



religions

Pilgrimage and Religious Mobilization in Europe

Edited by

Mariano P. Barbato

Printed Edition of the Special Issue Published in *Religions*

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Editor

Mariano P. Barbato

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This is a reprint of articles from the Special Issue published online in the open access journal *Religions* (ISSN 2077-1444) (available at: www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/pilgrimage_europe).

For citation purposes, cite each article independently as indicated on the article page online and as indicated below:

LastName, A.A.; LastName, B.B.; LastName, C.C. Article Title. <i>Journal Name</i> Year , <i>Volume Number</i> , Page Range.
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ISBN 978-3-0365-3382-7 (Hbk)

ISBN 978-3-0365-3381-0 (PDF)

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About the Editor

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Preface to "Pilgrimage and Religious Mobilization in Europe"

"Europe is born on a pilgrimage." This phrase, often ascribed to the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, might be apocryphal but it captures the important role of pilgrimage in Europe. In a secularizing continent, pilgrimage is a religious ritual that is not only still flourishing but on the rise.

Religions typically have a public dimension of social gathering, arguing, and worship. The ritual of pilgrimage constitutes, in many religions, an important expression of this public dimension. Christianity, in particular Catholicism, is still the first religion that comes to mind when thinking about pilgrimage in Europe, but it is by far not the only community that engages in this praxis.

Pilgrimage has dimensions beyond the religious experience. Pilgrimages can spill over into various ways of religious mobilization with social, political, and also economic impacts. When religious experiences meet with cultural landscapes and economic interests, questions of political power arise. Varieties of pilgrimages, from spiritual tourism to religious protest, shape the public dimension of pilgrimages and have an impact on various levels of European societies.

Pilgrim studies is an emerging interdisciplinary field that takes these various sociological, cultural, geographical, economic, and political implications into account. The present book seeks to continue and elaborate on the existing research agendas and to establish a forum for new approaches. Historical traditions, current trends, comparative approaches, conceptual developments, and methodological questions are of interest. Whose frames guide the pilgrims? Who profits from the pilgrims' decisions? What kind of identity emerges when pilgrims depart and return?

The first chapter by Anna Trono and Luigi Oliva delves into the rich tradition of Italian pilgrimages and discovers innovations in a historical landscape. Jan Mohr and Julia Stenzel tell the story of items from Oberammergau's passion play. Adrian Schiffbeck analyzes the relationship between pilgrimage and political protest during the protests in the Romanian city Timișoara in 1989. Petr Kratochvíl differentiates two types of pilgrimage in the Catholic tradition and shows how they present themselves on the internet.

One of the most popular pilgrimages in Europe is the Camino, the Way of St. James. Detlef Lienau, Stefan Huber, and Michael Ackert analyze data on German-speaking pilgrims' religiosity and spirituality. Patrick Heiser discusses how the religiosity of pilgrims is expressed on the way to Santiago. Yvonne Knospe and Karsten Koenig present a study about young offenders on learning walks.

Papal Rome and the papal pilgrimages are mass events of pilgrimage with a high impact on several levels. Francisco Javier Ramón Solans presents a study on the strengthening of transatlantic Catholicism through the pilgrimage to Rome in the 19th century. Mariano P. Barbato shows in a quantitative analysis of papal addresses in Fatima the cautious papal approach to mobilize pilgrims. Urszula Dudziak and Ryszard Zajaczkowski present two studies on John Paul II's travels to Poland. Johannes Ludwig Löffler focuses on virtual papal pilgrims.

Mariano P. Barbato
Editor

Article

Innovations in a Traditional Landscape of Pilgrimage: The Via Francigena del Sud towards Rome and Other Apulian Pilgrim's Routes

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Abstract: Religious routes and itineraries can be seen as promoting not only the sharing of ethical and religious values and sentiments of peace and brotherhood but also the awareness and personal growth of the traveller. Those who walk remote pilgrimage paths today wish to experience the fascination of the past, to feel something of the dread and the passion of ancient travellers, but they also seek to fulfil an emotional and intellectual need for authenticity, spirituality and culture. The Puglia region has numerous religious paths that arose in past centuries and continue to be practised by modern pilgrims, who treat the journey as an emotional, educational, social and participatory experience. Appropriate exploitation of this type of journey would enable the promotion of a “gentle” but no less successful tourism, above all in a period of social distancing and global suffering. The present study starts with a presentation of some of the precursors of the many routes that led from the Orient towards Rome, such as those of the Apostle Peter, St Francis of Assisi and the anonymous Pilgrim of Bordeaux. It then examines the new values that prompt people to follow the Via Francigena del Sud that runs along the Italian peninsula linking Europe north of the Alps to the ports of Puglia, and it is just an exemplary case aimed at fulfilling the potential of eastern Mediterranean coastal regions by offering cultural routes and itineraries for sustainable and quality tourism.

Keywords: spiritual routes; Via Francigena; contemporary pilgrimage; St. Peter Apostle; St. Francis of Assisi; Mediterranean routes

Citation: Trono, Anna, and Luigi Oliva. 2021. Innovations in a Traditional Landscape of Pilgrimage: The Via Francigena del Sud towards Rome and Other Apulian Pilgrim's Routes. *Religions* 12: 1065. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12121065>

Academic Editor: Mariano P. Barbato

Received: 26 October 2021

Accepted: 21 November 2021

Published: 1 December 2021

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1. Introduction

Religious itineraries and routes can be considered a reason for sharing ethical-religious values and feelings of peace and brotherhood but also an opportunity for the traveller to enjoy a spiritual and cultural experience. Those who practise religious tourism today are driven, as Monsignor Mazza points out, by “a desire for spirituality in response to the nausea of emptiness and bewilderment generated by the technological society” (Mazza 2009, p. 592). They wish to experience the fascination of retracing ancient pilgrimage routes, fulfilling an emotional and intellectual need for authenticity, spirituality and culture. Indeed, as Mambretti (2014) recounts in her journey to Santiago de Compostela, the tourist travels with the aim of “seeing” something, while the pilgrim travels with the aim of “seeking” something, an experience, an opportunity to learn about both themselves and the territory visited. Clearly, understood in this way, even the use of the term “pilgrim” is obsolete (Badone and Roseman 2004; Gladstone 2005; Digance 2006; Timothy and Olsen 2006; Collins-Kreiner 2010; Gitlitz 2014; Carbone et al. 2016). It is inconsistent with the new figure of the traveller who follows a route practised by ancient pilgrims but is also interested in the landscape, the deep and sincere perception of different communities and their cultural heritage, understood as a legacy that is key to the location's identity (Niglio 2014). This contribution focuses on the Via Francigena del Sud, in southern Italy, that enriches the historical-cultural itinerary, approved by the Council of Europe in 1994. Crossing different

regions, the itinerary highlights the rich diversity of the contributions to cultural heritage and plays an important role in promoting dialogue, which, for the Council of Europe, is a potential tool for intercultural cooperation and an opportunity to consolidate the feeling of identity (Berti 2012, 2013). Indeed, the itinerary makes it possible to identify and bring together “cultural, religious and humanist values, which are the roots of Europe, giving content to its memory and meaning to its identity” (Bettin Lattes 2010, p. 38). European cultural heritage, with its various contradictions and plurality of dimensions, represents, as Bettin Lattes reiterates, an “extraordinary wealth” from which European identity can still draw “precious nourishment” (Bettin Lattes 2010, p. 3). The literature on the value of cultural routes (see, for example, Majdoub 2010; Bruschi 2012; Zabbini 2012; Beltramo 2013; Berti 2012, 2013; Trono 2014; Council of Europe 2015; Pattanaro and Filippo 2016; Trono 2017) and on the character of religious ones (among others, see: Rizzo and Trono 2012; Rizzo et al. 2013; Rizzello and Trono 2013; De Salvo 2015; Trono 2017; Trono and Oliva, 2017; Trono and Olsen 2018) is considerable and growing.

Like pilgrimages, cultural routes and itineraries, with regard to their research aspects as opposed to the simple visit, are closely linked to the theme of authenticity and its various interpretations. The value of authenticity may be studied in accordance with several disciplinary approaches, whose focus ranges from the location to the individual. The historical-objective approach attributes value to the originality of the site or artefact; the sociological-constructivist approach links authenticity to the symbolic meaning associated with the culture of the user; disregarding the site, the existentialist approach searches for it in the state of mind of the subject (Wang 1999). None of these approaches in themselves seem to be exhaustive. Indeed, while on an economic level (understood as the satisfaction of a need) the originality of the place is certainly important, we should neglect neither the culture of the walkers nor the stratification of meanings of the places that they are already partly familiar with and discover as they pass through, establishing individual and collective relationships with the contexts (Belhassen et al. 2008). The place, therefore, cannot be seen as merely the container of what is original and has been preserved: on the contrary, as with the concept of landscape, it represents the complex and changing synthesis of temporal reality (events, transformations, interests), civilisation and social life (Bronzini 1984, p. 202). Within this complexity, the traveller is transformed from user into actor (Bachimon et al. 2016; Tuan 2010). The location, the randomness of events (actions in a defined time) and the subjective components (culture and beliefs) of the walker(s) ultimately combine to determine authenticity as an integration of context, meaning and experience.

At a local level, cultural and/or religious routes represent good opportunities for the transformation of natural and cultural resources and sacred places into heritage and assets. In this context, the route is the unifying thread that creates a new system of knowledge and enables the promotion of little-known places, especially inland or marginal areas that have considerable tourism potential (Meyer 2004; Briedenhann and Wickens 2004; Trono 2009; Quattrone 2012; Conti et al. 2015). These aims are shared by many national and regional governments, including that of Puglia, which sees the Francigena del Sud, a continuation of the European Francigena itinerary towards the Holy Land, as an opportunity for regional promotion. Together with the widely investigated Michaelian and Marian themes (Calò and Stella 2019; Calò Mariani and Pepe 2013), it could also provide a boost for other little-known paths that replicate the journeys of popular saints such as St. Peter the Apostle and St. Francis of Assisi from Jerusalem to Rome.

After a brief analysis of the paths of St. Peter the Apostle and St. Francis of Assisi, this paper presents the Southern Via Francigena and the characteristics that distinguish the new walker from the ancient anonymous pilgrim of Bordeaux, who, in 333 AD, on the way back from Jerusalem, decided to cross the Strait of Otranto and disembark in Puglia. Throughout the Middle Ages, the ports of Puglia were the preferred embarkation points for pilgrims heading to the Holy Land, at that time controlled by the Outremer kingdoms. On this topic, the sources are numerous and eloquent. Writing of Bohemond of Hauteville’s preparations

for his departure for the Crusades, Robert the Monk states that the Franks arriving in Puglia embarked from Bari, Brindisi and Otranto. A few years later, the Anglo-Saxon merchant Saewulf, who was headed to Jerusalem, mentioned the ports of Bari, Barletta, Trani, Siponto and Otranto, the latter held to be the last useful port for crossing the Adriatic. An anonymous pilgrim recalled setting off from Brindisi for the Holy Land in the late 12th or early 13th century, and the same port is cited among those used by the crusaders following Richard the Lionheart. In the *Crónica Catalana* by Ramon Muntaner, Brindisi is described as the best port in the world, situated in a fertile and productive region not too far from Rome. Vessels sailed from this Adriatic port carrying goods and pilgrims to Acre, organised especially by the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller. In the mid-12th century, the monk Nikulas Bergsson conducted an extraordinary journey from his native Iceland to Brindisi, from where the future abbot of Munkathvera embarked for Acre, which he reached after 14 days sailing.

The ports of Puglia, which had served the pilgrims at the time of the Crusades, became mere ports of call on this longer route, as did those of Dalmatia, Corfu and the Peloponnese (Methoni, Koroni, etc.), which the Venetians called Morea. Further stopping places included Chania on the island of Crete, Rhodes, Cyprus and finally Jaffa and Jerusalem. Numerous European travellers (Flemings, French, Italians, Germans, English) followed this route on their outward or return journeys. An interesting and highly complex itinerary was followed by two Flemish notables, John and Anselm Adorno, who set off for the Holy Land from Bruges in 1470. Anselm wrote a fascinating account of the journey, providing vivid images of their stopping-off points in the Mediterranean. The images of the ports of Puglia, the Aegean islands and Jerusalem were also evoked in their town of origin, Bruges, which is home to one of the most famous replicas of the Holy Sepulchre ever built (Stopani 1992; Davidson and Dunn 1993; Cardini 2008; Leo Imperiale 2012; Federico 2014; Trono and Imperiale 2018).

This study analyses in detail the features of the route that runs along the eastern side of Puglia. This region forms the most eastern part of the Italian mainland, jutting out between the Adriatic and the Ionian seas towards Albania and Greece, thus forming a “bridge” between Europe and the countries of the eastern Mediterranean. The territory of the region is geographically attractive to human settlement, combining the hilly areas with the extensive and rich plains, which dominate the region. Puglia is a land with a complex history, whose roots go back to the Homeric rural idyll, the great pagan mystery of the Acropolis, the Mediterranean traffic of the Phoenicians, the Greek colonies known as Magna Grecia, the Romans and the control of Greek Byzantium, which left its mark on the local culture, crypts and underground churches, not to mention the voyages of the Crusaders, the multiform historical experience of central Europe and the conflicts with the Ottoman Empire, the empire of Frederick II of Swabia, who loved this land and gave it monuments of inestimable value (Baldacci 1972; Novembre 1979; Trono 2003). Today, the region is still a destination for walkers who retrace the ancient pilgrimage routes but also for new travellers who cross the Mediterranean and head for Rome or other regions of Europe, no longer for reasons of faith but in the (frequently unfulfilled) expectation that Europe can ensure the well-being, peace and respect for human rights denied to them in their homeland.

2. Ancient Religious Itineraries

2.1. *St. Peter the Apostle*

The establishment of a religious-cultural itinerary that traces the transit of St. Peter the Apostle across the Italian peninsula has already been the subject of many studies, which are summarised and integrated in this section (Oliva 2015; Trono and Oliva 2017).

Peter of Bethsaida is a key figure for understanding the evolution of the Christian religion. The official Christian sources from which the Saint’s life may be reconstructed are the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. However, these contain only

fragmentary data from which it is possible to draw little information about the places where the Saint conducted his evangelising work (Donati 2000).

