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## PILGRIMS AND PILGRIMAGES: FATIMA, SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA AND TAIZÉ

### *Abstract*

This article explores pilgrimage as a phenomenon of contemporary religious rituality. Paradoxically, pilgrimages have contributed to the reinforcement of traditional churches and the reproduction of their members' practices on the one hand, and, on the other, to the expression of individual and privatised religiosity, close to the new conceptual perspectives on spirituality. The article analyzes three cases, namely Catholic central destiny places for pilgrims, such as Fatima, Santiago de Compostela and Taizé. The data consist of documental and statistical research as well as pre-existing surveys. The article argues that there are different levels of Catholic socio-religious differentiation in each place of pilgrimage, where Fatima comes at the top and Taizé at the bottom, with Santiago in the middle. There seems to be a relation between dominant types of pilgrims and the level of religious institutionalization of each Catholic place. The aim of the article is to give a theoretical contribution to the analysis of contemporary pilgrimages.<sup>1</sup>

Key words: Pilgrimages, socio-religious differentiation, individual religiosity

### Introduction

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, the sociological debate on the resurgence of religion in social life gradually gained importance. Generically, the new formulations point to religious recomposition in the Western world which cannot be distinguished from the paradoxical nature of modernity. Various works by French sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Léger (1993, 1999, 2003) particularly focus on this seeming contradiction. The author describes modernity as a period in which inherited religious memory is combined with rationality and new myths, or, in other words, the religious universe has simply reconfigured itself and is far from being in danger of extinction.

Belgium sociologist of religion Liliane Voyé (1993), concentrating particularly on Catholicism in Western Europe, defines diversity as the dominant trait of religion in post-modernity. The author affirms that we are living in a time of «emancipated and diverse religiosity» (1993: 504), following the previous period characterised by «church religion». The religious universe decomposes itself, and then recomposes itself, showing restorative tendencies in which rites appear as one of its fundamental

components. In the frame of the new patterns which gradually transform the religious panorama, another French sociologist of religion, Françoise Champion (1990, 1993), has coined the imaginative expression «mystic-esoteric nebulosity» to characterise the admirable new world of beliefs, practices and lifestyles which are proliferating in Western religious, para-religious, para-scientific and philosophical groups, or simply in each individual's private and subjective sphere.

Another crucial reference is Paul Heelas' and Linda Woodhead's *Spiritual Revolution* (2005) and the repositioning of religion in the modern world via the means of new spiritualities related to New Age. This is named «inner-life spirituality» and «spiritualities of life» (Heelas 2007), as opposed to a transcending spirituality related to a «church-oriented spirituality». Accordingly to their point of view, spirituality is progressively taking the place of traditional religion, and the two dimensions are incompatible. According to Italian sociologist Giuseppe Giordani (2009), for Heelas and Woodhead «true life establishes the origin and the place of spirituality, and this in conflict with any type of relationship with the sacred»(2009: 229). It means that religion is the institutional dimension of the relationship with the sacred while spirituality is related to the freedom of choice of the subject.

Contrary to Heelas and Woodhead, Clark Roof (1999) considers that the religious and spiritual dimensions are not mutually exclusive. In spite of using the term «spirituality» in contrast to religion, which is considered rigid and external, Roof recognizes there is a type of re-positioning of the traditional religious institutions in order to adapt themselves to the new demands of the believers. Also Kimmo Ketola (2007), questioning the spiritual revolution in Finland, argues that «late modernity results in the empowerment of individuals in many areas of life, religion included. This, in turn, results in the weakening of traditional institutional religions, but may also cause the appearance of new forms of religion that are more adapted to modern conditions» (2007: 38).

In the present article, Thomas Luckmann's (1974/1963) view on church related religion and spirituality remains a useful conceptualization in order to analytically differentiate between religion and church. Defining religion as a system of transcendental meanings, Luckmann allows us to see religion as many types of beliefs and activities (Andersen, Gundelach and Lüchau 2008: 66). The problem is that he sees non-churched religion as a private issue. In my approach to contemporary pilgrimages, I will argue that behind the motivations of the pilgrims there is simultaneously a private dimension and a collective one.

A particularly interesting aspect which has been the object of innovations and updates is that of rituals, especially ones of an exceptional nature, such as pilgrimages. These are actions which reach beyond the fulfilment of religious «obligations» imposed by institutions. Especially in countries of Southern Europe, this aspect still remains confined to the sociology of popular religiosity. Only recently it has been the object of studies that focus on the individualisation of belief, religious *bricolage* and new spiritualities which are typical of modernity and globalisation. Although Portugal belongs to Southern Europe, both geographically and culturally, it has since the early 1990s been possible to identify a diversification of typically popular Catholic pilgrimages. This is true for three different cases, the pilgrimage to Fatima, the reappearance

of pilgrimages and the modernisation of the medieval pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, as well as the search for a new, distinct destination such as that of the Taizé community in France.

