism, as an integral part of the tourism sector, in particular, by national and international agencies. However, the authors warn the need for agencies, organizations, academics and websites starting to get information about visitors/tourists, but also, about the experiences they offer, so that it is possible to begin to completely understand and evaluate the dimension of this tourist genre, such as understanding what are the most wanted forms of travel. The recognition by the OMT of the lack of data or studies reveals that it is important to study the territories that receive religious tourists.

## **Religious tourism in territorial development**

The development of many territories resulted from its attractiveness as a tourist destination with religious component covered by pilgrims. Beyond faith, what attracts the most tourists in terms of heritage is “the fact that the buildings are sacred sites” (Antunes, 2016, p. 275). The offer made

available in sanctuaries, monasteries and organizations based in sanctuary cities, such as “prayer, liturgy, spiritual conversations, creative workshops, contemplation, meditation and spiritual practices” (Tomljenović & Dukić, 2017, p. 5) alongside spiritual retreats, which foster and enable people’s personal development, combining well-being and spirituality (Heitor, 2019).

However, by relating the development of the Fátima territories to the tourist activity, it becomes vital to explain how it is understood by the OMT (2003). It is imperative to take into account a model economic development that allows improvement of the quality of life of hostesses communities; improvement of the quality of life with economic and social benefits not only for residents, but also for companies, leading to the promotion of high quality in the visitor experience; maintaining the quality of the environment on which not only the hostess community depends, but also the visitor; ensuring equitable distribution of both benefits and costs; encouraging understanding of the impacts of tourism on the cultural, human and material environment; improving health and social infrastructure.

Sachs (1993) indicates that sustainable development must be implemented by a methodology of planning, and should be based on the following principles: social sustainability (based on the establishment of a development process that leads to a standard growth, with a reduction in current social differences), cultural sustainability (consolidated in the need to look for local solutions through the potential of the specific cultures, taking into account the cultural identity and the local way of life, as well as the participation of the population in decision-making processes and in the formulation of development), ecological sustainability (supported by the theory that sustainable development tourism should limit the consumption of natural resources, and cause little damage to life sustainment systems), economic sustainability (enabling economic growth for current generations, as well as the responsible handling of natural resources that should have the role of meeting the needs of future generations), spatial sustainability (based on more balanced geographical distribution of tourist settlements in order to avoid exceeding the carrying capacity), political sustainability (based on the negotiation of the diversity of interests involved in fundamental issues ranging from local to global).

From the perspective of local development through tourism, at the level of economic sustainability Clarke & Raffaf (2015) consider that it is important to sell local products, thus promoting shape the development of the local economy.

In Fátima, the Sanctuary is the main “pole of attraction for large human masses and boosting of the local and regional economy” (Prazeres & Carvalho, 2015, p. 1146), sustaining most of the economic activities that are interconnected with religious offerings and with the touristic development. The Sanctuary of Fátima and the respective flow of visitors to this location dictate the subsistence of the commercial activity, the social development of the parish and the municipality (Prazeres & Carvalho, 2015, p. 1146). Aware of this reality, their managers have advocated policies for the loyalty of pilgrims and tourists to the place, conserving, simultaneously, its identity (Heitor, 2019).

Fátima assumed itself as a center of gravity of urban nature through the power of initiative and of attraction for the religious and spiritual component. This explains why we found in Fatima several religious institutes and congregations. At present and according to Leiria/Fátima Diocese, there are 88 diocesans, social, schools, catholic congregations and structures. From this number, 66 institutes and congregations have religious and spiritual component of this territory. “The emergence of three schools: the Centro de Estudos de Fátima, Colégio São Miguel and Colégio Sagrado Coração de Maria, resulted from the religious initiative, obtained adherence by the resident population in this locality, but also from people from other parishes in the municipality of Ourém as well as other neighbors” (Heitor, 2019, p.81). These three schools have been attended, during the last four decades, by thousands of students from the municipalities of Ourém, Alcanena, Batalha, Leiria, Alvaiázere, Ansião, Porto de Mós. The expansion of the Professional School of Ourém to Fátima, through the School of Hospitality of Fátima, highlighted the dynamics of territorial development “as response to the training needs of human resources for the existing hotel and tourism offer” (Heitor, 2019, p.82).