Historically, all the texts dealing with Peter are classified as *Acta Petri* in the *Corpus Christianorum* (Geerard 1992, pp. 190–209). In the sources, as well as in the posthumous tradition, his journey towards the centre of Roman power unfolds through his preaching in the most important cities. In those places, where some inhabitants had probably already come into contact with the nascent religion, his presence served to introduce the apostolic version of the new faith and its liturgy (Trono and Oliva 2017).

We have no contemporary sources, since the oldest start from the second century AD. (Hegesippus, 110–180; Clement of Alexandria, 150–215; Arnobius, 255–327; Eusebius of Caesarea, 265–340; Cyril of Jerusalem, 313–386; St. Ambrose, 339–397). The list of these sources expands considerably if we include the founding myths of many Italian dioceses (Lanzoni 1927).

Written and archaeological sources agree on the fact that St. Peter arrived in Rome and that he spent the last twenty years of his life there before his martyrdom and burial (Gnilka 2003; Guarducci 1989). Many southern cities, particularly in Puglia, traditionally claim that he passed through them on his journey across the Italian peninsula to Rome, including Siponto, Venosa, Lucera, Canosa, Ruvo, Bari, Oria, Otranto, Galatina, S. Maria di Leuca, Gallipoli, Taranto and San Pietro in Bevagna (Manduria).

Regarding the identification of paths, in accordance with the constructivist approach, myths and legends are considered to be embedded in the territory, regardless of their actual relationship with real characters or documentable facts. These traditions are often associated with specific locations, forming a “mythical landscape”, which generally has its own organic coherence. The landscape of myth blends with the real landscape of complexity. In some cases, legendary traditions of millenary reach no longer have any link with the current state of the places. In other cases, the landscape of myth adapts and changes with the transformation of the real landscape (Santangeli Valenzani 2012, p. 99).

The traditions relating to Peter’s journey, even those that appear historically spurious, play a significant role in the light of certain cultural and geographical interpretations. The first concerns the documented presence of large Jewish communities in some of the settlements he is said to have passed through. Analysis of the New Testament apocrypha leaves little doubt about the primary role played by the Apostle in the Judeo-Christian context of the first evangelisations, in contrast with the figure of Saint Paul. Another interpretation concerns the episcopal primacy claimed by cities that had a prominent position during the late Roman imperial phase and late antiquity. For these dioceses, the Petrine tradition links them directly to the successor of Christ. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that the cult of the Saint has had a special value for the Roman Catholic Church since the late Middle Ages, especially in those regions affected for a long time by the spread of Orthodox Christianity or heretical movements in various periods (e.g., Lombard Arians, Poor Hermits and Little Friars, as well as schismatics). This seems to be a consolidated theme in current historiography, despite the important role that the figure of Peter played in the Christian Orthodox Church and despite the numerous late ancient and early medieval dedications referring to the Apostle in the Greek-speaking world. Further reasons for the spread of these traditions can be found in the role played by Peter “the fisherman” in the protection of sailors and seafarers. Finally, it is worth mentioning the singular material manifestations of the cult of Peter in connection with the presence of spring waters and protection against drought.

Aiming at greater involvement of users, the constructivist model needs to be integrated with references to the perceptual and experiential dimension. To this end, we selected sites that in various ways recall Peter’s physical presence. The selection criteria imply that these places currently exist and are geographically contiguous with each other, in order to establish possible itineraries (Figure 1). Furthermore, we distinguished two possible approaches to the sites: a navigable coastal itinerary that recalls the theme of the Saint’s

landing in the peninsula through coastal navigation and an inner land itinerary that shares most of its route with the existing network of regional cultural routes (Figure 2).

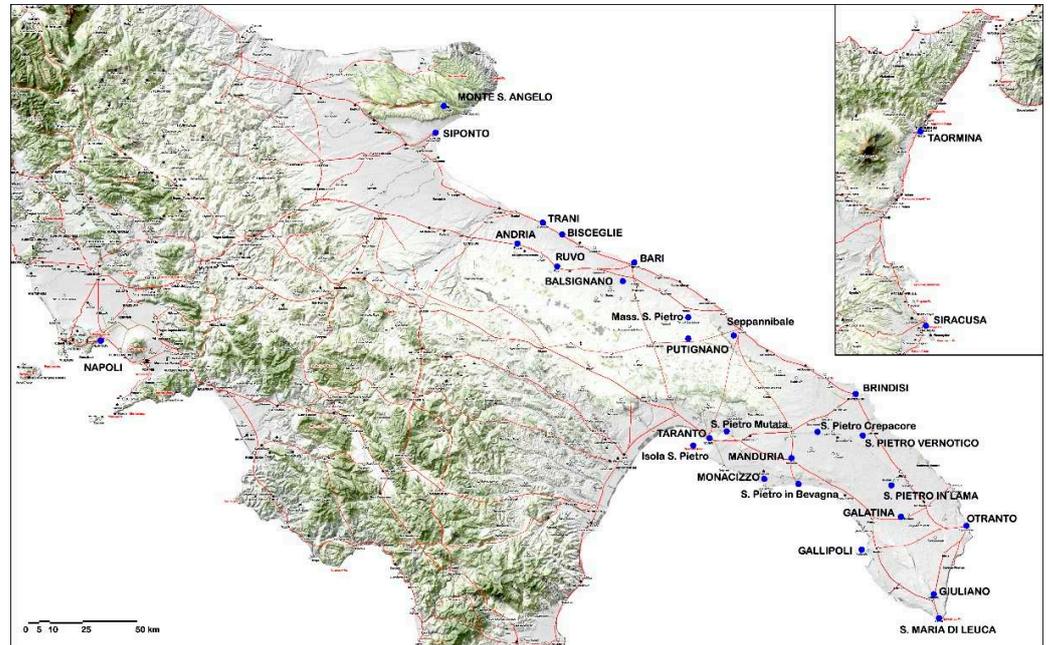


Figure 1. Petrine sites in the Roman road network.

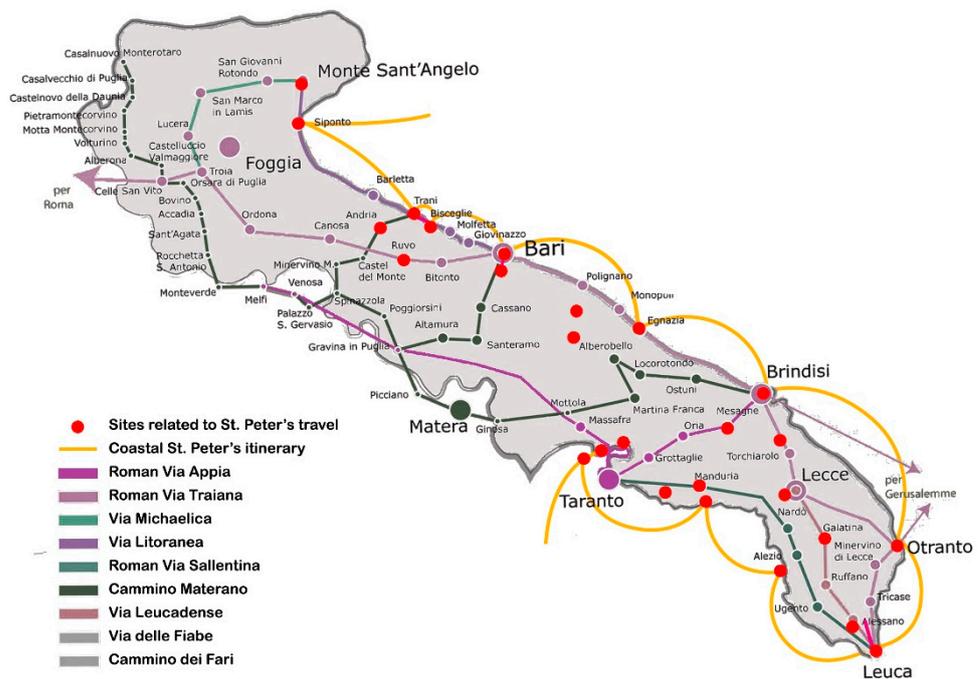


Figure 2. Petrine sites in Puglia on the network of existing regional cultural routes and proposal of a navigable coastal itinerary.

The following cases, relating to two provincial capitals, Brindisi and Bari, exemplify the research method adopted in the case of sites and relics that bear the signs of contact with the first pontiff. In all cases, current knowledge is based on the echoes of remote oral sources or accounts handed down by modern documentation. Recently, possible new archaeological evidence has helped to extend the circumstantial framework.

The oldest source attesting to the apostolic evangelisation of the city of Brindisi is a passage by Paul the Deacon which dates to the eighth century AD (Paolus 1829, p. 261) and attributes the foundation of the city's first Christian community to Leucius, a disciple sent directly by Peter after he had settled permanently in Rome. The places and relics of Leucius are therefore linked to the memory of the Petrine authority, which has been handed down in the local memory. In the tradition of faith, therefore, when Leucius fulfils the mission entrusted to him by Peter, he embodies and represents the consideration in which the Apostle held the city of Brindisi. We do not know whether this mission reflected the importance of the city for Christianity or the Saint's own experience of the place, having passed through it on his way to Rome.

For the city of Bari, however, the first document affirming the local tradition dates only to the 18th century (Selvaggio 1779, tome I, chp. 6, par. 3, pp. 44–45). This source reports an episode that in other versions took place in the city of Taranto: after the landing of the Apostle, he was secretly housed in a cave, in which he baptised and ordained the city's first bishop (Oliva 2015, pp. 179–80). In Bari, the cave is commonly located in the old town, below the complex of San Pietro Maggiore, attested in 1119. This place was later incorporated into the convent of San Pietro delle Fosse, built by the Observant Friars Minor, which took its name from it in the 16th century. During some excavations in 1910, what was believed to be the original cave was discovered. It was photographed by the Archaeological Museum of Bari and published in a city guide (Colavecchio 1910, p. 110; Dell'Aquila and Carofiglio 1985, pp. 123–26). The convent was heavily damaged during the Napoleonic occupation and was later definitively demolished in the 1960s. Some recent excavations have revealed some of its remains and made them accessible (Ciminale et al. 2015).

2.2. *St. Francis of Assisi*

The myth of the voyage of St. Peter shows singular analogies with that of the voyages of St. Francis of Assisi: the former as the founder of dioceses, the latter as the founder of convents (Giannone 1770, book XIX, chp. V, p. 333). This relationship can also be extended to the development of a variegated range of local manifestations of veneration and epiphanic references.

The methodology of research followed in both cases is similar, giving high importance to the landscape of myth as a way to re-semantize the geographical context with a discriminating approach that could bring the users closer to the historical dimension of the saints.

A "Way of Francesco" (www.viadifrancesco.it, accessed on 23 November 2021) has already been established and set up in the historical footsteps of the Saint between Assisi and the sanctuary of La Verna, proceeding to Rome.

Regarding the documentary sources on the establishment of convents, the Series Provinciarum (from 1262 onwards), the Statistics of 1282 (Golubovich 1913, vol. II, pp. 241–58) and Il Provinciale of Fra Paolino da Venezia of 1334 (Eubel [1892] 2011) all show fewer foundations in Southern Italy than the rest of the peninsula. The disputes between the Swabian imperial dynasty and the friars are the most historically accepted reason for this difference, but recent historiography has shown that in the Kingdom of Naples, especially in the larger towns, there was a balanced presence of various orders at least until the early decades of the 14th century (Serpico 2002; Pellegrini 2010).

The most ancient and official biographical sources show a progressive mythicisation and institutionalisation of the figure of Francis, starting with the so-called *Vita prima* by Tommaso da Celano of 1228 (Intagliata 2020) and continuing with the *Legenda antiqua*, the *Vita secunda*, the *Tractatus de miraculis* and the *Legenda Maior* by Bonaventura da Bagnoregio. In contrast, the biographies written by the early "socii" (the term used to define the first members of the nascent Franciscan community) bring out the Saint's anti-official and jocular aspects (Bronzini 1984, p. 222; Frugoni 1995). They include the *De inceptione et actibus illorum fratrum minorum qui fuerunt primo ordinis et socii b. Francisci* by friar Giovanni da Perugia, the *Legenda trium sociorum* and the later *Actus beati Francisci et*

sociorum eius. These writings describe places and regions as the background to episodes in the life of the Saint, linking them to his preaching, his pilgrimages, his meetings at the Holy See and the management of his growing order.

Modern and contemporary historiography represents the richest set of sources, thanks to a large number of local historians who have transcribed the myths (often distorting or reinventing them) that had been handed down mainly orally in conventual contexts (Bacci 1925; Forte 1967; Perrone 1976; Corsi 1982, 1988; Bronzini 1984; Pellegrini 1984, vol. II, pp. 86–87).

Regardless of both the historical question of authenticity and the anthropological dimension of legends, the creation of one or more geo-devotional itineraries that retrace the places where the myth of Francis is preserved cannot ignore the correlation between the tangibility of this myth today and the late medieval infrastructural context.

The itineraries thus determined combine elements of interest and historical geography with the approach to the life of Francis himself and his posthumous veneration. On the devotional level, the proposals seek to correlate those places that preserve or project a dimension that evokes the founder's original precepts (although sometimes it may also dilute them).

The *Memorabilia Minoritica* by Bonaventura da Fasano and the *Cronica* by Bonaventura da Lama cite many sites in the early Province of St. Nicholas, mainly corresponding to the actual Puglia. In these texts, we read of the presence of St. Francis at the extra-urban site of S. Maria del Casale near Brindisi, where (despite his love of animals) he cursed the spiders for their webs that covered an ancient Marian icon in a chapel dedicated to the Ascension (da Lama 1724, pp. 8–10). The popular topos of the water source is re-proposed in the city of Oria, where the Saint created an inexhaustible source of water to quench the thirst of monks and pilgrims visiting the “Madonna di Costantinopoli” and “Madonna delle Grazie”. Later the use of that water was extended to the whole city (da Fasano 1656). In Taranto, St. Francis established the new Franciscan community in the church dedicated to San Lorenzo, which he consecrated (Merodio [1682] 1988, pp. 279–85). In the *Trattato dei miracoli* of 1252–1253 (da Celano 2015), Tommaso da Celano tells of a deceased girl who was resurrected by the Saint in the town of Pomarico. Other miracles, evoked by prayers and dreams, are attributed to St. Francis even after his death. Marco da Lisbona in 1680 locates the miracle of the storm narrated by Tommaso da Celano in the city of Barletta. In the town of Celano, north of Puglia, St. Francis saves a boy who has fallen into a well. In Potenza, a cleric who doubted the presence of the stigmata on the hands of the Saint finds them on his own hands until he repents.