## The role of ritual in the new religious landscape

A rite is above all an action, a modality of doing, a combination of embodied forms of conduct (Maisonneuve 1988), which do not necessarily require intellectual understanding. A rite is a gesture, and, being so, it is a language and a sign inscribed on the body. Following the classical approaches of Victor and Edith Turner (1990, 1978), Liliane Voyé (1995) states:

[It is a] mode of communication and relation with others or with a transcendence, it marks the initiation, inauguration, and regeneration. It is a gesture which generates memory, which commemorates, and inscribes itself in a project (1995: 106–107).

In a religious context, the most common rites are those of passage. In Southern European countries, rites such as baptism, weddings and funerals have seen a decrease, but they are still common when compared to other dominical rites such as communion. The Catholic wedding is one of the most obvious examples. Studies have revealed that many couples (if not the majority) choose this type of ceremony without adhering to the Church's conception of marriage and the dogma related to it. The couple may have lived together, used contraceptive methods, be in favour of the right to a divorce or abortion. It is therefore a good indicator of the phenomenon of compartmentalization (Dobbelaere 1999).

Various rites are typical of pilgrimages, such as the route followed, stops, touching sacred objects, offerings and *ex-votos*. The expression *ex-votos* means to offer something «as a result of a promise». Actually, the «*ex-votos*» are the most important feature of traditional Roman Catholic pilgrimages. Different kind of gifts can be offered to Our Lady or to a Saint: candles, pictures, photos of a beloved one who returned safely from war, wedding gowns, military uniforms or sculptures in wax of one part of the body (legs, arms, breasts, heads etc.). All these things are promised in a moment of despair and offered once a positive answer is obtained.

In the context of the religious pastiche of Christian rites, it is worth noting the resurgence of popular religiosity, which is strongly linked to pilgrimages. Liliane Voyé (1995) explains this phenomenon of re-emergence and re-legitimation as a reactive consequence to certain decades of the twentieth century in which popular religious practices were delegitimised under the weight of a secularising, rational discourse of a scientific and Marxist nature.

The pontificate of Jean-Paul II was considerably important for this process of re-legitimation, due to the beatifications performed (such as that of the shepherds of Fatima) and the reaffirmation of the Cult of the Virgin Mary. In Portugal, perhaps the most Catholic country of Southern Europe, Fatima is the most important example of popular pilgrimages, and it has been mediated both nationally and internationally.

However, Fatima is not the only pilgrimage destination: many other religious sanctuaries remain across the country, especially in the North. Rural exodus towards the country's urban centres, emigration abroad, agricultural abandonment, the process of urbanisation and the increased complexity of class structures have not reduced the importance of traditional pilgrimages. They are considered, amongst other factors, as the last remainder of a lost community and a reconverted form of religiosity, shared by both the inhabitants of rural areas and the city-dwellers who visit them.

Religious manifestations of a popular nature are not based on a set of written and intellectually established rules, but on a series of practices and gestures which involve the body in its sensorial and affective dimensions. The said affective dimension involves the prayers, the promises which have to do with the protection and well-being of loved ones, according to a mechanism of offerings (Pereira 2003) and counter-offerings (e.g. the offering of money, the walk on foot or on one's knees, the lighting of candles).

Of course, these rituals take on different forms. If, in the case of a small and traditionally rural community, the cult and pilgrimage to a patron saint ensure the continuity of the community and represent a certain form of indivisibility within the said community, other phenomena reproduce partial identities and transitory communities because they incorporate the traits of an urbanised, globalised and individualised society, characterised by multiple senses of belonging which never encompass a total.

Pilgrimages, even in their traditional form and outside the Christian world, reveal innovations in forms of behaviour, which are adapted to modern lifestyles. For this reason, there are emotive aspects and gestures which are common to inhabitants of both urban and rural areas, to the educated and non-educated and which are common to different social groups and classes.

## Pilgrims and pilgrimages in Portugal

The subtitle of the book by Hervieu-Léger (1999) book, *Le Pèlerin et le converti* (The Pilgrim and the Convert), clearly suggests the understanding that the author has of contemporary pilgrimages: *la religion en mouvement*, i.e. religion in movement. In its most common form, a pilgrimage is the exit of one's place of residence and the journey towards a sacred site. The distinctive trait of this activity is the journey itself, the trip as an essential objective of the pilgrimage, second to its destination. It is for this precise reason that the theologian Michael Pye (1994: 203–204) states that the term «pilgrimage» can be used as a metaphor for walks without a clear final objective, i.e. a stroll.