This territorial dynamic occurred “due to the growing internationalization of the religious offer and of the economic agents, in the context of globalization”. Fatima’s attractiveness in the international dimension became fundamental for the economic sustainability, through the presence of visitors along the year. It is justified in this way that “a Sanctuary in a country with just over 10 million inhabitants, in a city of around 13 thousand inhabitants, peripheral in relation to Europe” attracts, according to the “regional tourism entity of the Center, more than 5 million visitors per year” (Heitor, 2019, p.83).

Today we know that Fátima is visited by pilgrims, religious or spiritual tourists, moved by cultural or patrimonial issues (Heitor, 2019). But we don't know the needs of those who visit Fátima. To enhance the dimension of Fatima in the world, to develop the economy and the religious services, to response to the necessities of pilgrims and tourists that visit the city and go to the Sanctuary, it is necessary to obtain statistical data refer to the origin of people, their motivations and other set of information that allows to structure the offer and develop the territory. This is a fundamental tool for religious authorities, for the commercial sector and for public entities.

## **The position of the pilgrim image to the territorial development**

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Fátima is a place with greater demand by pilgrims and visitors of the so-called religious tourism. It is important to contextualize its significance to the geographical space that the present analysis alludes – the Sanctuary of Fátima. The pilgrimages took place from the beginning, around the image of Our Lady, throughout the year, with special focus between the months of May to October (period in the apparitions are celebrated), calling themselves anniversary pilgrimages, occurring on the 12th and 13th of these six months (referring to the six apparitions).

Fátima is pilgrim and represents the pilgrimage that is celebrated in the faith itself and/or in the spiritual objectives that the pilgrim takes on when disconnecting from the profane world, establishing a silent connection with its religious icon and with himself, in a process of reflection, meditation and prayer (Heitor, 2019).

As a religious tourism destination, Fátima comes from the called Marian apparitions, which constituted as manifestations of the extraordinary plan, sending the subject to the experience of the religious as a spiritual manifestation.

On the 13 of May, of 1947 the authorities of the Sanctuary authorized the creation of the pilgrim image of Our Lady of Fátima. The first itinerary carried out by the pilgrim image began, through Europe, after the World War II, to Maastricht (Holland). This pilgrimage caused a greater impact in the territories, and generated many requests from various locations (parishes, dioceses, archdioceses and Marian movements) for the image of Our Lady of Fátima could visit then. With the growth of these requests coming from the most diverse locations in the world, the Sanctuary authorities had the need to create replicas from the original pilgrim image. From that date until today, there are 12 pilgrim images on constantly pilgrimage in different countries in the world, in close articulation with the parishes and dioceses of the respective territories.

This image carries the message, the cult and the history of Fátima, in a process of growing internationalization in each place where she goes. It is in this way that Fatima asserts itself as the center of a system of global virtual flows, which transcend its inhabitants, its visitors, expanding its space of influence in successive levels of integration and diffusion, continuous, in the places where it passes. In this sense, as Heitor (2019) wrote, the passage of the pilgrim image it is assumed as a “visiting card” that invite pilgrims to visit the place where it is originally: the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fátima.

## Analysis and discussion of results

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In the last decades, throughout Italy and in the island of Sicily there have been several journeys of the pilgrim images of Our Lady of Fátima. Analysing only the image paths on the island of Sicily, we found that among 2010 to 2019 they circulated in the Diocese of Palermo and in the Parishes of Ragusa, Siracusa, Messina, Catania, Trapani, Agrigento, Mazara del Vallo and Caltanissetta. Establishing the relationship between pilgrimage on this island, along the years, and the consequent return to Fátima, through data of the Sanctuary, which are the only registers that exist in terms of visitors to this tourist destination, we found 122 direct relationships, highlighting in this work only a few examples.

In these ten years, three images have been on the island of Sicily: image number 8 (between 2010 and 2014) and images number 13 and 6 (between 2015 and 2019). Crossing the period of the visit of the pilgrim image number 8 and the presence of organized groups of this origins in the Sanctuary of Fátima we find that in 2010, six months after the passage of the image in the Diocese of Palermo, for five days, there was a visit of fifty-two people, from this diocese, to the Sanctuary, with subsequent returns, between 2012 and 2015, with a hundred and twenty; fifty; twenty nine and twenty four people, respectively. Twelve months after passage of the image in the Parish of Messina, for three days, fifty-six people, from this parish, visited this city, with subsequent returns in 2012, 2013, 2014, with thirty-five, thirty-four and forty people, correspondingly. Eleven months after passing the Trapani Parish, for four days, fifty-five people, from this place, were in Fátima, with subsequent returns in 2012 and 2014, with forty-four and nineteen people, correspondingly. Twelve months after visiting the Caltanissetta Parish for three days, there was a visit of forty-five people, from this place, to this city, with returns later in 2012 and 2013, with fifty-twenty-two people, respectively.