In addition to these episodes, the cult of St. Michael and the sanctuary dedicated to him on Gargano should not be overlooked, although there are no contemporary texts that mention a real pilgrimage to that place. In the *Vita Seconda di San Francesco d'Assisi*, Tommaso da Celano, dating back to 1246/1247, (Intagliata 2020) reports the pilgrimage to the sanctuary of St. Nicholas in Bari, during which the miracle of the bag containing a snake took place. Much later, this city also became the setting for the legend of the temptress at Frederick II's court. The same source identifies the instrument used by Francis to call people during his preaching with a small bell kept in the church of S. Maria degli Angeli (Bonaventura da Lama 1724, p. 261). Other posthumous traditions link the presence of the Saint in Puglia to his travels to the Holy Land. On the historical level, it is likely that he landed in one or more ports of that region on his return from his mission to Damietta, in 1219–1220.

Almost all the aforementioned places lie on important trans-regional routes, which are cited by the geographer Guidone in 1119 (Pinder and Parthey 1860). The legacy of ancient roads is strongest in the south of the peninsula, connecting the regions and influencing the fortunes of cities and ports (Uggeri 1983; Oliva 2013; Marchi 2019). Above all, the Appian Way, the Via Traiana and the connection with Gargano seem to constitute the infrastructural backbone on which kings and saints such as Francis and Peter (in reality

or in myth), pilgrims and armies, merchants and travellers crossed the region to stop or embark for the eastern and southern Mediterranean (Figures 3 and 4).

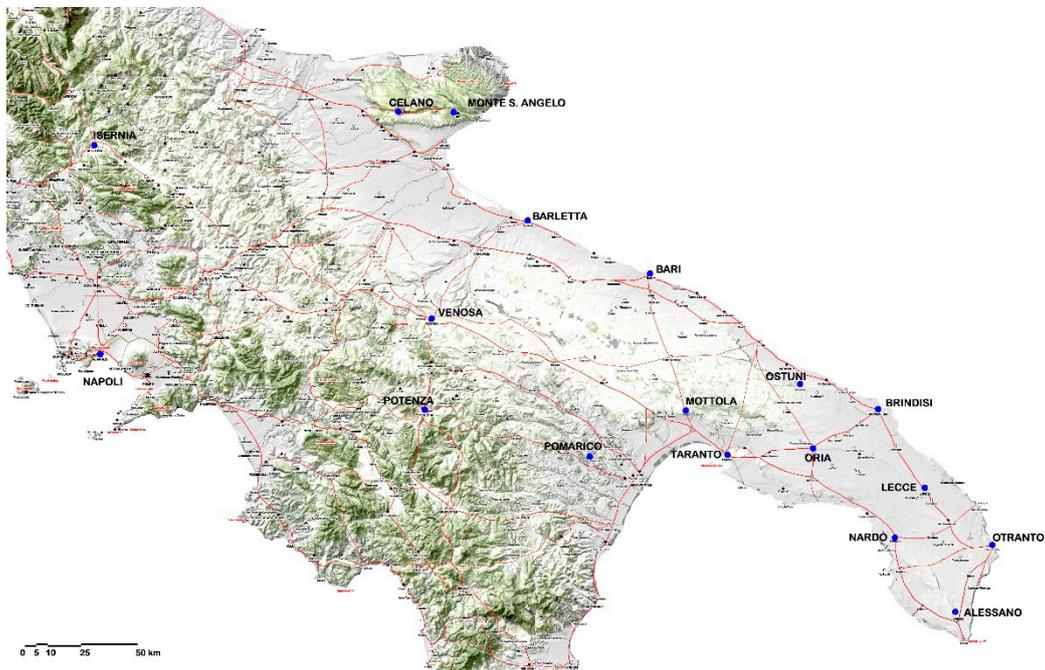


Figure 3. Sites linked to the presence of St. Francis in the Roman road network.

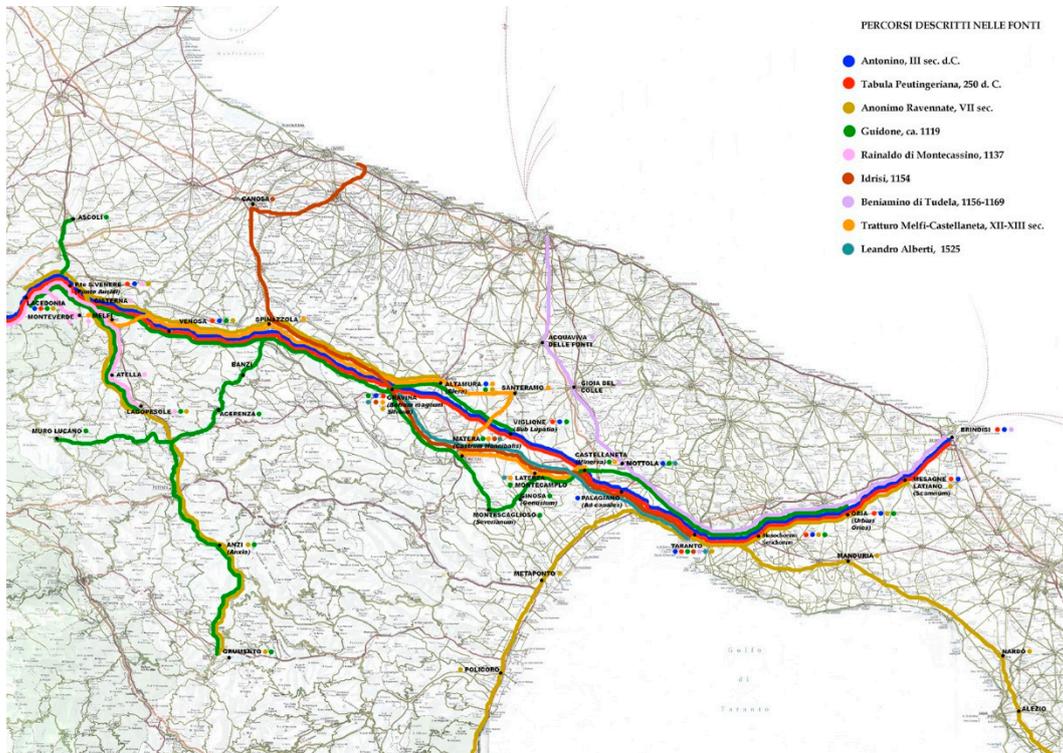


Figure 4. Routes known from sources relating to the early-modern medieval road system centred on the Appian Way in Puglia and Basilicata.

2.3. *The Via Francigena del Sud*

Following the Via Traiana variant of the Via Appia, the Southern Via Francigena corresponds to the pilgrimage route from Rome to Jerusalem and vice versa.

Jerusalem was described by medieval commentators as the capital of God's earthly kingdom and was considered by them to be the "image of all perfection and the pivot of all cosmological conceptions of their time" (Dupront 1993; Marella 2014, p. 124). Unequivocally representing the very essence of Christianity, Jerusalem was therefore the primary goal of the ancient pilgrims. After the granting of freedom of worship to Christians under the edicts of Galerius (311) and Constantine and Licinius (313), churches were built and a considerable flow of pilgrims towards the Holy Places was seen (Dalena 2014). This increased in the period from Theodosius I to Theodosius II (378–450) and after the construction of important churches such as the Holy Zion Basilica, completed between 392 and 394, the Tomb of Mary, completed shortly afterwards, and others.

The pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem were from "various walks of life, monks, clerics and members of the nobility, especially from Gaul; they made their way to the Holy Places: Apodemius of Burdigala, Deacon Sisinnius of Toulouse, Postumianus, Honoratus of Lérins, the Roman ladies Paula and Fabiola, Deacon Niceas of Aquileia, the Brescian priest Gaudentius, the Breton Pelagius and Deacon Heraclius and Castrician from Pannonia" (Dalena 2014, p. 12). The travel diaries analysed by Marella (2014) provide a detailed description of the Christological monuments and liturgical rites that the ancient pilgrims saw in the Holy Land. Above all, however, they allow us to discover the most popular routes by land and sea, the journey times and the role played in that context by the settlements along the route. Generally speaking, pilgrims travelled by the road system that had been created throughout Europe by the Roman administration, which was still in full working order in late antiquity and indeed was used without interruption until the Middle Ages. In order to reach Jerusalem, pilgrims from Central and Northern Europe had two options at their disposal: they could either descend along the Italian highways to the ports of Puglia and then continue by sea, or they could travel across the Balkans to Constantinople and then either head for Jerusalem along a coastal maritime route or continue overland through present-day Turkey and Syria. The second option was no doubt the shorter route, but it was also fraught with danger and impossible to use in some months of the year (from March to November). The first option was thus preferred. The Anonymous pilgrim from Burdigala (Bordeaux), author of one of the very first travel accounts—the famous *Itinerarium Burdigalense*—used both options depending on their convenience at the time (Cuntz 1929; Marella 2012, p. 200).

From his home town, he and a group of pilgrims walked the Via Domitia from Toulouse to Arles, crossed the Alps at Mont Cenis, travelled through northern Italy from Turin to Aquileia, entered the Danube valley and turned south along the Via Diagonalis, which ran diagonally across the Balkan Peninsula. After passing through some inland towns in Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and present-day Turkey, he reached Constantinople, crossed the Bosphorus and continued overland along the inland stretches of the Roman road system, passing through Anatolia and Syria and finally reaching Palestine. On his return journey, the Anonymous palmer travelled with his companions back along the same Middle Eastern roads as on his outward journey, but once he had reached Constantinople, he took the Via Egnatia through Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus to Vlora, where he embarked and crossed the Strait of Otranto, landing in the City of Martyrs. He then travelled up the Salento peninsula along the Via Traiana Calabria, stopping at Brindisi and Bari, thereafter following the Via Appia to Benevento and finally Rome. Other members of the group continued along the Via Flaminia to Rimini and finally along the Via Emilia to Milan, where the "Itinerarium" ends (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Itinerarium Burdigalense, 333 AD.

The Itinerarium Burdigalense “recalls in general terms the Itinerarium Antonini and the Tabula Peutingeriana and is the oldest and most complete itinerarium document, a kind of ‘Guide’ for Christian pilgrims going to Jerusalem at a time—the fourth century—when pilgrimage from the West to the holy places assumed significant proportions” (Dalena 2008, p. 41).

In southern Italy, and Puglia in particular, the itinerary partially follows the consular road known as the Via Traiana (Dalena 2014), which, in its coastal and inland variants, “was not identified with the Appian-Trajan consular road alone, but also with the Adriatic coastal highway (from Sipontum to Barium) and the inland transhumant herding routes (‘or white roads’)” (Copeta and Marzulli 2012, p. 238). From Egnatia, the route turned south towards Brindisi (Via Traiana) and from there descended to Otranto (Via Traiana “Calabra”), branching out into various “circuits” throughout Salento and often intersecting with other ancient devotional routes.

During the Middle Ages, and in particular from the First Crusade in 1096 until the fall of Acre in 1293, the itinerary following the antiquam Rome viam remained the most popular among those heading to the Holy Land, the ancient road network of the Roman age forming the central core of a bundle of often alternative roads. Throngs of crusaders and pilgrims from the north passed through Rome on their way down to the ports of Brindisi and Otranto. Once they had fulfilled their vow, they would return to their homeland, retracing the route in reverse: as had been the case in late antiquity, therefore, for returning pilgrims landing in Italy, the Via Traiana constituted the initial stretch of an ideally “Francigena” road, which, after Rome, continued towards the Alpine passes following the consular roads and the so-called “via di Monte Bardone” (Marella 2014).

The current Via Francigena del Sud connects with the European Vie Francigene cultural itinerary (which follows the stages of the return journey from Rome to Canterbury of the archbishop Sigeric, after receiving the investiture from Pope John XV in 990 AD) in Rome.

The Southern Via Francigena, on the other hand, reproduces the route from Otranto to Rome taken in 333 AD by the anonymous French pilgrim, who, while crossing the Apennines, listed the stages with their relative names, position and distances on the cursus publicus of the late Roman period (Hunt 1982).

Concerning the name of this route, which links the Apostolic See to the ports of embarkation in Puglia, it should be clear that there is a good reason for identifying it as the continuation of Sigeric’s Francigena, with whose consolidated popularity as an organised route it aspires to be associated. On the basis of the sources, but also in accordance with a constructivist reading of the places, it can be shown that from late antiquity to the Middle

Ages and beyond, this particular journey was undertaken via multiple roads that varied over time and that the same name can be found in areas that are quite distant from the route that is now being developed. Taking into account the substantial unity of the Christian world in the view of the ancient pilgrims, it would perhaps have been appropriate to consider a single, unified route, a great European artery linking the three major centres of Christianity (Oliva 2012, p. 227).

3. The Via Francigena del Sud: From Religious Pilgrimage to Spiritual Route

In the rapid transformation of modern society, in which social and economic innovation seems to be a driving force, there is a need to make room for the demands of the spirit and clearer manifestations of human freedom.

We are witnessing a sort of “anthropological shift”, which is restructuring the person and human societies in terms of lifestyles, outlooks and perspectives. The uniformity of its spiritual motives makes it possible to view it as something that cuts across different cultures with comparable patterns and unifying themes and concepts. It acts as a calming factor with respect to tradition and modernisation, showing that the spiritual motive that animates it can be more than just a ritual: it is a response to the widespread need for spirituality and identity but also for convivial socialisation in contrast to the many negative factors that afflict today’s society (dissonance, discord and conflict). There is a need to enjoy life experiences made up of emotional expectations, associations and nuances, mediated by the knowledge, experience and subjective perception of each individual, which make it possible to manage reality by meeting the growth needs of the individual.