From this point of view, the pilgrim is seen as a «typical example of a devout individual in movement, a metaphor for the fluidity of personal spiritual routes» (Hervieu-Léger 1999: 98). This kind of religious sociability has expanded, and the individuals involved are not forced to adhere to doctrinal fidelity nor to the rigidity of religious belonging. What this reveals, however, is the fluidity of beliefs (Davie 1994), a biographical path full of meaning. That is why it is difficult to make a clear distinction between voyage and pilgrimage, whether on the grounds of motive or of the experience

of individual or group spatial mobility, which reveal common traits. Social scientist Rachid Amirou (2007) states: «Pilgrimage transcends secular constraints and places itself directly in the heart of what constitutes collective memory, namely religion as a global vision of the world» (2007: 140) and as the expression of collective imagination.

The fluidity of beliefs and spatial, subjective walk of a pilgrimage is a reminder of the distinction operationalised by Hervieu-Léger (1999) between the traditional church-goers and the pilgrims. Indeed, from the point of view of religious orthodoxy, it is more demanding to be a church-going believer than a pilgrim. The latter goes on a spiritual «voyage» in time and space. Walking pilgrims are «festive practising believers». A person who believes and attends church service regularly comes, from this point of view, closest to the ideal of a religious individual. More precisely, a religious individual is someone who regularly performs the rituals established by the Church, and belongs to a territorialized community established for the fulfilment of these ordinary obligations: the parish. According to religious orthodoxy, there is a positive correlation between confessional identity, belief, belonging and practice.

The case of the pilgrim, according to Hervieu-Léger (1999), is different. She systematises the practise of the contemporary pilgrim by contrast to the traditional religious church-goer. The Pilgrim practice is voluntary, autonomous, malleable, individual, mobile, and exceptional (extraordinary).

In order to understand the contemporary pilgrim, I believe that the definition of religious category such as established by Simmel (1998/1912) is appropriate, because it corresponds primarily to a vision, a feeling and a life experience, which create an objectivated, autonomous spiritual world. Firstly, it is the individual and his/her personal choice that are decisive. His/her action, even if performed in a group, is performed in an autonomous and adaptable manner to the circumstances and motivations of the moment. Furthermore, it is an extraordinary practice, and even if repeated it remains an exception from the pilgrim's daily routine, with the space of belonging. That is why it is a voyage.

This fact, for instance, was highlighted by Portuguese sociologists Carlos Fortuna and Claudino Ferreira (1993) in their study on the walking pilgrims to Fatima. By establishing a parallel between the pilgrims' walk and other trips of tourist nature, the authors, also inspired by Turner's (1990/1969) work<sup>2</sup>, stressed the fact that pilgrimage involves spatiality, symbolism and an interruption of a localised daily routine. It is the abandonment of the structural dimensions of life, a return to the community, but in this case, one of a delocalised nature: a movement from the centre of everyday life towards a distant periphery (the sanctuary), which becomes the central element. The workings of the world and society are halted for some days. The action is structured according to the search for mythical places, which is the reason for the voyage itself, the walk is sacralised. Temporarily, cultural and class identities are dissolved, and there is a process which doubles itself into «attraction» by means of unifying myths, and of «distraction» (Fortuna and Ferreira 1993: 60) by means of the flight from social differentiation and the weight of daily routines.

## Research questions and data

The aim of this article is to give a theoretical contribution to the analysis of contemporary pilgrimages in the traditional Catholic world, considering as main reference three cases, namely central destiny places for pilgrims.

The article addresses the emergence of a de-institutionalized religiosity in the Catholic world. Although the Catholic Church keeps its effort as representative of the supply, in terms of mobilizing and organizing people to lead them to central pilgrimage places, there is an increasing autonomization of the demand side, i.e., the pilgrims. There is a tension between believing and belonging, between authority and individual choice. This means that there are different levels of socio-religious differentiation of the supply side in the places of pilgrimage: Fatima comes at the top and Taizé at the bottom, with Santiago in the middle.

Consequently, I want to discuss the notion that there are three distinct dominant types of pilgrimages and pilgrims: Fatima as a place of popular religiosity; Santiago de Compostela which combines popular with new forms of religiosity such as New Age; and Taizé as an ecumenical and pluralistic Christian place, gathering people motivated by individual mystical attitudes.

Although I will analyse each place of pilgrimage in separated sections, I make a short presentation of them in the following paragraphs. The Sanctuary of Fatima in Portugal is the most institutionalized sanctuary, in the sense that the Church has a higher level of intervention in terms of organization and mobilization. Church authority is also more visible. In spite of this fact, pilgrims resist the efforts of «Christianization» promoted by the Catholic Church (new temple without saints' worship, Christ in the centre and a discrete «Our Lady»). Anyway, this is not a sign of emergence of individual religiosity but a demonstration of the vitality of the popular tradition.