Crossing the period of the visit of the pilgrim image number 13, between March and July 2015, and the pilgrim image number 6, in June 2016, on the island of Sicily, and the presence of groups organized from these origins in the Sanctuary of Fátima we find fifty-six direct relationships, highlighting, some examples.

In 2015, twelve months after the image passed through the Diocese of Palermo, for seven days, a visit of twenty-four people, from this diocese, to the Sanctuary, with returns later, between 2015 and 2019, with twenty-two; twenty; twenty-nine; eighty; eighty; forty seven; forty-four; thirty-five; forty-five; forty-five; thirty-five; forty; twenty-five; forty-sixty-six people, respectively. Only from this Diocese, between 2016 and 2019, there were six hundred and seventy-seven people, in organized groups, after the passages of the pilgrim images. Fourteen months after the image passed through the Parish of Messina, for seven days, twenty-three people from this parish visited this city, with subsequent returns in 2017, with sixty; thirty-seven; thirty-five; thirty-four and forty people, correspondingly.

Twelve months after passing the Catania Parish, for seven days, forty-five people, from this place, were in Fátima, with subsequent returns between 2017 and 2019, with fifty-seven; twenty-seven; thirty-two; twenty-one; sixty-five; thirty-four; forty and five; twelve; one hundred; forty-three; twenty-four; sixty-two; fifty-one; sixty and nine; forty-six; thirty-seven; one hundred; forty-one; fifty; sixty-one; twenty; sixteen and thirty people. From this parish alone, between 2016 and 2019, there were a thousand and forty-three people. Eleven months after passing through the Parish of Trapani for three days, forty people, from this place, were in Fátima, with later returns in 2017, with fifty-thirteen people.

In the analysis carried out, we find that the visits tend to occur, eight to twelve months after the passage in the pilgrim image. The level of permanence of these groups in Fátima, in the last ten years stands at 5.43 nights, more than doubling the average for this tourist destination. Since 2015 there has been a substantial increase in the number of nights and people from the Sicilian island in Fatima. Interestingly, visits do not follow the overwhelming trend of the Fátima visitor, which is concentrated in the months of May and October, occurring more in June, July and August, although there are records in other months of the year.

However, despite the existing demand after the passage of the pilgrim image, the data obtained makes it possible to understand that the relationship between the image and visitation to the Sanctuary is still at an early stage, at the level of demand. Since the total number of visits during the study period was 4684 people, it does not allow an assessment of the several dimensions of sustainability proposed by Sachs (1993) the social, cultural, ecological, spatial, political, only allowing analyse economic sustainability.

## Conclusions

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From the apparitions of Our Lady to the three little shepherds, the territory of Fátima developed its identity as a religious tourism destination. In an initial phase, there were no tourist support services or organized promotion as a tourist product. Over the years and in the last decades there has been a change in the hotel offer and in the provision of services related to this tourist destination.

Fátima asserted herself in the world through the image of Our Lady. When starting a process of symbolic mobility and with high adhesion on the part of people, the creation of the Pilgrim Image of Our Lady of Fátima was a novelty of the religious ideology worldwide. The Sanctuary considered that it would make sense to send the pilgrim image to several parishes. This dynamic generated the creation of several routes of those images.

Creating a motivation for the dislocation of people from the island of Sicily to the Sanctuary of Fátima, after having attended ceremonies with the pilgrim image, proving the strength of the image and its dimension. When generating these wishes, by motivating the movement of people from foreign countries to the Sanctuary, the image pilgrim fulfils her mission with her audience.

We identified the images that visited the island of Sicily (numbers 8, 13 and 6), as well as the respective parishes and proceeded to the analysis of the Sicilians groups who visited Fátima, after the passage of the pilgrim images on this island, between the years 2010 to 2019, to establish the proper connection.