It would seem that walking the trails, which are based on ancient religious pilgrimage routes but have undergone profound transformations over time, fulfils these objectives (Josan 2009; Collins-Kreiner 2009, 2010). From the ancient practice of “devotional marches” towards illustrious burial places associated with women and men worthy of veneration to the medieval pilgrimage, we have now come to a new approach: via a long process of transformation affecting the physiognomy of the pilgrims and the routes they cross, the travellers have taken on the features of the “pilgrim-tourist”, i.e., a person who makes use of modern tourism facilities in the areas crossed by the route. What remains firmly anchored to the original meaning of pilgrimage is the aspect of the journey, which has two specific features determined by the variable motives for undertaking it: the first concerns the traveller who enters unusual contexts, while the second is about the recovery of a more interior, spiritual dimension. While the medieval pilgrim set off towards some sanctuary out of faith (*causa orationis*) or a need for inner mortification (*causa poenitentia*) or to beg for divine or saintly intervention (*peregrinatio pro voto*) from the eponymous saint of the place of worship (Vantaggiato 2012), today’s walkers have other motives (Singh 2013). These include faith, but above all, they concern spiritual needs, which Castegnaro (2018) describes as a vast and invisible “middle ground” lying between the two extreme positions of fundamentalists and atheists/agnostics, occupied by those who sense a spiritual meaning in nature, culture, art and socialisation (p. 127). Lacking any confessional tradition, many set out in search of their own identity, as well as stability, clarity and a way to shed some of their baggage; they are on an inner quest, seeking an intimate sense of security that allows them to face everyday life with greater serenity and wisdom (Barber 1993). The motives for the journey have thus changed, shifting from an essentially religious endeavour to a “search for meaning”. This process may thus rightly be called “spiritual”, as it is more “inclusive” and perhaps reflects more precisely the experiential motives of many contemporary “travellers”. It is also more closely related to the “tourist traveller” who looks with admiration and nostalgia on the heroic figures of pilgrims. Seemingly disillusioned, yet fascinated by mystery, today’s traveller seeks out ancient testimony that responds to a wide range of needs: for identity, companionship and culture. Those who follow ancient pilgrimage routes have eliminated the extraordinary hardships and pains, both material and spiritual, that characterised the medieval pilgrim,

and yet they appreciate the charm of the unexpected, have a taste for adventure and value the rich opportunities for acquiring new knowledge.

Today's traveller seeks to recover the meaning of the journey as an experience that is fundamental to existence, a meaning which unfortunately today is frequently a pale imitation, a facsimile of places, people and emotions that has become part of a simple ritual, presented by the media and assorted commercial interests, resulting in the sort of standardisation and replication that is typical of organised trips.

The route of the Via Francigena del Sud is not exempt from these risks. The arrival of travellers is creating a tourist destination composed of places with a strong religious connotation, whose attractions are cultural and/or spiritual, as well as frankly naturalistic and social. The route integrates with cultural tourism via a co-mingling of motives, needs and trends that are highly heterogeneous and entail continuous interaction between spiritual, cultural, naturalistic, social and leisure aspects. It is open to memory but above all to the present and to the region as it is currently configured. Its value lies in its orientation towards testimony of the past and spirituality and towards regional characteristics and the complexity of experience conveyed through regional heritage. Such heritage manifests the past by means of the traces of ancient pilgrimage routes, but it is seen above all in the testimony of spirituality manifested in the locations via the material and immaterial heritage generated by the communities. Along the southern Via Francigena, spirituality and religion derive not only from the route of medieval pilgrims, along with the celebrated places of worship linked to the Virgin Mary and the paths of saints: they also represent a form of knowledge and understanding of the religious issues arising within a community, exemplified by the celebration of festivals and local cults. This shows how the religious dimension can be detached from specific events in favour of an expression of spirituality inherent to the customs and traditions of each region (Piersanti 2014). This involves participatory interaction with local communities, their artistic and craft activities and the life of small villages, where there is a strong sense of community, sharing and pilgrim and family hospitality. These represent the immense submerged resources of the Francigena del Sud, which crosses small towns, sometimes in the process of being abandoned, where time stands still and the landscape holds elements of a nostalgic return to the past (Trono Anna et al. 2017). This can be seen, for example, in the manifestations and expressions of modernity among the hospitable and welcoming people of Salento, where the ancient soul survives, and the flavour of remote times, of a world now too far away, with its rites, myths and magic, is manifested in the prehistoric cults of fire and stone. A central element of the landscape and the expression of a primitive conception of peasant culture, an element of shelter, an enclosure for a once-barren land made fertile by immense toil, but also the material of humble yet monumental architectural forms, stone is also a sacred and propitiatory symbol. It flourishes in the dolmens and menhirs found everywhere, among the olive trees, in front of churches and Byzantine crypts, on the side of the road, a nostalgic reminder of prehistoric cults and times long gone. It is the heightening of that feeling of loss and recovery of the past that is reaffirmed in the beauty of the hilly landscape of Murgia, with its fantastic conical whitewashed buildings, standing out against the intense green of the ancient olive trees. Here, the agricultural landscape appears finely woven with dry stone walls and enriched by the "masserie", the nerve centres of the old cereal and grazing farms, whose functions evoke a long-since vanished feudal economic organisation (Formica 1982, p. 140).

Myths, legends and folk traditions recur along the Via Michaelica (St Michael's Way) of the Francigena del Sud. Climbing the green and rugged mountains of Gargano, it reaches Monte Sant'Angelo, the national sanctuary of the Lombards which united in worship Langobardia Maior (whose capital was Pavia) and Langobardia Minor (whose capital was Benevento) with the Holy Land. Popular folklore, religious festivals and fertility rites of pagan origin (seen in the procession of the "fracchie" (torches)) in San Marco in Lamis intertwine with each other to the point of blending with the existing culture. Along the entire Via Francigena del Sud, modernity and memory merge in forms both ancient and

new in a succession of archaeological remains, churches, towers and castles, all the way to the cobblestones at the gates of Castel Gandolfo, where the Via Appia Antica ends, marked on either side by tombstones, mausoleums and stone blocks that have been there since ancient times.

Considering the spiritual motive, as global as it is intimate and subjective, the Via Francigena del Sud lives and develops in the physical places situated along the route, giving rise to a retroactive dimension that excludes the idea of “reproduction”. Its originality derives from local contexts and from cultural and social phenomena with a “glocal” dimension, in which the local cultural aspects constantly interface with a “transcultural” dimension hybridised by external factors (Trono and Castronuovo 2018).

4. From the “Ancient” to the “New” Travellers of the Mediterranean

What makes the route of the Southern Via Francigena even more valuable is that it is intended as a transit route towards the East, the Holy Land, Jerusalem, via the Mediterranean. The Mare nostrum is the end result of a historical, cultural, emotional and sensorial process. Pondering the value of this sea means engaging with a huge variety of expressive and cultural forms that have helped build the history of Europe (Zerbi 1991), whose identity lies precisely in the maritime and coastal origins of its civilisation and its constant openness to the rest of the world (Dematteis 1997, p. 21). Once the centre of civilisation, characterised by its universality, over the years, the Mare nostrum has lost the absolute centrality conferred on it by the pilgrimages to the Holy Land until the 11th century and the subsequent “armed pilgrimage” of the crusaders (Cardini 2007). For almost two thousand years, Christian pilgrims set out on their journey, sailing the Mediterranean to reach the Holy Land and visit the places where Christ lived, preached and made his final journey to Calvary. They became part of the long encounter between Christianity and Islam aimed at producing positive cultural and economic results (Cardini 2007), which Venetian and Genoese traders were able to keep alive in the following centuries (Cardini 2002, 2007). The Christians of Europe indicated in their travel diaries the faith that had driven them to undertake such a long and dangerous journey, a motive that still has a clear spiritual justification even today. Today’s travellers are prompted by the search for inner wellbeing, the recovery of the soul, the desire to experience transcendence or to escape from everyday life and family duties. There is also a desire for growth, to get back into shape, to overcome loss and recharge their batteries via a sense of autonomy and freedom, but a role may also be played by a desire for adventure and curiosity, for companionship and human contact or, more simply, the religious motive.

However, these are not the only motives of those who still attempt to sail the Mediterranean, today considered one of the riskiest crossings for migrants in the world. The Mare nostrum, which continues to play a role in the destiny of peoples, is today the scene of naval traffic, commercial challenges and flows of men and women. They are no longer pilgrims travelling to and from the Holy Land but African and Asian migrants, who follow invisible routes that oblige them to attempt to cross the Mediterranean. Its waters are now affected by serious environmental pressures, and strong economic and criminal interests are intertwined. There is a frenetic and unregulated race to seize precious resources on the seabed, destabilising the region, which is already collapsing under the weight of the socio-political unsustainability of regimes in the Arab world, while Europe struggles to find its own dimension and to confront its own past and history. That history—as Pellitteri points out—“is also a political product, derived from the mastery of the past and the consciousness of time”, which is now obliging Europe to face its “historical responsibilities” (Pellitteri 2018).

Questioning the future of Europe means confronting the history and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean, assembling the pieces of a complex mosaic whose common motif is an emphasis on cultural heritage, while respecting the environment, legality and human rights (Matvejevic 2006; Braudel [1987] 2017).

The Mediterranean is currently being crossed by human beings who wish to fulfil a dream of freedom and democracy: their voyage is not linked to flight as a search for refuge, as in the myth of Ulysses, but to the journey of Abraham, justified by a “need to go beyond, for something more [. . .] a race to which we are driven by an irrepressible need to “get out”: “leave your land and go!”; cast off your own being and its immobility, respond to the need to go beyond, to escape, to get away from yourself”. We are thus dealing with a metaphysical desire, which sees the Mediterranean as a “sea of complexity [. . . a sea] in which it is still possible to find positive signs and perspectives regarding both memories and projects, the past and the future, allowing the continuation of history [and] an alternative renewal: freed from the tranquilising notion of the great lake (a dead sea!), having become a sea that boils, crossed by different cultures and religions and not only by the dinghies of desperate people and the fast vessels of smugglers [. . .]. And it is precisely by passing through the Mediterranean that we Europeans can examine what we have been, what we are and what we could be, setting in motion a healthy exercise of memory, which for us is nothing other than the grounding of the values by which our culture is supposed to be inspired. This task is unavoidable for us Westerners today. By immersing ourselves, so to speak, in the Mediterranean, it is possible to grasp those characteristics of western civilisation that only the most distracted reading of the events of recent decades could allow us to culpably neglect” (Signore 2007, p. 20).

5. Conclusions

Cultural and religious itineraries are gaining more and more importance in contemporary approaches to slow tourism. In their blend of spirituality and the search for knowledge, these itineraries combine the faith motive with interest in nature and the landscape, with its varying complexity, from the scenic-perceptive level to knowledge of its links to regional identity.

Following the ancient routes of the Via Appia and Via Traiana through regions and contexts that for medieval pilgrims constituted the harshest and most tiring stretch of the journey, for today’s travellers, the Via Francigena del Sud offers the social and cultural values of discovery and enrichment. The route can be seen as a quest, involving personal growth, wonderful landscapes, “a true human quality-of-life resource” and a “primary encyclopaedia of our knowledge” (Croce and Perri 2009, p. 60), which still manages to convey the idea of lost harmony and the metaphysics of beauty. Walking it helps recover the memory of places, its users experiencing a dimension of the past involving aspects that are quite different from the classic “pilgrimage”. It offers cultural and experiential enrichment by intercepting the demands of society and religion in a cultural context pervaded by complexity, cultural pluralism and a “polytheism of values”.

In the creation of religious-cultural itineraries, as described in the previous sections, the places’ elements of originality are intertwined with socio-cultural values and the subjective components (interior and cultural) of the walker through the experience of anthropological liminality (Turner and Turner 1997). The authentic dimension goes beyond what is measurable with an objectivist approach based on the reliability of the sources with respect to the research theme that drives the journey. As a matter of fact, when it is able to evoke in the user its matrices of culture and faith, this experience is enriched with symbolic meanings and interior implications.

From this point of view, if properly structured, the paths of the “epiphanies” of St. Peter and St. Francis, both real and those based on more or less ancient local traditions, take on their rightful importance. The Petrine cult as handed down to the modern day is closely linked to the roots of Mediterranean and European evangelisation. This ancestral relationship is evident in the reference to footprints and in the association with the presence of water sources used to baptise the first Christians. The tradition of St. Francis, on the other hand, although linked to a conventual and more cultured environment, always finds new strength due to the power of renewal of the faith that the Saint introduced in all communities. His message of serenity and inner simplicity made the need for “communitas”

resonate in the cities of the late Middle Ages, persisting even in the following centuries. For this reason, his preaching and miracles are mainly associated with convents, squares and natural places of particular charm.

The path of the “Via Francigena del Sud” to Rome, *Caput mundi*, is located at the centre of a journey between two *Finis terrae*, Santiago and Jerusalem, at a time when Europe was the centre of the world. For some current wayfarer, the “Via Francigena del Sud” is the journey towards Jerusalem. For many others, it has a social and cultural value, filled with discovery and enrichment. The wayfarer who sets off today along that route is interested above all in more dynamic and participatory ways of learning about historical events and the various components of the region’s identity, the perception of which is filtered by the traveller’s culture. In this context, the traveller’s interpretation of “Via Francigena del Sud” is mediated by the travel experiences of people who are “on the road” and involved in a dialogue that is open to local cultures (La via Francigena Nel Sud 2021). Retracing the dense and extensive network of roads and paths associated with ancient and medieval mobility is a powerful way to enhance the historical, cultural and anthropological values of its most important localities. The “Via Francigena del Sud” adds knowledge of heritage and sites to the travellers. Moreover, it not only serves as a common thread to link essential components of the physical and human landscape (e.g., nature, art, architecture, archaeology, rural settlements) but also brings together gastronomical traditions, ancient crafts and distinctive local products, local feasts and folklore.

For modern travellers, completing it today can represent the end of a pilgrimage, where anxiety is banished, the soul is freed, toil ends, and they can imagine being reborn to a new life. That rebirth is what those who cross the Mediterranean today yearn for, pursuing their European dream to ensure the rights of the person and peaceful integration between different peoples (De Cesaris 2017, p. 22). Finally, this is the underlying meaning of the Francigena (Ricciardi 2011). It is the recovery of the awareness of a common cultural and spiritual matrix that connects the East to the West, on which the European identity has been built and a “new Europe” can be built: a community no longer founded only “on the identity of origins or on belonging to a place, but on that equally true and profound identity that is realised by crossing borders, in that construction of oneself, which is change, encounter, interbreeding, contamination with the other. There is no civilisation, [. . .] there will be no European identity, without this continuous going out of oneself and meeting with the other, without that feeling at ease in the complexity of differences” (Diodato 2017, pp. 71–72).