In Santiago de Compostela, Spain, Church institutionalization is not so strong. Since the route was reinitiated in the 1980's, it became increasingly secularized, clearly evidenced when it was awarded a World Heritage site in 1993. The relations between the Catholic Church and political institutions are, in a certain way paradoxal, as they compete and complement each other concerning the organization of the pilgrimage. The Church wants to emphasise the religious dimension while the Autonomous Government of Galicia and the economic agents are interested in promoting the tourism there. Although it is not a core dimension in this article, this fact must be mentioned because it is also related to the permanent tension between believing and belonging and also a diversity of beliefs (many related to New Age and new forms of religiosity) or absence of any kind of belief, when the motivation is merely touristic and sportive.



Figure 1. Map Pilgrimage Places<sup>3</sup>

The third place, Taizé, close to Lyon, France, has quite different characteristics. It is an ecumenical place for Christian worship and it is more adequately described in terms of interactive spiritual pluralism. It is not a place centred in the Virgin Mary or a Saint but in the worship itself. The level of freedom for individuals is higher but it is not an obstacle to the formation of a *communitas* during the journey and after the arrival.

This article uses the three cases to illustrate theoretical issues. The analysis of these cases is based on existing documental and statistical research (Fatima, Santiago de Compostela and Taizé websites), as well as pre-existing studies such as *Church and Religion Survey* (2006), empirical studies about Fatima (Fernandes 1999, 2007; Fortuna and Ferreira 1993; Pereira 2003) and Santiago de Compostela (Herrero 2008; Mendes 2004/2005), and the analysis about Taizé made by Hervieu-Léger (1999). In addition, a few exploratory interviews were conducted of pilgrims and pilgrimage organizers to those places. This article does not attempt to offer a solid confirmation of the above mentioned notion that there is a relation between dominant types of pilgrims and the level of religious institutionalization of each Catholic place. Instead, my aim here is to discuss this notion, using the data collected for these three cases, in order to provide a theoretical contribution to studies on pilgrimage.

## Fatima: A popular and remodelled pilgrimage

On 13 May 1917, in *Cova da Iria*, Fatima (located in the central western region of Portugal), three shepherd children, later so called «pastorinhos», i.e. little shepherds, claimed that they saw the Virgin Mary. The apparitions repeated for six months (from May to October), occurring always on the same 13th of each month. In a short time, the news spread out throughout the country, contributing to the transformation of a phenomenon of popular curiosity into a public event (Fernandes 1999) and leading to the first pilgrimage.

In the six apparitions of Our Lady, after a lightning, the Virgin appeared upon a tree. Lucia was the only little shepherd who could really see and speak with the Virgin and every time Our Lady asked the girl to return there. The third appearance is associated with the revelation of a secret – which contributed to a mystification of the phenomenon - whose first two parts were revealed in Lucia memoirs of 1941 and the last part, just over eighty years after the first apparition, in 2000. During the last apparition, on 13 October 1917, the Virgin finally said what she wanted: don't offend the Lord anymore, pray the rosary to Our Lady, build a chapel to the Lady of the Rosary and the World War I would come to an end (Pereira 2003).

In order to understand Fatima, one must consider the role and presence of the Catholic Church in that particular location<sup>4</sup>. As a typical phenomenon of popular religiosity, Fatima was first rejected, later to be appropriated by the Catholic Church. To this day, there is still conflict between the popular pilgrimage and the ecclesiastic regulations established with the aim of providing a framework, organisation and re-catechisation of the rituals of the voyage and sanctuary since 1917. These clear rifts currently remain: as mentioned above, the architecture of the new temple (inaugurated in 2007), devoid of images inside and in which «Our Lady» lost her central position in the favour of the Cross and image of the Crucifixion led to manifestations of great discontent in the population.

In any case, this task of reconversion performed by the Catholic Church strongly contributed towards the establishment of Fatima as a place of prayer of worldly importance. Fatima is an indicator of the return of religion to the public sphere (Vilaça 2006), a possibility supported by the fact that it has become a place of religion, education, culture, tourism and even politics. Pilgrimages organised by schools (especially state schools) have become increasingly common over the past years. Portugal being a secular state, this could even be considered as yet another indicator of the importance of religion in the public sphere of the country, and, at the same time, an indicator of the ambiguous relationship between the Portuguese state and the Roman Catholic Church.

**Table 1. Pilgrims in Fatima, 2000–2007**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Total of pilgrims</b>	4,750,000	4,000,000	4,300,000	4,250,000	2,450,000	4,107,388	4,203,361	4,880,497

Source: Santuário de Fátima, 2008a.



Although it is not yet possible to verify the exact number of pilgrims who go to the Sanctuary of Fatima every year, the Support Service to Pilgrims of the Sanctuary of Fatima (SEPE) has developed a calculation system based on the number of people who attend the celebrations. This entity has estimated that the sanctuary received 4,750,000 visitors in 2000, a year of particular affluence due to its status as a Holy Year. Although 2001 saw a slight decrease (4,000,000 pilgrims), affluence to Fatima grew in the following years, reaching nearly 5 million pilgrims in 2007 (see table 1).