In the correspondences found and marked, it is confirmed that there is a direct relationship between the passage of the pilgrim image and a subsequent groups that visit Fátima. In total 4684 people arrived in Fátima, in groups, from the island of Sicily, between 2011 and 2019. An average of 520 people per year with a stay ranging from one to eight days. The average of 520 per year people moving from the island of Sicily to Fátima, for religious and spiritual reasons, embodied in the phenomenon of religious tourism, alone represents a high number of visitors considering its geographical origin and population density. However, it is in the number of days and nights that these numbers gain relevance and added dimension, in view of the high permanence in the accommodation units and in periods of the year when the affluence to the Sanctuary of Fátima is tinier: November, December, January and February.

In this sense, organized groups from the island of Sicily contribute directly to local development, through the religious component, with positive effects on economic activity, on the dialectics itself of the structures that constitute the tourist offer of Fátima and in the development of the territory by conjugation of all these elements.

## Appendix

Percurso Imagem Peregrina				Grupos Registados no Santuário de Fátima			
Data/Dias	Imagem	Localidade	País	Data/Dias	Número pessoas	Paróquias Localidade	País
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	23/27 maio 2011	18	Paróquia Mª S. Immacolata Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	23/27 maio 2011	18	Paróquia Mª Sta Immacolata Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	24/26 junho 2011	44	S. Antonio Termini Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	27/31 agosto 2011	52	Paróquia S. Trinit Magione Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	22/24 setembro	42	Diocese de Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	27 julho 2012	120	Diocese de Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	25/27 junho 2013	50	Paróquia Sta Cristina – Gela	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	30 julho a 2 agosto 2013	44	Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	24/27 agosto 2013	40	Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	25/29 janeiro 2014	26	Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	7/10 julho 2014	22	Paróquia Montreal Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	25 julho a 28 julho 2014	55	Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	1/3 agosto 2014	29	Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	25/27 janeiro 2015	45	Carini Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	2/3 maio 2015	24	Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Diocese Palermo	Itália	25 julho a 1 agosto 2015	24	Palermo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Ragusa Sicília	Itália	12/19 agosto 2011	39	Ragusa	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Siracusa Sicília	Itália	16/20 agosto 2011	30	Siracusa	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Siracusa Sicília	Itália	18/19 julho 2014	25	Siracusa	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Messina	Itália	5/7 julho 2011	56	Messina	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Messina	Itália	13/15 julho 2011	40	Pompei	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Messina	Itália	26 julho a 2 agosto 2011	43	Paróquia St Mª Catena e St Mª Visitazione	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Messina	Itália	12/16 maio 2012	35	Messina	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Messina	Itália	24/25 agosto 2012	51	Calabria Messina	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Messina	Itália	12/16 maio 2013	34	Guido Messina	Itália

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junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Messina	Itália	26/27 julho 2014	40	S. Nicola di Bari Madonna Pace Messina	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Messina	Itália	21/25 agosto 2014	27	Santuário Ecce Homo Messina	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	19/22 julho 2011	46	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	19/21 julho 2011	20	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	19/23 julho 2011	40	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	22/26 julho 2011	25	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	22/26 julho 2011	128	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	26/28 julho 2011	18	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	26/29 julho 2011	20	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	19/22 julho 2011	33	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	29 julho a 2 agosto 2011	34	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	31 julho a 2 agosto 2011	42	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	9/16 julho 2013	44	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	24/25 julho 2013	32	Agessind	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	4/6 agosto 2013	30	San Antonio Padova	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	9/14 julho 2014	32	Paróquia Madonna di Fátima	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	15/22 julho 2014	35	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	15/18 julho 2014	38	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	25/29 julho 2014	20	Catania	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	5/8 agosto 2014	15	Oby Whan	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Catania	Itália	23/27 agosto 2014	40	Madre S. Giovanni Battista La Punta	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Trapani	Itália	31 maio a 3 junho 2011	55	Paróquia San Giuseppe di Alcamo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Trapani	Itália	20/22 outubro 2011	44	Trapani	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Trapani	Itália	18/20 fevereiro 2012	44	San Giovanni	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Trapani	Itália	11/14 junho 2012	32	Paróquia Nª Sr.ª de Fátima de Trapani	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Trapani	Itália	4 maio 2014	19	Alcamo, Trapani	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Agrigento	Itália	18 agosto 2012	21	Agrigento	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Agrigento	Itália	19/24 julho 2014		Agrigento	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Agrigento	Itália	22/29 agosto 2014	33	Agrigento	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8ª	Mazara del Vallo	Itália	3/5 junho 2015	23	Preghiera Alleati dei Piccoli di Petrosino	Itália