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, methodology, software, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, data curation, writing—original draft preparation, writing—review and editing, visualization, supervision, project administration, funding acquisition, Anna Trono and Luigi Oliva. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Article

The Ways of Things: Mobilizing Charismatic Objects in Oberammergau and Its Passion Play

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Abstract: The mobilization processes initiated by the medieval practice of Christian pilgrimage do not only concern the journeys of human travellers but also of things. The transport of objects to and from pilgrimage sites derives from a pre-modern concept of charisma as a specific kind of energy that can be transferred to things and substances. This mutual mobilization of humans and things can be described as the entangled processes of charismatic charging and re-charging; we argue that this pre-modern logic of contiguity and contagion has survived the multiple transformations of individual travel until today. Even travel dispositives of the 20th and 21st centuries presuppose kinds of situational and spatialized charisma involving human and non-human agents. We illustrate this by the example of the world-renowned Oberammergau Passion Play with its unique playing continuity from the early 17th century onwards. We argue that by taking objects home from elevated places, situational and site-specific charisma can be taken home. To describe the relationship between travel by pilgrims, the mobility of objects, and the mutual charismatic charging of elevated places and things, we propose three perspectives on the material remains of elevated situations. In addition to relics and souvenirs, we propose ‘spolia’ as a third category which allows for the description of discontinuity and transformation in practices of elevating things.

Citation: Mohr, Jan, and Julia Stenzel. 2022. The Ways of Things: Mobilizing Charismatic Objects in Oberammergau and Its Passion Play. *Religions* 13: 71. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13010071>

Academic Editor: Mariano P. Barbato

Received: 1 December 2021

Accepted: 6 January 2022

Published: 12 January 2022

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Keywords: pilgrimage; tourism; charismatic objects; Oberammergau; Passion Play; relics

1. Introduction

Confronted with pilgrimage as a mobility practice, one may first think of persons moving and being moved, be it physically in space or metaphorically in narratives and semantics. However, the dispositive of pilgrimage, which is a bundle of movements, actions, communications, topographical and topological ways and shifts, routes and transgressions, institutions, and infrastructures (Foucault 2000; cf. Bührmann and Schneider 2008), does not only engage persons. The dynamics of space and time corresponding to pilgrimage also involve things and objects, animals and architecture, narratives and imagery.

This article will discuss pilgrimage as a constellation entangling multiple kinds of mobilization, shifting, and change over time, beyond cultural-historical borders. The type of pilgrimage discussed here is not identical with the practices of religiously affected travel that co-evolved with European Christianity, although it refers to them. Encouraged by the early church fathers, pilgrimage has been a customary episode in a good Christian’s life, and it has always been a set of practices assembling more than human agents: God and Saints, relics and icons, things and symbols, holy places, and religious architecture (Kessler 2013). Places of pilgrimage are regularly identified as ‘elevated’ places, linked to miracles or martyrdom, now bearing the physical remains of saints or revered persons. While these relics are stationary, they trigger the dynamization of living human bodies when religious practitioners devote a part of their lifetime to get there. Thus, a history of Christian pilgrimage can hardly be written without mapping the topology of relics in



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Europe and beyond (Dyas 2014; Wilken 1992). On the other hand, people are likely to take home mementoes from their journeys to elevated topoi; transportable objects have been part of the pilgrimage since early Christianity. Thus, there is a significant overlap in the histories and biographies of relics and pilgrimage.

The entangled histories of pilgrimage and elevated objects are the first historical point of departure of this article. The second lies in the modern transformation of pilgrimage: While some of the practices of pilgrimage survived reformation and the epistemological shifts of the 16th–18th centuries, the 19th century as a period of radical societal and media-historical transformations also led to the transformation of pilgrimage as an institution and the integration of agents constituting it to specifically modern ways of travelling. In the 19th century, a new bourgeois way of life emerged that made travel without religious or economic aims and background a common practice. Shifts in practices and a new conceptualization of travel contributed to the evolution of modern dispositives of tourism, taking part in the production of identities beyond religious metanarratives or economic necessities. Nevertheless, even late-modern travel dispositives continue to essentially involve objects of concern, such as postcards, photographs, and souvenirs of different kinds. Thus, traditional pilgrim destinations did not disappear from the maps of post-enlightenment travellers, nor did they lose their attraction. Instead, they remained spaces that were likely to make a difference; the journey to these places qualified them to be integrated into modern narratives of individuation.

Departing from these two historical observations, we aim at understanding how the pre-modern practice of taking home bits and pieces of the numinous experienced in sacred places, and integrating them into everyday life, is transformed in the context of fluidized and individualized religion (Lüddeckens and Walthert 2010). To explore this, we take a closer look at the interwoven histories of relics as charismatic objects, and pilgrimage as a practice based on the notion of charisma. Charisma has conventionally been described as a quality that can be transferred—from a numinous entity (God) to outstanding persons, non-human agents and even objects or substances (Vedeler 2018). In non-human agents, we argue, the spatial and situational charisma of the pilgrimage site can be taken home, where these significant objects can recall the charismatic situation and, again, generate charismatic effects: healing, making present, generating communion.

The elevated place and the situated practice we engage in in the following are Oberammergau and its world-famous Passion Play. Oberammergau is a small Upper-Bavarian centuries-old historical village. The village's identity has been closely linked to the legendary foundations of its Passion Play in 1634. According to the narrative, in 1633, the community of Oberammergau had pledged to produce and perform a decennial passion play if God would spare their village from the bubonic plague. The promise has always been fulfilled, with only two exceptions. In the 17th century, the play used to be an affair of the village. However, it soon attracted travellers from the whole region of Ammergau and, from the second half of the 19th century onwards, from all over the world. With about half a million visitors in the most recent playing seasons, the Passion Play is no doubt one of the decisive economic factors of the village. Paradoxically, the transformation of Oberammergau into a pilgrim destination co-evolves with the history of secularization that involved the implicitness of the pilgrimage. Thus, pilgrimage into Oberammergau and its Passion Play has always been a hybrid practice, integrating moments of individual spirituality and conversion in parallel with narratives of retreat, reversion, and return to Christian faith and belief (Waddy Lepovitz 1992).

We will observe the specificity of Oberammergau as a pilgrim destination bearing the index of late-modern multiple secularities. The village is institutionalized as a pilgrimage site not only by the villagers' fulfilment of their legendary vow but also by travellers witnessing and testifying the decennially renewed staging of the Passion Play, integrating it into diverse biographies and environments. This institutionalization also affects how things were used in evidencing and evoking the Passion Play as a singular event and Oberammergau as an elevated site. The infrastructures, objects, and practices the dispositive of

pilgrimage allow for the production of elevated objects that can be transported elsewhere to spread the charisma of the place and the play and manifest its relevance.

Our main systematic interest is in material matters of concern in travel, their agency, and their discursive negotiation: How can human spatial practice participate in producing and transforming objects conceived as ‘elevated’ and charged with charismatic energy? We approach this aim from three overlapping perspectives:

1. In pre-modern dispositives of pilgrimage, stationary and place-bound objects (relics, holy substances) trigger and coordinate the travel of bodies in space. They produce specific topologies manifested in travel infrastructures (hostels, chapels, travel guides, maps, communities) centred around elevated situations (pilgrim church service, holy plays). These situations assemble human and non-human agents, notably triggering objects (often relics) we conceive as ‘charismatic’ in a post-Weberian sense: they are perceived and made use of as charged objects, bearing a certain energy transferred to them in specific, often ritualized, practices involving metaphors of contiguity such as ‘contagion’ and ‘infection’ (Frazer 1900; Flügel 2010; Vedeler 2018).
2. The notion of taking home a specific energy ascribed to an elevated situation (e.g., of community, wholeness, salvation, cure) is closely linked to the notion of charisma as a substance or a quality that can be rubbed off from the bodies of saints or relics onto other material things (such as pieces of cloth or paper). This idea of transferring charisma by touch or spatial contiguity is deeply rooted in the Catholic typology of relics (Vedeler 2018, p. 18). Thus, elevated situations typically experienced at pilgrim destinations often involve practices of producing relics of touch (Vedeler 2018) that can be taken home as both physical evidence and a spiritual means of recalling the charisma of the original object.
3. Although differing from their pre-modern reference, late modern derivations of medieval pilgrimage involve objects brought home as souvenirs (e.g., shells, stones, dried plants; mugs, carved or sculpted objects; postcards, posters, phonograms). Conventionally, these objects are seen as falling into two or more categories, depending on how they involve specific indigenous handicrafts, facilities, or techniques of mediation (Hume 2014). As it has been widely shown, souvenirs can be more than the mere remains of travel. Instead, they can be—and are—used to encapsulate the different time and space of the journey, integrating it into the traveller’s affective biography and serving as a spot of remembrance to an emotionally charged individual past. Especially journeys narrated in the logic of pilgrimage tend to elevate these objects and ascribe to them a certain charisma. Departing from notions of the affective power of souvenirs as charismatic objects of a specific kind (Hitchcock and Teague 2000; Hume 2014), we propose to introduce a third category, aware of the analogy between relics (of touch) and souvenirs as ‘elevated objects’, transporting the charisma of ‘elevated places’. It cuts across the concepts of relics and souvenirs, focusing on the function they gain as the means and media of singularization. We identify it as a category of objects that can be a means of ‘vitam instituere’ (Legendre) without including individual biographies in a universal metanarrative. We call objects of this type spolium in a sense to be elaborated on below. While a relic of touch serves to transport (and transfer) charisma, a spolium serves to transport (and transform) singularity (Stenzel 2022a).

The structure of the article is as follows. First, we briefly sketch out the history of pilgrimage and its modern (touristic) transformations (1). Then, against the backdrop of the traditional Catholic typology of relics, we outline a typology of elevated objects correlated to practices of pilgrimage and its modern derivations: the elevated objects we are dealing with can be described as remains of an elevated situation, recalling it in different ways, in the form of relics, souvenirs, and spolia (2). This typology is concretized in the analyses of exemplary matters and objects of concern: The negotiation of the performers’ hair in the context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries’ Oberammergau Passion Play allows for an elaboration of the concept of spolium. A closer look at the refashioning and

explicit recontextualization of promotional articles produced for the 2020 season after its postponement due to COVID-19 sheds light on how elevated objects can contribute to the collective coping of latency and unforeseeable shifts in the traditional chrono-logics of the Passion Play (3).

2. 'Tourimage'—'Pilgrimage': Travelling to Elevated Places

The following section will elaborate on the evolution and diversification of pilgrimage both as a concept and a practice, entangling narratives, imaginaries, (situated) knowledge, and materialities. This involves two highly intertwined histories: One is the history of the diversification of travel as a social practice from the Middle Ages to early modern times. The second is the history of the narratives that can initiate great voyages: since early modern times, it is no longer only the epistemic objectivity of (religious) truth that can persuade humans to leave home but also, and even to a greater extent, the subjective craving for an individual, singular experience.

2.1. *The History of the Diversification of Travel*

There are many types of what we conceive as 'elevated' things, depending not least on which places they are correlated with. Nevertheless, the spatial metaphor of elevation implies a relation to a baseline that requires historicization and precise contextualization, especially in the context of pilgrimage: Christian life has been described as the daily pilgrimage of the people of God towards Heaven by the church fathers (e.g., Clement of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine). Thus, pilgrimage is a 'way up', and strategies of giving persistence to the experience of being lifted beyond the earthly world at the holy place the peregrine directed his physical effort to are of considerable concern.

Where travel movements in the Middle Ages did not obey economic or pragmatic imperatives such as seeking work or trading, they were overwhelmingly religiously motivated. Few other reasons in the Middle Ages could cause a person to travel far and spend a long time away from his or her environment. Most pilgrims will have had a religiously based desire to travel to holy places. In addition, however, and perhaps even easier to grasp in the written and pictorial record, the motivation for pilgrimages lies in a measurable purpose: the journey to an elevated place obtains indulgence. Those who complete a pilgrimage may hope to be pardoned in the afterlife for part of the time they must spend in purgatory. In addition to this main reason for pilgrimages, there are more individual reasons which are still typical: supplication, fulfilment of a vow, enhancement of one's reputation, and no doubt also economic interests (Wolf 1989, p. 83).

Curiosity will also have played a secondary role, but it could hardly manifest discursively as a reason for the journey. Since Augustine, 'curiositas' has been subject to a theological ban; anyone who curiously tries to search out the hidden powers of nature questions its beautiful and good arrangement by God and makes himself suspect of 'superbia'. Accordingly, for a long time, pilgrimage reports hardly bore individual traits; these could have provoked and undermined the reputation of the person reporting (Wolf 1989, pp. 83, 88). On closer examination, the sources reveal that in the range of pragmatic text types, only the pilgrim subject was available to narrativize journeys. In individual cases, types of adventurous journeys also offered narrative patterns that could shape pilgrimage accounts, but they remain secondary to the pilgrim subject. Novel and unfamiliar things can be included in pilgrimage reports more effortlessly, making it easier to classify them in familiar reference patterns and evaluate them from a theological perspective. This holds especially true for pilgrimages to the Holy Land. On his way to the stations of Christian salvation history, the pilgrim conspicuously confirms the New Testament events and inscribes his own life story in them.

By the Middle Ages, pilgrimages, especially to the Holy Land, were strongly regulated, and it would not be wrong to speak of veritable pilgrimage tourism. Routes were largely standardized (from Central Europe, pilgrims headed for Venice and travelled by ship with stops in Crete, Rhodes, and Jaffa), and at the destination, competent guides awaited the

pilgrim. Since the second half of the 14th century, a detailed description of particular places of salvation was no longer necessary, for every pilgrim was in the care and under the guidance of the Franciscans. They had obtained a kind of license from the Sultan in Cairo to take care of pilgrims, setting them up in a monopoly position. Once pilgrims obtained a permit in Cairo and entered the Holy Land, they were largely incorporated into the Franciscans' sightseeing program (Wolf 1989, pp. 91–92). Given this dense supervision, pilgrims had little opportunity for individual experiences; the individuality in their accounts lies more in the way topic motifs are invoked and varied.