In what concerns the nationality of the pilgrims, the large majority are Portuguese (see table 2, concerning the number of organised pilgrimages), from all regions of the country. Foreign pilgrims are represented by approximately one hundred countries. The highest number of foreign pilgrims comes from Italy, Spain, Poland and Ireland, and there has been an increase in pilgrims originating from those countries. In 2007, Fatima received 37,992 Italian pilgrims, 34,450 Spanish and 14,188 Polish. It is interesting to note that Italian pilgrims often combine their pilgrimage to Fatima with one to Santiago de Compostela.

**Table 2. Organised Pilgrimages: Pilgrims and Pilgrimages, 2005–2007**

	2005	2006	2007
<b>Portuguese Pilgrims</b>	391,248	428,236	400,230
<b>Foreign Pilgrims</b>	285,345	270,071	156,729
<b>Total</b>	676,593	698,307	556,959
<b>Portuguese Pilgrimages</b>	1,143	1,209	1,344
<b>Foreign Pilgrimages</b>	2,090	2,238	2,565
<b>Total</b>	3,233	3,447	3,909

Source: Santuário de Fátima, 2008b.

In the past, the pilgrimages were especially concentrated around the dates of the apparitions (May and October), but today pilgrimages occur in a more equal distribution over all months of the year, with a higher influx at weekends. The sanctuary of Fatima still receives the highest number of offerings. In the past years, annual offerings have totalled approximately 10 million Euros, an amount which does not include church collections.

The subject of Fatima (and pilgrimage in general) is an essential topic in the public and private spheres of religion in Portugal. A survey carried out in 2000 by the *Centro de Sondagens da Universidade Católica* (Survey Centre of the Catholic University) revealed that 90 percent of the Portuguese population has visited Fatima, and a third of these visited the sanctuary whilst on a pilgrimage. According to the results of the survey carried out by the *Church and Religion in an Enlarged Europe*<sup>5</sup> (C&R) in 2006, 43.3 percent of those questioned stated having participated on a pilgrimage at least once<sup>6</sup>. Although the questionnaire did not enable the identification of the pilgrimage destination, other indicators suggest that pilgrimages to Fatima are on the increase. This percentage is higher, for instance, than that of individuals who are practising Cat-

holics, i.e. who go to church at least once a month. It was also possible to conclude that a pilgrimage is not significantly correlated with traditional popular religiosity, which is measured by indicators such as the possession and belief in sacred objects (C&R). If about 43 percent of Portuguese participate in pilgrimages, it seems plausible that it is not only a typical activity of rural populations, people with a low level of education, lower social classes and the elderly. A study published in 2000 by the Sanctuary reveals that the most representative age group is that between 35 to 44 years<sup>7</sup>, both in terms of visitors and pilgrims. On the basis of these statements, the belief that pilgrimage is an exclusive indicator of traditional rural religiosity appears to be questionable.

In a sanctuary such as that of Fatima, private devotion and individual faith acquires a collective dimension, in which an «emotional community» (Weber 1978/1922: 40–41) is formed, creating a *subjective feeling of belonging together*. In Fatima, this is particularly evident when, in the evening service of pilgrimages' days, the statue of «Our Lady» is taken from the altar and crosses the huge square among the pilgrims, who wave white handkerchiefs while praying and crying. Actually, it is not rare that commemorative rituals generate collective effervescence in the production of beliefs or in the preservation of the group's unity, as Durkheim (1925/1912) argued. The ritual gives a feeling of community, belonging and social cohesion. Rites of passage, pilgrimages and the commemorative rites which are celebrated upon the arrival at the destination activate the said states of collective effervescence which are fundamental to the individual's integration in society.

Fatima lends itself to contemporary forms of religiosity, as do other locations. In the study, mentioned above, by Fortuna and Ferreira (1993) in the early nineties, the authors conclude that, according to the survey carried out, 88.2 percent of the walking pilgrims stated that their decision to go to Fatima was a personal one. Only 1.1 percent stated that it was a parish initiative. This study supports the notion that this ritual is of a highly individual nature. In spite of that, it is also socially conditioned as Catholic Church maintains a high level of institutionalization.

## Santiago de Compostela: The travelling pilgrim

According to the legend, after the dispersion of the Apostles through the world, St. James travelled and preached in Galicia, Spain, where his name was translated to Santiago. He return to Palestine in 44, suffered a martyrdom in Jerusalem and his body, robbed by two of his disciples, was shipped to Iria Flavia, Galicia, where he was buried secretly in a forest. Still according to the legend, between 813 and 820, his tomb was discovered by a hermit of the woods. The bishop of Iria Flavia, once alerted to the fact, decided to build a chapel in «Campus Stellaires» (probable origin of the word Compostela) to protect the tomb of the apostle who became a symbol of Christian resistance against the Moors (Mendes 2004/2005).