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junho dezembro 2010	8 <sup>a</sup>	Caltanissetta	Itália	9/16 agosto 2011	36	Caltanissetta	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8 <sup>a</sup>	Caltanissetta	Itália	17/19 agosto 2011	45	Paróquia S. Paulo	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8 <sup>a</sup>	Caltanissetta	Itália	20/25 outubro 2012	50	Paróquia Santa Flavia	Itália
junho dezembro 2010	8 <sup>a</sup>	Caltanissetta	Itália	1/5 abril 2013	22	Caltanissetta	Itália
março/julho 2015	13 <sup>o</sup>	Palermo	Itália	02/03 maio 2015	34	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015	13 <sup>o</sup>	Mazara del Vallo	Itália	03/05 junho 2015	23	Mazara del Vallo	Itália
março/julho 2015	13 <sup>o</sup>	Palermo	Itália	25 julho a 01 agosto 2015	24	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015	13 <sup>o</sup>	Messina	Itália	11/17 setembro 2015	23	Messina	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup>	Palermo	Itália	13/16 julho 2016	22	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	16/23 julho 2016	45	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup>	Siracusa	Itália	22/24 julho 2016	27	Siracusa	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	28/30 julho 2016	57	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	13/19 agosto 2016	27	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Noto	Itália	19/23 agosto 2016	40	Noto	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	20/27 agosto 2016	32	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	03/06 setembro 2016	21	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Palermo	Itália	15/18 fevereiro 2017	20	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Palermo	Itália	12/14 abril 2017	29	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Agrigento	Itália	19/23 junho 2017	31	Agrigento	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Messina	Itália	24/25 junho 2017	60	Messina	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Trapania	Itália	03/05 julho 2017	40	Trapania	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Palermo	Itália	19/26 julho 2017	80	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Palermo	Itália	19/26 julho 2017	80	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	24/26 julho 2017	65	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Agrigento	Itália	24/26 julho 2017	31	Agrigento	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	24/26 julho 2017	34	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	27/29 julho 2017	45	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	29 julho/05 agosto 2017	12	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Palermo	Itália	30 julho/02 agosto 2017	47	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	02/05 agosto 2017	100	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13 <sup>o</sup> 6 <sup>o</sup>	Catânia	Itália	09/15 agosto 2017	43	Catânia	Itália

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março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	12/16 agosto 2017	24	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	16/19 agosto 2017	62	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	19/26 agosto 2017	51	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Messina	Itália	20/23 agosto 2017	37	Messina	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	23/29 agosto 2017	69	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	26/30 agosto 2017	46	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	30 agosto/02 setembro 2017	37	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	06/09 setembro 2017	100	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Trapania	Itália	12/16 setembro 2017	50	Trapania	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Trapania	Itália	25/26 setembro 2017	13	Trapania	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Messina	Itália	28/30 setembro 2017	20	Messina	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Agrigento	Itália	18/21 outubro 2017	26	Agrigento	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Palermo	Itália	14/17 novembro 2017	44	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	11/15 junho 2018	41	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Palermo	Itália	25/28 janeiro 2018	35	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Mazara del Vallo	Itália	06/09 abril 2018	40	Mazara del Vallo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Palermo	Itália	21/24 abril 2018	45	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Palermo	Itália	03/06 julho 2018	45	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Siracusa	Itália	25/27 julho 2018	20	Siracusa	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Siracusa	Itália	11/18 agosto 2018	40	Siracusa	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	18/25 agosto 2018	50	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Palermo	Itália	23/28 outubro 2018	35	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Palermo	Itália	23/26 setembro 2018	40	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Palermo	Itália	25/27 janeiro 2019	25	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Caltanissetta	Itália	21/25 fevereiro 2019	35	Caltanissetta	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Mazara del Vallo	Itália	12/13 maio 2019	50	Mazara del Vallo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Noto	Itália	13/18 junho 2019	30	Noto	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Caltanissetta	Itália	17/20 julho 2019	15	Caltanissetta	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	20/24 julho 2019	61	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	07/10 agosto 2019	20	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Siracusa	Itália	10/17 agosto 2019	20	Siracusa	Itália

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março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	21/24 agosto 2019	16	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Palermo	Itália	02/05 setembro 2019	40	Palermo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Mazara del Vallo	Itália	22/25 setembro 2019	25	Mazara del Vallo	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Catânia	Itália	14/17 outubro 2019	30	Catânia	Itália
março/julho 2015 junho 2016	13° 6°	Palermo	Itália	08/11 novembro 2019	66	Palermo	Itália

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