By the Middle Ages, religious and economic interests were interwoven. For instance, the Church promoted pilgrimages to the Holy Land less vigorously than those to Rome to support the economy there and prevent freed-up capital from falling into the hands of the heathens (Wolf 1989, pp. 83–84). In the early modern period, a diversification of travel practices occurred (Margry 2008a, pp. 28–29). In pilgrimage reports by aristocrats, the prospect of increased reputation already played a critical role. The reports stylize the pilgrimage as an adventurous journey and emphasize proving oneself in the face of perilous situations. In the 15th century, the focus shifted to accents of representation. In this period, the unique, unrepeatable nature of the journey is emphasized, which lies in the enormous financial and logistical effort and the exclusivity of the encounters with other top nobles and rulers (Wolf 1989, pp. 97–100). In the early modern period, alongside the pilgrimage which maintained its high status into the 18th century, and sporadically in offshoots into the 19th century, the grand tour of nobles and the 'peregrinatio academica' of students, who were attracted by the call of individual scholars and took on long journeys to study with them, arose (de Ridder-Symoens 1989; Meier 1989; Sweet et al. 2017). In these types of journeys, curiosity gains a new legitimacy (Blumenberg 1996). While pilgrimage accounts are not necessarily capable of absorbing and processing experiences of novelty, erudite Latin travel descriptions ('hodoeporica'; cf. Wiegand 1989), and the descriptions of voyages of discovery for which there were no patterns to live up to, absorbed the novel empirical data and fed them into contemporary knowledge systems.

2.2. *The Singularization of Travel Narratives*

The types of travelling so far discussed have two things in common: the main and interim destinations of the journeys and the things and circumstances to be observed on the way are prior to the individual experience. This holds for the sites of salvation history in the Holy Land and the cities, courts and residences on the cavalier's tour or the universities with an international appeal (Paris, Bologna, Padua, Louvain) attracting students from all over Europe. The destinations of pre-modern travel are mostly fixed, as are the routes and their stages. To put it bluntly, the traveller knows in advance what she or he may encounter. For a long time, their own experience is secondary to erudite book knowledge; it has to confirm the latter and, at most, add new details.

While within pre-modern logic, the destinations have a categorical validity, modern, post- or late-modern journeys have to legitimate their respective destinations. If the promise of salvation and places of grace is already given to pre-modern pilgrimage accounts, so is the discursive site where such validity is enforced. In times of multiple secularities (Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2017), one encoding can be joined by another precisely because the discursive location of elevated places is not clarified in advance. Persons who conceive of themselves as pilgrims will mix with those they estimate as 'mere' tourists (for interrelations between religion and tourism see Bar and Cohen-Hattab 2003; Badone and Roseman 2004; Gebhardt et al. 2005; Timothy and Olsen 2006; Swatos 2006; Raj and Morpeth 2007; Grimshaw 2008; Margry 2008b; Stausberg 2009; Norman 2011). Spiritual contact zones of this kind make two moments expectable: first, the meaning of the destination and the journey itself is likely to be grounded in an inner experience. Second, one will eagerly assure oneself of the experiences through souvenirs if the significance of the journey cannot be readily communicated. Thus, the relationship of justification between journey

and biography is reversed; the journey through space is increasingly discursivized as an encounter with one's self.

While the topologies of medieval and early modern pilgrimage are based on physically overcoming the spiritual distance between the individual Christian and God, thus mirroring human life as a pilgrimage towards Heaven, late modern concepts and practices negotiate the task of overcoming the psychological distance between a subject and the inner self. They no longer necessarily rely on the history of salvation and the belief in a beyond but involve multiple spiritualities and multiple secularities. Thus, while the former includes the pilgrim and his physical journey into universal salvation history, the latter includes the journey and destination into an individual biography. Instead of confirming a person's belonging to a collective like 'Christendom' and re-enacting inclusion into the Christian community, modern peregrinations can be described as strategies of singling out, and as practices of stepping apart from societal life, at least for the duration of the journey (Turner and Turner 1978).

Travel guides and reports of travel to Oberammergau since the 1850s reflect these developments. From 1850 on, the Passion Play village attracted an increasingly international (though predominantly British and American) audience (Waddy Lepovitz 1992). Visitors seek not only religious edification but also recreation, the exoticism of simple country life (almost) untouched by modernity, or an alternative to bourgeois art theatre (Mohr 2018, 2022). The municipality tried to address these heterogeneous expectations; travel guides and other publications such as the trilingual 'Oberammergauer Blätter' (1890) were intended to channel the diverse expectations and attune the out-of-town audience to the special conditions of the Passion Play and the location. The travelogues of visitors who see themselves as pilgrims clearly show efforts to distinguish themselves from the mass of other travellers. However, since people widely follow the same routes (even the routes to Oberammergau are largely standardized), this can only happen by asserting an inner attitude. The way to the Alpine village separates the traveller from everyday life. Not only does it lead to a spiritually charged sphere but it also constitutes a way to an inner experience (Mohr 2018).

3. On the Orders of Remains: Relics, Souvenirs, and Spolia

When talking about the devotional practice of pilgrimage in the context of the medieval and pre-reformation Catholic religion, the link to wandering things is at hand. As shown before, pilgrimage can be described as a complex topological constellation of places, proximities, distances, and corporeal experiences such as walking, watching, touching. How and why a place qualifies for inclusion in this constellation significantly depends on material factors. Therefore, attitudes to the material remains of holy lives are central in the organization of "'primary' holy places and the secondary network of sites which developed through belief in 'transferable holiness'" (Dyas 2014, p. 1). Consequently, bodily practices connected to relics and the spiritual realities that they are involved in are triggered by the basic assumption that the charisma of religious figures can be rubbed off onto things and thus mobilized, transported through space and time in those 'charged' objects.¹ Thus, the logics of relics, as the logics and topologies of pilgrimage, are the logics of the transfer of certain qualities by contiguity, contact, and contagion (Dyas 2014; for an intercultural approach Flügel 2010).

Marianne Vedeler describes relics as objects possessing charismatic power. Challenging the sociologically elaborated concept of charisma, she opts for exploring 'charisma' as an attribution not restricted to human agents and superempirical beings (Vedeler 2018). The neo-materialistic notion of a non-asymmetrical structure of the social in the background (Latour 2007), charismatic objects come into view as being part of, made by, and generating a hybrid, more-than-human actor-network, involving physical and non-physical entities. As we approach pilgrimage as a practice of assembling heterogeneous agents and triggering the production of things qualified to inherit and transfer more-than-human features, Vedeler's proposal seems helpful. Departing from her notion, we aim at charisma as a

dynamic, ephemeral quality generated by the agents involved in specific settings. It can be associated with humans as well as non-humans, it can be charged and discharged, and it can, under certain circumstances, be transported through space and time. Of course, we do not understand charisma as a matter of fact, but as a “matter of concern” (Latour) that gains its reality and efficacy by the use communities make of it and its power to act and trigger action. We can observe the practices connected to this concern and the materialities they involve and bring about.

The transferability and dynamics of the charismatic power of relics manifest in the conventions of their categorization. Roman Catholic dogma subsumes relics into three classes derived from the order of the biblical model of martyrdom: the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross. Relics of the first order are the Arma Christi, the instruments of torture bringing Jesus to death, e.g., splints of the holy cross, thorns of the crown, but also Veronica’s Veil, the shroud of Christ, and even the dices of the Roman soldiers. Deriving from the foundational situation of the crucifixion, the category of first-order relics includes every surviving part of the bodies of Jesus or the saints, such as bones or hair. Relics that are neither body parts nor parts of Arma Christi but inherit their quality otherwise are classified as ‘contact relics’: This “rather vague term”

“can be used to describe two entirely different classes of relic [. . .]. Secondary relics are items that came into contact with a saint during his or her lifetime, such as the tunic of Francis of Assisi. Tertiary relics are items that have come into contact with relics and thereby absorbed some of their power, becoming another form of contact relic, such as the strips of cloth (brandea) that were touched to the tombs of saints. These tertiary contact relics allow for the power of the holy to spread [. . .]” (Montgomery 2012).

It is mainly the contact relics of the third order that can be connected to the practices and processes of transferring and transforming charisma. While the stationary relics of the first and second order that are not allowed to be bought, or to be randomly brought somewhere else, are triggering journeys, third-order relics are mobile and dynamic. They can be generated by contact or contiguity, taken home, used in individual devotional practices away from the official church service’s architectural and ritual framework.

As wandering objects, they can accompany travellers on their way to holy places and back home; their quality as a relic can be charged, discharged and recharged. A broad spectrum of objects served to transport the qualities of the relic somewhere else, and the difference between relics of touch and mere media of transfer is often difficult to draw (Simonsen 2018). As Sarah Blick has shown for relics deposited in the Aachen Cathedral, mirrors have been used as objects to inherit the charismatic qualities of relics they are pointed on:

“A widespread belief held that mirrors reflecting a sacred image could assimilate and fix some of the sanctity expressed and could later be dispensed by pointing the mirror towards a loaf of bread to be eaten or towards one’s own eyes”. (Blick 2014, p. 114).

These mirrors can be seen as ephemeral relics: they are charged easily, discharged quickly, rechargeable every time they inflect and reflect a relic that possesses a continuous charismatic power. Thus, the logic of relics comes into sight as a specific logic of mediation and transcription.

The notion of charismatic objects is not limited to the field of Catholic Christianity. Moreover, the material history of ex-voto offers of pre-Christian European contexts shows that concepts and practices of transferring, transporting, and transforming ‘good’ or ‘bad’ energies often survive shifts and disruptions in religious histories, and are deliberately taken up, re-enacted, and recycled—sometimes intentionally, sometimes inadvertently (cf. Glørstad 2018).

In ancient and medieval Europe, the reuse, recycling, and re-enactment of “matters of concern” was mainly a process accompanying major historical and cultural shifts or wide-ranging migration movements. However, since the beginning of the 19th century, the affective or semantic reformulation of objects by someone considering themselves not involved in the practices these objects stand for becomes increasingly common. Furthermore, modern

practices of travel and objectifying significant moments to take them home are often connected to the transformation of charismatic objects and the production of new ones. This holds even true for mass products of a globalized tourism industry that are both evidencing and recalling the individual journey to the place they represent (Hume 2014). They are used in manifesting charismatic situations and chargeable with charismatic power, singularizing their proud owner and materializing their memories and imagination when back home. Although deliberately given away and sold for individual use, they also recall the often violent decontextualization and appropriation of charismatic objects characterizing European religious histories. Their materiality impersonates the histories of these objects that have been discharged by decontextualization and forgetting and recharged by integration into a new context. To further understand their relation to relics on the one hand and souvenirs on the other, we introduce the concept of spolia.

Early modern writers first used the metaphor of ‘spolium’ to describe how architectural remains and fragments from the Greek and Roman cultures were used to build early medieval Churches (see, e.g., Meier 2007, p. 2). Deriving from Latin, spolium means spoils or loot, but also the flayed skin of an animal. The latter semantics shows a significant overlap between spolium and relic that we will further elaborate on. Namely, relic theft—*furta sacra*—was a common issue in the Middle Ages. Relics of the first and second orders can be decontextualized and included in different devotional contexts without being transformed into spolia in the sense we propose here (cf. Geary 1990). When applying this term, we refer to practices that cut off the unconditionality of mythological and pragmatic contexts, deliberately establishing new ones involving objects that seem to inherit a particular relevance.

Thus, relic and spolium form an asymmetrical pair of concepts; spolium is the old, stolen, reactivated, and resocialized thing insofar as it asserts itself in its erratic evidentiality: ‘I have been important elsewhere. The sheer fact that I am stolen and reused testifies to this importance.’ The logic of the spolium corresponds to a predatory actualization of tradition, which is transformed like the alien skin of the animal when it becomes human clothing. Spolia, as proposed above, can incorporate features of relics of touch as well as of first-order relics: they gain their charismatic power by their previous relevance, but also by testifying an experience estimated as significant for an individual or collective biography. In addition, this makes the concept valuable for practices involving souvenirs.

4. Souvenirs and Relics, on and off the Passion Stage: Hair, Keyrings, Crucifixes

Instead of applying the older contested notion of secularization as the replacement and emancipation of secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, the production and recycling of elevated things in Oberammergau makes it necessary to describe the relation of religion and other societal fields more specifically. The practices of transforming and reformulating “matters of concern” in Oberammergau can both illuminate and be illuminated by the concept of multiple secularities (Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2017). Departing from the more established model of multiple modernities (Eisenstadt 2000), the concept has been primarily used to detangle the relation between secularity and modernity. Wohlrab-Sahr and her coworkers distinguish between secularism as an ideologically loaded concept connected to Westernization and occidental hegemony and secularity. Secularism stands for the ideology of separation (of religion and state, the privacy of faith, and the secular public sphere). In contrast, secularity as a concept allows description of the diverse and multiple modes of differentiation between religion and other societal fields of practice. The concept of multiple secularities does not imply a unilateral or teleological process of modernization that makes religious practice disappear from the public sphere. Instead, it aims at establishing a typology open for historical and cultural comparatistics and not restricted to Western modernity (Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2011, p. 71). Thus, the use and reuse of elevated objects, their charging and discharging, their agency and erraticity, can be described as multilateral and multilayered through space and time, through material and discursive histories.

For the case of relics, this means that they do not have to turn into mere remains. Instead, as spolia, they can be built into a completely different, individual or societal, transcendental system, adapted to a different body, without getting lost and becoming invisible. Thus, spolia become negotiable on secular bodies that can be sacralised in these processes—however temporarily and idiosyncratically.

To evaluate the plausibility of these hypotheses, the Oberammergau Passion Play offers remarkable examples. For a century and a half, the Passion Play site has only attracted a local audience from Oberammergau itself or the surrounding villages. However, since the second half of the 19th century, the Passion Play has increasingly mobilized an international audience. As the catchment area of visitors grows, the interest in the Passion Play has also become more diverse.