The birth of Santiago de Compostela is linked to the (presumed) discovery of the remains of the apostle St. James in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Two centuries later, the Romanic

cathedral was built, and from then onwards, pilgrimages began increasing, making Santiago de Compostela one of the most important sacred Christian sites in the world<sup>8</sup>.

Although it was a typically Roman Catholic pilgrimage destination for many centuries, its current vitality has been considerably influenced by the declaration of Santiago de Compostela as a «World Heritage Site» in 1985 and by the recognition of the Way of St. James as the «First European Cultural Itinerary» in 1987.

Figures in table 3 show the trend of pilgrims' growth. It is particularly remarkable the number of pilgrims in saint Compostelanos years and Jacobo years. It must be taken into account that the figures in the table just consider the «true» pilgrims, i.e. those who receive the certification designated as «Compostelana», as it is explained below. Only in 2007 is published data about Portuguese pilgrimages to Santiago. In that year Portugal was the fourth country with more pilgrims, after Germany, Italy and France (Paz 2008).

**Table 3. Pilgrims in Santiago, 1998–2007**

Year	Pilgrims
1998	30 126
1999	154 613
2000	55 004
2001	61 418
2002	68 952
2003	74 614
2004	179 944
2005	93 924
2006	100 377
2007	114 026

Source: Paz 2008.

There are several pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela, the most popular ones being the French Way, the English Way, and the Portuguese Way. St. James is not only the local patron saint but the patron of the Iberian Peninsula. The Portuguese devotion to St. James has been demonstrated by the pilgrimage of some of the country's monarchs to the site, and the choice of St. James as the patron saint of the Portuguese army until the end of the fourteenth century. It is still common to hear the popular saying, «Who does not go to Santiago whilst alive, goes after his death» in the North of Portugal.

The definition of a Portuguese route, as such, does not yet exist, because it is only very recently that associations and entities which organise pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela have begun marking the Portuguese track on the basis of the most-used pilgrimage routes by the nation's pilgrims. The greater part of these routes is marked from Porto, the second largest city of the country. Six associations dedicated to the support of pilgrims are located in the North of Portugal, thus representing practically all such organisations based in the country. Only one of them is based in greater Lisbon.

The role of «Friends of the Way» associations have gained importance in recent years: they have established their position in the array of assessed institutions for the organisation of pilgrimages and have been recognised by the Sanctuary of Santiago de Compostela. The *Compostelana*, a credential issued by the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela defines a devout pilgrim as one who has travelled 100 km on foot or 200 km on horseback or bicycle, in order to distinguish pilgrims motivated by religious faith from tourist excursions to the same location. However, this only worked during a first stage. The religious and the tourist spheres have progressively become increasingly interlinked. An example of this is the agreement which was reached between the Cathedral and the Tourist Region of the Alto Minho, a coastal region in the North of Portugal. This agreement authorised the said tourist entity to hand out credentials, an activity which goes against the original principles of credential attribution to pilgrims, i.e. religiosity.

The Spanish anthropologist Nieves Herrero (2008), who has studied the visitors to Santiago, agrees with other authors that a pilgrim is also a tourist. This anthropologist looks at transports and services of tourist industry, combining religious acts with leisure. Besides, the places of religious pilgrimage are also attractive to tourists due to their cultural value, art and exotic elements. In a more radical way the author conceives tourism as «a modern equivalent or substitute of religious pilgrimages, and in that sense, tourist attractions can be considered as the sanctuaries of modernity (2008: 123–124).

In my own perspective and according to the available data, Santiago is possibly the place where tourism and religious pilgrimage are more indistinct; however in many pilgrims we find the attitude of a search for transcendence and some kind of religiosity, partially resulting of Church implication in this new phenomenon.

Portuguese pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela have gained renewed vitality and were reconfigured in the early 1990's. In what concerns the Catholic Church, university pastoral groups have been responsible for increased interest in the site by involving young people and motivating them to revive a medieval tradition. However, the renewed valorisation of outside activities, sport and the search for self-knowledge, as well as for new spiritual experiences, have contributed towards the increased demand for Santiago de Compostela in a hybrid framework of both physical and mental purification. It has become common to see people on the pilgrimage route who have taken New Age literature with them, thus combining subjects such as alchemy, ancient myths and ancestral symbology.

A new role appeared in 2000: the ecumenical one. Whereas Fatima represents a great fracturing element between Catholics and Protestant minorities due to the cult to the Virgin Mary, Santiago de Compostela has managed to bridge differences between the two groups. An example of this is the existence of pilgrimages which include both Catholic and liberal Protestants, such as the Episcopalians and some members of the Methodist and Lutheran Churches. This represents a new element, which must be considered in the study of Protestantism in Portugal. The Ecumenical Conference in Sibiu, Romania, reinforced the importance of pilgrimage as a purifying element and as a metaphor for the route to be followed by Christian churches.

To conclude, Santiago remains a Catholic place of pilgrimage, where Church still assumes an important role in terms of institutionalization. However, on the one hand, other agencies (touristic, political, cultural) compete with the Catholic Church, and, on the other hand, pilgrims are not necessarily Catholic. They can be new agers, other Christians, individuals motivated by reasons not necessarily religious or just tourists.

## Taizé: The route to the community of double Utopia

When World War II started the son of a French Protestant pastor, named Roger Schütz, left his home country, Switzerland, and went to live in the village of Taizé, in France. Having studied Reformed theology, Roger comes to Taizé in order to help and welcome refugees from war. As a consequence of giving shelter to Jews, he was forced to leave immediately to Geneva, where he remained until the end of the War. Once there, he began a religious community. In 1944, he and the first brothers of the community returned to Taizé, where, along with a couple from the region, began to accommodate war orphans and started a community of men living together in poverty and obedience:

Gradually other young men came to join the original group, and on Easter Day 1949, there were seven of them who committed themselves together for their whole life in celibacy and to a life together in great simplicity (Comunidade de Taizé, 2008).

Above the numerous Roman Catholic sanctuaries which have remained over time and have been remodelled, such as Fatima in Portugal and Lourdes in France, the community of Taizé, also located on French soil, is a ecumenical space of pilgrimage and encounter of great importance on the religious and tourist map of Europe, with ramifications all over the world: not only is it represented in several European countries, but it also has offices in the USA, Australia, India, Venezuela, Kenya, etc. Taizé's specificity is that it was founded by a Protestant, and, for that reason, became ecumenical. Although the «fulfilment of obligations», rituals, observations of the cult and pilgrimage, to an even lesser extent, do not occupy central positions in Protestant religiosity (Pereira 2003: 43), it is interesting to note that Taizé is adhered to in many Evangelical churches of Europe.

Taizé welcomes mostly young people aged between 17 and 29 years, and the encounters occur throughout the year, on a weekly basis or at weekends. These meetings take place around a community of monks who live at the location. Everyone must be prepared to fully adhere to the community's rhythm of life for the whole week: join the monks for prayer three times a day, meet people from other countries for meetings, meals, small discussion groups, practical chores (serving meals, washing dishes, etc.), live in simple conditions, respect the silence around the Church of Taizé, as well as around other places, especially at night. Apart from the visitors who spend a week in Taizé, some young people aged between 18 and 29 remain close to the Community for longer periods of time, sometimes for several weeks or a year. This period is a way of halting their daily lives to reflect, share with others and live through an interior search

for self. Those who stay longer than a week take on some practical responsibilities that are required for their stay in Taizé.

The people responsible for the youth pastorals take the initiative of the dynamisation of the trips to Taizé and organize the «prayer of Taizé», a monthly encounter which has gained increased visibility in the Portuguese religious sphere, especially amongst Catholics. The promoters in charge do not only refer to the importance of music, but also focus on the necessity to create «moments of prayer», contemplative spaces and wordless silence.

Taizé is a tourist stage or a religious trip especially for young people, whether they are Catholic, Protestants, Orthodox or without any link to a specific religion or belief. Over the decades, it has become a location for holidays and spiritual retreat for adults and families. In this way, it represents a contemporary type of pilgrimage, which incorporates the diversity of the facets present in modernity. It is a voluntary, probabilistic and transitory activity that involves a more mystical experience than a religious one (Hervieu-Léger 1999). The utopia of a perfect world, one may even say the metaphor of a universal church, is lived there and the centrality of the self and the transitoriness of groups are also present.

Contrary to Fatima or Santiago the tourist elements are more absent in Taizé. In my view, the attitude of the pilgrim, as referred to above, comes very close to the meaning of religiosity defined by Simmel: religiosity as «a pure form.» Refusing social dichotomy, the term «sacred» is abandoned, in order to centre itself more on religious feeling, which, according to Martelli (1993: 380), «is flexibility between necessities and the forms in which it manifests itself». On the epistemological level, Simmel situates religiosity in the domain of culture, just as he does as regards aesthetic intuition to the scientific and philosophical spirit. In this sense, religiosity is one of those multiple worlds, ideal virtualities which are only partially attainable. In this context, I share the Italian Sociologist Stephano Martelli's (1993) perspective in what concerns the accommodation of Simmel's suggestion to the analysis of religious phenomena in a complex society. Religiosity as «a pure form» does not necessarily have to be objectivated in a religious form. It corresponds essentially to vital impulses and to individuals' pious sentiments and the necessity to believe (Watier 1998: 150). Without pretending to push Troeltsch to modern theories on spirituality, I would dare to say that Simmel's pietism presents some affinity with Troeltschian mysticism. As Jean Séguy (1980) states, by creating the third ideal-type, mysticism, Troeltsch (1958/1911) was interested in differentiating socio-religious patterns (theological and organizational) within Christianity the interpretation of Christ's message – a non-authoritative and non-formative community, a spiritual network without infra-structure or visible authority (Séguy 1980: 123).