Given this heterogeneous bundle of interests, expectations, and religious backgrounds, it is anything but surprising that the physical encounter with the Passion Play village and the actors affects different perceptions. That performing the Passion Play was merely a more or less exclusive theatre event under conditions of modern fictionality and theatricality is one point of view among others that can be traced in the Oberammergau discourse of the 19th and 20th centuries. Instead, numerous travelogues and guides claim (or presuppose) that a visit to Oberammergau is, even in modern times, a pilgrimage. According to them, witnessing the events of the salvation history renewed (rather than just watching the Passion Play) provides an inner experience unrivalled in times of rational sobriety. Furthermore, to be sure, there are many layerings, entanglements, and amalgamations of travel practices marked as ‘touristic’ and others described as ‘religious’. Thus, Oberammergau is a perfect example illustrating the different types of remains and relics and, more specifically, the different orders of relics and processes of mutual charging, discharging and recharging.

One of the most prominent objects involved in the co-evolution of elevated things and practices of production is the actors’ hair. Hair is a specific kind of material, combining traits of a body part with those of a substance that can be used in multiple human practices, such as weaving, wig-making, and even puppetry. Moreover, hair has been classified as a first order-relic in Catholic dogmatics. On the other hand, the connection between a strand of hair and the body to which it belonged is uncertain as soon as it is cut, which has been a literary motif since the times of Attic theatre. In the times of European romanticism, a curl of hair from the beloved is ascribed the power to make their absence physically perceptible, transforming it into an imaginary presence. In the Passion Play, hair is involved in the performative production of authenticity and credibility, allegedly increasing the intensity of the religious experience of the play (cf. Stenzel 2022a, 2022b). Probably in the first half of the 19th century, a rule was established for the Passion Play, according to which wigs were forbidden to be worn by the performers. Moreover, with the so-called hair and beard decree (‘Haar- und Barterlass’), which is renewed on Ash Wednesday of every year before the playing season, all performers are obliged to let their hair and beard grow until the end of the season (Mohr and Stenzel 2020). Since then, flowing hair, especially of male inhabitants, has been part of Oberammergau’s iconographic tradition, invoked in travelogues and fictional texts as well as in pictorial representations. Significantly, the production and trading of secondary relics made with hair are mainly graspable as a discursive reality, in travelogues and magazines.

Depending on whether the Passion Play is conceived as a repetition of salvation history and blends the actors in Oberammergau with the biblical characters, the status of this conspicuous splendour of hair also changes between a merely picturesque peculiarity, a theatrical costume with particular authenticity, or otherwise the charismatic quality charged by and charging the wearer reciprocally. This ambivalence has caused, among others, several caricatural responses we will briefly discuss. It is far from surprising that, on the occasion of the 1922 Passion season, the Munich satirical magazine ‘Simplicissimus’ dedicated a special issue to Oberammergau and the Passion. Since ‘Simplicissimus’ was well known for its anti-clerical stance, the issue was packed with satire, caricatures, and somewhat informative contributions on the performance history of Oberammergau. The

strikingly long hair and beards of those who impersonated the holy figures on stage were the main target of satire, especially when it comes to the affective and (semi-)religious charging. An illustration shows two elderly ladies attacking a helpless, long-haired Jesus (obviously the Christ-actor of Oberammergau) with scissors (Figure 1).



„Locken werden nicht mehr freihändig abgegeben. Im Herbst kommen sie zur Versteigerung.“

Figure 1. *Simplicissimus* 26, 53: 2.

One could take this for the enthusiastic followers' hunt for souvenirs, for a fetish, but the context of the caricature points in another direction. In the 'Simplicissimus', as in other popular journals and magazines of that time, caricatures are shown repeatedly in which British visitors to the Passion Play (recognizable by their clothing) do not distinguish between the characters presented on stage and the performers themselves. That is, they consider the stage action to be reality. They beat up the Judas actor, wish for a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, or are surprised that Jesus apparently has a wife and kids and lives a sedentary life in the village together with his family, though never mentioned in the Bible. As for the hair of the famous Christ actor Joseph Mair, the British orientalist Richard Burton mentions the "legend that an Engländer [. . .], who had vainly offered £1000 for a crop [haircut], dogged him for months with furtive scissors" (Burton 1881, p. 97).

Against this background, it is likely that the two women with scissors do not take their victim to be the 1922 Christ-actor, Anton Lang, but Christ himself. The picture suggests that his naturally grown curls are first-order relics to them. However, this is not just the twisted perception of two British ladies: pleadingly, Christ points out that the hair would be auctioned off at the end of the season. This equally assumes that much money can be made from the natural hair of a tangible Christ actor (or, in the eyes of the pious Englishwomen, not a mere embodiment but a revival Jesus). The imminent theft of the sanctified curls anticipates what is planned: the mobilization of a remnant, a remain, which is stylized into a relic.

The illegitimate haircut evoked by the drawing can be described as a strategy of mobilizing charisma by relic theft, as 'furtum sacrum' (cf. Geary 1990). However, other than the medieval strategy of bringing commonly approved relics under one's control, the theft depicted here produces a relic from a spolium—a stolen body part, removing not skin but hair, thus leaving the source body alive. The hair is charged in at least two interwoven aspects. Firstly, it has been grown according to institutionalized rules on the heads and faces of those supposed to perform the biblical narrative on stage. Secondly, it is part of a human body that underwent the Passion of the Christ, albeit on stage. Thus, the hair can be seen as testifying to both the year of rehearsal and spiritual preparation its wearer subjected himself to, and the lived experience of the Passion play that the auditory has shared with the performers on stage. As the hair is traditionally cut after the dernière, it is the only remain of the body of Jesus on stage, for his impersonators regularly return to their roles in families and society. The status of the performers' hair at the end of the

season is a reminder of a practice involving the merchants' jugs that Jesus destroys on stage in the temple scene: those are still crafted in local workshops and restituted after the season, showing the cracks and lesions of their destruction, and bearing the signatures of the performers. Until today, the visibly mended vessels are auctioned at the end of the season, and the proceeds are donated to charity. Thus, in purchasing a jug, the buyer accepts it as an object that is elevated by its material connection to the performance of the Passion.

The ambivalence of hair between remain, memento, relic, and nauseating remnant is a recurring motif in the satirical Oberammergau discourse of the early 20th century. For example, an illustration in the Munich magazine 'Jugend' shows the waitress of an inn in dispute with a guest who complains about the extortionate price of the soup (Figure 2).



Figure 2. *Jugend* 26 (1910), p. 606.

In a broad dialect, she rebukes the guest: Some female American would pay a dollar, for there's a hair of the Christ inside! ("A Amerikanerin zahlat an Taler! Weil a Haar vom Christus drin is!"). Quick-witted, she responds to the dissatisfied guest who had found the

proverbial fly in the ointment (the German equivalent: ‘hair in the soup’), not in the soup itself, but its price (“Zurechtweisung”, (Hirth 1910), p. 606).

Responding, she reinterprets the unappealing leftover (if there is anyone at all) into a relic deprived of its context. At the same time, she claims that the alleged hair is charismatically charged by the body it stems from—at least from the fictive American woman’s point of view. Far from being in the same spiritual mood, the waitress knows precisely to what extent some visitors are enthusiastic about the Passion Play actors whose behaviour they observe as reflecting their stage roles. The serving of the soup is ironically transformed into relic trade. We do not know if the fictive American woman would have saved the holy remain in her handkerchief and how a later monstration of that relic might have been designed. Perhaps she would have simply enjoyed the soup in which she had found the object of concern.

The assumption that divine charisma is generated in the performance of the Passion and that this charisma remains in matters and substances that have participated in the performance is notorious in the discourse on the Oberammergau Passion play, and the notion of charismatic charging can be taken much further. Another sketch in the special issue of the 1922 ‘Simplicissimus’ shows the impersonator of Christ fleeing from a gaunt lady with a handbag (Figure 3).



„Ist hab komm über from America for zu heirat Sie. De Dollar steht 306.“

Figure 3. *Simplicissimus* 26, 53: 2.

In an awkward combination of German words and English grammar, the lady addresses the theatrical Jesus: ‘I have come over from America for to marry you. The dollar stands at 306’ (*Simplicissimus* 26 [Langen 1922], p. 2). The enormous purchasing power of the U.S. dollar was conditioned by the economic crisis and the reparation payments that the Weimar Republic had to make after the World War. Many cartoons from the 1922 season ironically refer to the currency disparity that made the trip to Oberammergau possible for pocket money from the perspective of U.S. tourists.

The lady offers a barter deal in which economic and religious logic intersect. After all, she aims to steal the man who is considered to perform as Jesus on stage and, by this, be charged with divine charisma. In this gesture of appropriation, the theatrical body of Christ is degraded to an object, albeit a sacred one.

The caricatures exaggerate, but they reflect historical options of thinking, at least the (discursive) presence of relics, their production, transformation, and trade. In this respect, they are just as relevant for a reconstruction of the Oberammergau discourse as they are for the question of the various forms of transition between souvenirs as semantically and emotionally charged things, and relics in social fields of entangled religions and multiple secularities. Oberammergau can be seen as a contact zone and a place where religious and secular claims of validity and legitimacy are negotiated. The Passion play seasons fuel not only Catholic Christian views and ways of life. They also fuel their challenges by multiple secularities, that is, multiple distinctions and correlations between ‘elevated’ and ‘ordinary’ situations, private and public matters of concern, religion, and other societal fields.

In a far more trivial form, types of contextual charges can also be observed in the windows of Oberammergau’s carving stores today. For centuries, the inhabitants of Oberammergau have established a tradition of woodcarving since the soil in their valley was not fertile and allowed neither for agriculture nor for breeding cattle. Not surprisingly,

what prevails in today's carving stores are the iconographically familiar pictorial formulas of the Christian history of salvation: the Crucifixus, the Holy Family, the Pieta. However, mundane objects, figures and arrangements are also exhibited. This leads to constellations which pious observers might find offensive, e.g., when a statue of Mary is placed next to a clown with dice, a toy castle, and wooden animals (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Window of a carver's shop in Oberammergau. Photograph by the authors.

Settings like this can not only initiate the transfer of charisma by contiguity and thus the transformation of souvenirs to relics, referring to Oberammergau as a place where a specific religious or at least spiritual experience has occurred. However, it can also lead to the profanation of devotional objects as a carved Crucifixus or a Madonna which come to stand in-line and function as arbitrary remains of a tourist trip: they do not necessarily await any recharging or religious appropriation but remain spolia, decontextualized and exhibited as arbitrary remains of a journey that lack any integration to a unifying narrative.

The Passion play season of 2020, which, due to the pandemic of COVID 19, had to be postponed for two years, highlighted another mode of charismatic objects. Shortly after the postponement, the local tourist industry responded by producing souvenirs from the remains of a performance that never occurred: keyring pendants were made out of original costume fabrics, bags, shirts, backpacks, and other promotional articles continue to be sold online, partially reprinted and modified to advertise a period of latency between the moment of the play's postponement and its actual production on stage. This recycling of material remains can further illuminate the concept of charging and discharging.

At first glance, the souvenirs of a production that has not yet occurred may appear irritating, even pointless. The cessation of the elevated situation the objects refer to should instantaneously deprive them of their charisma. However, this is only one side of the coin.

On the other hand, at the same instance, a process of recharging is initiated. On some of the promotional objects, the scheduled playing season 2020 was conspicuously deleted and overwritten with 2022, complemented by the single word ‘anticipation’ (Figure 5).



Figure 5. ‘Anticipation’: reprint of an Oberammergau merchandise bag (<https://www.passionsspiele-oberammergau.de/de/blog/detail/was-die-passionsspiele-mit-snowboarden-zu-tun-haben-2020-0614>, accessed on 8 January 2022).

Here, the holy covenant with God, which initiated the playing tradition in 1634, is replaced by a pact with the potential customers, the characteristic verticality of Abrahamic religion by the horizontal logics of a bourgeois society. Keep the faith, the promotional articles shout out, keep the anticipation, and ‘we’ (the village community) will perform the Passion for you. The chrono-logics contributing to the persistence of Oberammergau as the site of the Passion Play are recycled like the material remains of costume production. These logics are mainly founded on the mutual generation of latency and resuscitation, of the performance on stage and the performance of waiting and preparation, rehearsal, and bodily subordination to the rules of the Passion. Though referring to an event that has never occurred, the articles still play a role in transforming the phase of latency into a directed and fulfilled time, as does the growing of hair and the enrolment in an extensive casting and rehearsal process. Beyond, the ‘anticipation’ overprint connotes the mutual mobilization of objects and visitors: the one who takes the ‘anticipation’ home as a material testimony of the postponement is likely to set out for the Alpine village in 2022.

5. Conclusions: Site-Specific Charisma and the Ambivalent Status of Objects

Oberammergau draws a substantial part of its fascination from the site-specificity of the Passion Play, which is just as dependent on its topographical surroundings. It works, conversely, as a condensation that semantically and charismatically charges the village and its environment. According to a well-known anecdote, a U.S. film studio offered the village one million dollars for the right to film a Passion Play production. The community decisively refused, just as they had previously refused the proposal to go on tour with their production in America. The anecdotal response (‘We would have to take

the Kofel [a prominent mountain peak that characterizes Oberammergau townscape] with us'), internationally spread as early as 1881 (Burton 1881, p. 43), condenses the notion of a strictly local play practice that combines with a situated body of knowledge and logic of things and performers tied to a place.

Studio photographs of the performers have been offered for sale since the late 19th century, and authorized trailers and scene recordings have been produced for the last season in 2010. However, film recordings during performances are still prohibited (and the next season will show how far this prohibition can still be enforced in times of smartwatches). While individual images of the Passion Play are reproduced, the play itself remains beyond reproduction. There is much to suggest that the unconscious logic behind this is that the charisma of the elevated place should remain tied to it. The Passion Play mobilizes the masses precisely because it is tied to a specific location.

However, this is only one side of the coin, as we have shown. The ambivalent status of the play in times of multiple secularities and multiple religiosities allows things to leave the village because there is no dominant semantics according to which they can be classified as relics. It is precisely on this lack of common ground that the jokes of the early 20th century caricatures are based. Where one finds a fly in the ointment, his counterpart can declare it a potential relic—for certain groups, under certain circumstances. By the same logic, souvenirs can mark an elevated situation for the visitor (such as the experience of the Passion Play). Thus, as individual matters of concern, the objects can enter into a global network of places and represent the village and its Passion Play in multiple ways. However, the things of Oberammergau always only mark the absence of the elevated place and the elevated situation to which they refer, as did the lover's hair in romantic literature. This holds especially for the promotional articles offered after the postponement of the playing season in 2020. They both evoke and document individual histories of experience and singular patterns of doing and making sense (Hume 2014).