Actually, the study of phenomena such as that of the pilgrimages to Taizé or even to Santiago de Compostela, on the basis of their ecumenical (the first always was, since its foundation; the second later became ecumenical) and individualistic nature can be interpreted, as Hervieu-Léger (1999: 105) also suggests, in the light of the third type of religious orientation such as formulated by Troeltsch, (1958/1911) designated in the beginning by the author as «enthusiasm and mysticism». Mysticism incorporates two dimensions: a direct and personal relationship with God and religious individualism.

This relationship with the divine transcends institutions, cults and traditions: what is important is one's personal experience (Daiber 2002: 332). In its most extreme form, it is a radical individualism without any community (Troeltsch 1958/1911). However, it is important to note that Troeltsch's mystic is a Protestant figure, presenting similarities with Weber's ascetic; both are inter-mundane. In that sense we must be careful in the applicability of this category to contemporary Christian pilgrimages.

Close to Hervieu-Léger (1999) approach, I would say that more than any other place, Taizé reflects the desire to turn life into a fusional, undifferentiated community in which confessional, social and cultural differences are erased from reality. Taizé incorporates a double utopia: the return to the imagined purity of the primitive church and, through its interactive pluralism, the projection of a future, reconciled Christianity.

## Discussion and conclusion

Contemporary religious rites continue to belong to a field that escapes the control of official churches: they appear in combination with other spheres of social life which do not belong to the religious sphere, thus creating a new configuration. Pilgrimage is one of the dimensions of contemporary religiosity which has not been the object of extensive study by the sociology of religions. In this context, it may be said that Luckmann (1974/1963) anticipated the «metamorphosis of religion», predicting «structural privatisation», i.e. a new social form of religion. Official models of religion stop being the only references of the sacred and the individual privatizes his/her religious attitude. The «'religious' layer of one's individual conscience is situated in a relation with personal identity, which is analogous to the relation of the sacred cosmos with the vision of the world as a whole» (1974/1963: 71).

The main purpose of this article is to help develop theoretical tools that can be used to analyse contemporary pilgrimages in the traditional Catholic European southern countries, considering as main reference the most important destiny pilgrimage places for Portuguese people. My central argument is that there is an emergence of a de-institutionalized religiosity in the Catholic world in connection with different levels of socio-religious differentiation due to the choices and attitudes of pilgrims. According to the analysis of the three cases, it seems possible to identify a differentiation between distinct dominant types of pilgrimages and pilgrims. Fatima is a place of popular religiosity, where the Catholic Church still keeps a significant level of control. In Santiago de Compostela, there is a combination of popular with new forms of religiosity such as New Age, which places the Church in an ambivalent situation. Finally, Taizé, an ecumenical and pluralistic Christian place, seems to gather people motivated by individual mystical attitudes.

Although pilgrimage may be understood as *religion in movement*, and even if it is exteriorized and publicly observable, it still remains invisible in many of its private aspects. It is a claim in the name of the subjectivisation of individuals. It does not necessarily require the mediation of a religious institution, even though it combines

ingredients of a socially inherited religiosity and as I tried to demonstrate, the Catholic Church still has relevant (and renewed) role in pilgrimages places.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Translator: Anna Porter
- <sup>2</sup> Victor and Edith Turner establish similarities between pilgrimage and rites of passage. A pilgrimage is a path of physical and spiritual regeneration, the beginning of a new life, achieved, on one hand, by means of a process of isolation from the secular world, and on the other, by joining other pilgrims and forming a *communitas*, i.e. a transitory non structured community. When the pilgrim «returns», he/she is a changed person.
- <sup>3</sup> The map was made by the geographer Susan Pereira.
- <sup>4</sup> Refer to the works of António Teixeira Fernandes (1999 and 2007) for an analysis of the trajectory of the Catholic Church in this context and of its relations with the state. Also see Barreto (2002).
- <sup>5</sup> The project *Church and Religion in an Enlarged Europe: A study on the social significance of religion in East and West* (C&R) is coordinated by Detlef Pollack, Gert Pickel and Olaf Müller of the Institute for Transformation Studies of the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt/Öder [Germany]. The project encompasses the following countries: Germany, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Portugal and Russia.
- <sup>6</sup> In this study, only Croatia surpasses Portugal in the number of individuals who declare having taken part on a pilgrimage at least once, with 53.6 percent.
- <sup>7</sup> There is not available data about education level.
- <sup>8</sup> More than patron of Compostela, Santiago is considered the patron saint of the Iberian Peninsula. The devotion of the portuguese was proved by the holy pilgrimage of some monarchs to Compostela, as Afonso II and Queen Santa Isabel. To emphasize even that Santiago was the place of patron saint of the portuguese army by the end of the fourteenth century (Mendes 2004/2005).

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