Author Contributions: The paper has been fully written and edited by Jan Mohr and Julia Stenzel. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received funding from DFG (German Research Foundation).

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Note

- ¹ The practice of putting one's illness or wish onto votives that stay at the holy place is the other side of this coin: as charisma or a healing energy can be transferred to any arbitrary object, ex voto offerings can carry harm and sorrows to be cured and solved (for a concise investigation into the interconnection of Christian and other practices and beliefs, see (Dyas 2014)).

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Article

When “I” Becomes “We”: Religious Mobilization, Pilgrimage and Political Protests

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Abstract: Scholars have extensively studied social and psychological components of pilgrimage in the past decades. Its political ingredients have less been taken into account. Moreover, there is marginal scientific evidence on connections between pilgrimage and political protests: A response to injustice within a specific agenda and certain goals, remembrance, testimony, imagination, as well as transformation, along with communion and solidarity—are some common features of pilgrims and protesters. There is also the resource mobilization factor—to be analyzed here with a view upon the Romanian 1989 anti-communist revolution in Timișoara. We look at religion as a provider of social ties, in terms of messages with political connotations coming from clergy, and of chain reactions inside religious groups. The qualitative research relies on content analysis of documents, and of 30 semi-structured interviews with former participants to the demonstrations. Results point towards a subtle and circumstantial collective religious mobilization before and during the Romanian revolution. Similarities with pilgrimage are related to the presence of a resourceful actor, converting individual into common needs and generating a collective identity. Differences refer to the spiritual vs. political movement, and to the socio-religious experience vs. the secular search for freedom and justice.

Citation: Schiffbeck, Adrian. 2021. When “I” Becomes “We”: Religious Mobilization, Pilgrimage and Political Protests. *Religions* 12: 735. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12090735>

Keywords: communion; mobilization; pilgrimage; protest; religion; Romania; transformation

Academic Editor: Mariano P. Barbato

Received: 28 July 2021

Accepted: 6 September 2021

Published: 8 September 2021

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1. Introduction

Religion has not been studied at an extensive level when it comes to its potential for motivating social and political protests: It “has taken a back seat in contemporary research on social movements and collective action” (McVeigh and Sikkink 2001, p. 1426). However, it is an important element favoring the occurrence of social movements, from an individual, but also from a collective and structural point of view. Religiosity “promotes feelings of efficacy, interest in politics, and other psychological traits conducive to political activity” (Harris 1994, 1999; Hoffman and Jamal 2014, p. 7). In practice, inner spiritual perceptions often interfere with elements from outside, with collective types of beliefs related to the institutional side of religion. Studying the African-American political activism, for instance, Harris (1994, pp. 61–62) reaches a pertinent conclusion: “Both organizationally and psychologically, religious beliefs and practices promote political involvement”. Our focus lies on the institutional and collective role of religion, as a motivational factor for protesting: What does the role of communal practice/institutionalized religion look like, when it comes to driving people to protests? First, there is a difference to be made between democratic societies and authoritarian regimes. Under the last political circumstances, religious groups often remain one of the very few forms of collective manifestations. They are likely to be “propelled” as a “natural vehicle for political participation” (Omelycheva and Ahmed 2018, p. 4). We look specifically at the Romanian 1989 revolution in Timișoara: What was the role played by the Churches, clergy and religious people in general, in mobilizing people to protest?

We are also interested in the potential connections of political demonstrations to pilgrimage, especially with respect to religious mobilization. Common elements of the two phenomena can refer to a response to injustice within a specific agenda and following certain goals, to remembrance and imagination, to a testimony about beliefs and the search for transformation, along with communion and solidarity. In terms of differences, pilgrimage acts as a cultural item, with mystical connotations; it involves personal piety, experience of the sacred and spiritual self-expression. When we look at religion in the case of protests, it may take the shape of an individual and social catalyst: People go out on the street to oppose a political regime and, besides their potential inner religious impulses, can be mobilized by religious forces around them—within a social, rather than cultural and spiritual type of construction. What is certain is that, in both cases, of pilgrims and protesters, individual needs and aspirations can be animated by a resourceful element—a “sacred actor” or organization, seeking to convert self-interest into common good, by means of collective action (Pace 1989).

The study is a qualitative one, based on content analysis of documents and declarations issued on TV broadcasts, as well as on the interpretation of 30 semi-structured interviews with former participants to the demonstrations. Although more than 30 years have passed since the events had happened, it is a case worth looking at due to the particular religious influences before and during the protests. The political changes in Eastern Europe at the end of the 80-s have shaped the future of the continent; research has mostly neglected the implications of the revolutions on the spiritual level. Studies have focused on the Velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia and the peaceful anti-communist movements in East Germany (see, for instance, Swoboda 1990; Rein 1990; Doellinger 2013; Pollak 1993), on the Orange revolution in Ukraine and its religious institutional implications (e.g., Simons and Westerlund 2015), as well as on the connections between Islam and the Arab Spring revolutions with respect to mobilization (e.g., Noueihed and Warren 2012; Lynch 2012). Romania was virtually neglected, with some exceptions (e.g., Pope 1992; Neacșu 2007; Clardie 2017). However, none of these studies have taken potential similarities of protests with pilgrimage, in terms of religious mobilization, into account. This is the field we are entering in this work, trying to unfold concrete collective religious impulses during the events in 1989 in Timișoara, and to connect the findings to what we know about pilgrimage as a social movement. Pilgrimage has been studied extensively under its classical component, of a spiritual journey to faraway places, whereas its local manifestations still deserve attention from scholars. At local level, people tend to visit shrines in an organized manner, inside a group, rather than individually. The phenomenon has often been put in conjunction with processions. After all, “why go to a strange church to seek the help of the Blessed Virgin whose power is universal and could just as easily cure you in your own home?” (Sumption 1975, pp. 50–51).

It remains to be seen if political protests may be assimilated to a local pilgrimage type of movement. For answering this main research question, the article first looks at the social characteristics of pilgrimage, especially under its local type of manifestation. It then turns its attention to religion and its potential for mobilizing political protests—focusing on the logistical power of communities, on individual protesters able to act as motivators, and on the influence of messages coming from clergy and religious leaders. The article then describes the case study and methods, and the next section presents the results, followed by the discussion and the conclusions.

2. Literature Review

Pilgrimage is “one of the basic modes of walking, (...) in search of something intangible” (Solnit 2000, p. 45). In the political context, it refers to travelling towards a sacred place, searching for a secular shrine, or pursuing to transform the self according to senses extracted from the visited places (Pazos 2012, p. 1; Barbato 2016, p. 564). Kratochvíl (2021, p. 3), along with Turner and Turner (2011), speak about three main stages of the ritual—separation (detachment from daily life), limen (transcending the order) and aggregation

(coming home). With respect to its structure, pilgrimage has three main components—place, movement and motivation (Coleman 2021). Why do people engage in a pilgrimage, after all, and what are the common and different elements to be assessed in relation to protesting? First, pilgrims intend to reflect on their own lives, deal with crises, detach from daily routines and take some time off, to shape personal or professional transitions, and/or to initiate a new start for their lives (Heiser 2021; Kurrat 2019; Heiser and Kurrat 2015). Parts of these motivations apply to protesters—in the sense of dealing with crises, passing a stage of personal transition in life and intending to start all over. Further, Christian pilgrims often set up their journey in remembrance of Jesus, saints and ancestors—likewise, protesters may follow the steps of the ones who had sacrificed their lives. Both walk in an “anamnetic empathy” for the loved ones, share dreams and beliefs, and overcome fear through strength given by solidarity (Fennema 2018, p. 384; Solnit 2000, p. 229). These actions lead to communion: “Protestors, like pilgrims, seek to be transformed along the way, by the very solidarity, interdependence, and freedom that we try to cultivate in the doing, not just the dreaming” (Fennema 2018, p. 383). Further, protesters and pilgrims testify about their beliefs, they follow a common goal (Barbato 2016, p. 569) within a certain agenda, and seek transformation. Moreover, “protest as pilgrimage is one, if not the, appropriate response to the injustice (...)” (Fennema 2018, p. 385). These similarities are completed by differences between the two phenomena—the social and/or political characteristics of protests, vs. the cultural and sacred/spiritual features of pilgrimage: the profound and mystical sense of the action, the personal contact to the divinity, the connection between life and faith, or providing a meaning to their existence (Pace 1989, p. 240), vs. a transformational path on the social and political level.

Last, but not least, pilgrimage is a spiritual (real or symbolic) journey, a “higher socio-religious experience”, where individual needs and aspirations are animated, or mobilized, by a “sacred actor” or an organization, seeking to convert self-interest into common good through collective action (Pace 1989, p. 231). People are mobilized by a resourceful actor (a person/charismatic leader or spiritual master, or an organization, but also by the place of apparition, a relic or a shrine). This “emotive mobilization” drives pilgrims towards a common goal, it transforms self-interest into common good. The pilgrim becomes a “homo sociologicus who engages with others and with God and whose communal identity is shaped by these interactions” (Barbato 2016, p. 569). The journey gives birth to the materialized idea of *communitas*: People start adhering to a collective set of values and the individual perspective becomes a communitarian one (Pace 1989, pp. 230, 234). Following a certain mobilization process, the individual starts thinking differently; she turns her attention from her own person, to the collectivity. Transformation, regeneration, salvation, all become collective. In this transcendental perspective, *communitas* is not about community anymore, but about communion—in the sense of “an egalitarian state of lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity and comradeship” (Turner 1969, p. 96).

To what extent are these ideas, referring to pilgrimage and mobilization—organization, sacred actor, transformation and *communitas*—to be found in scientific literature with respect to political protests? The next theoretical part intends to answer this question.

2.1. Church, Logistics and Social Capital

There are many definitions of social capital in the literature—a general one refers to “features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1993, pp. 35–36). Attempting to overcome lack of networks and trust in the authority, and often between themselves, people turn to religious involvement as a form of “repeated interaction” (Clardie 2017, p. 4). Before revolutions take place, the degree of social cohesion inside religious communities becomes highly relevant (Clardie 2017, p. 10): It was often proved to function as a spark, determining people to jointly go out on the street. Studies focusing on Islamic activism, for instance, show that religious movements are often the only option for citizens to express their contention when being excluded from political activity (Omelycheva and

Ahmed 2018, p. 8; Wiktorowicz 2003). The Arab Spring revolutions are among the events intensively studied in recent years. In the context of constructing a fresh “We-identity” of the Islamic political world, as well as of building the “new Arabic We-Feeling of arising democracies” (Barbato 2013, pp. 116, 123), the spiritual activity turns into a political one: Religious structures serve as networks for discussing about politics and transform “individual grievances into shared grievances and group-based anger”—a fundamental condition for going out on the street and protest (Klandermans and van Stekelenburg 2013, p. 887). During the Arab Spring, religion revealed its influence both at individual (piety), and at collective level (organizational resource and social capital): The so-called “mosque-to-square” narrative (Hoffman and Jamal 2014, p. 594) suggests that mosques functioned as “a locus of anti-government agitation and logistical centers of preparation for demonstrations” (Ardic 2012, p. 38). And the Islamic world is not the only place where these theories apply: “Movements that have sought both to overthrow and to install socialism have drawn members, resources and leadership from religious institutions” (McVeigh and Sikkink 2001, p. 1426; Osa 1996); the role of Pope John Paul II and of the Catholic Church in subverting socialism in Poland, as well as the support of the Lutheran Church for the peaceful East German Revolution in 1989 (prayers for peace turning into demonstrations for freedom, for instance, in Leipzig)—are well known examples. Church is able to function as a *logistical center* for preparing street demonstrations, and as a *provider of social capital*: “Through both social capital and organization, group religious behavior could promote even high-risk political mobilization” (Hoffman and Jamal 2014, p. 6).

Being a member of a religious community, practicing its specific rites and interacting with others puts you in the position of acquiring civic skills—one of the most important resources for participating in politics (e.g., Smidt 2003; Verba et al. 1995; Putnam 1993). This acquisition can take place during socializing “in non-political institutions, such as voluntary organizations, places of work and church” (Omelycheva and Ahmed 2018, p. 9). Voluntary associations are considered a highly significant element of democracy (Almond and Verba 1963; Putnam 1991)—people are able to interact and conditions are being created “for the development of attitudes like trust, tolerance, and solidarity used to achieve the groups’ purposes” (Vlas and Gherghina 2012). On the other hand, literature questions the general development of trust and involvement among Church members with high levels of doctrinal commitment; in these cases, trust and engagement are supposed to manifest in a rather internal, in-group manner, at the expense of civic culture at a larger, community level (Scheufele et al. 2003, p. 301). Within the context of a dictatorial regime, civil society remains an abstract term, with church as one of the few structures of socialization: Attenders have the possibility (under dictatorship, often restricted, too) to discuss not only about religion, but about social life and politics; they become more informed and, as part of a group, are “more likely to be politically active” (Glazier 2015, p. 16). The *religious* group is, itself, a source of social interaction and trust between its members, who have the opportunity to “share their private preference in opposition to the government” (Clardie 2017, p. 10). Through church life, people identify with the religious group and with its norms, and this identification gives birth to “an ‘inner obligation’ to participate on behalf of the group”, and to efficacy (Klandermans and van Stekelenburg 2013, p. 892). Generally, “church life equips people for political engagement” (Glazier 2015, p. 3; Smidt 1999, 2003). If they cannot vote, initiate a referendum, sign petitions or join a campaign, they may start a protest: “To the extent that religion does influence social capital in a positive manner, it can indirectly influence the emergence of social movements” (Clardie 2017, p. 3).

2.2. The Chain Reaction

People who hardly believe in change at the social and political level are the so-called “low efficacious” persons. The individual’s lack of trust, uncertainty and fear of reputation costs (which prevent her from getting involved)—ultimately, the falsification of true preferences—can be overcome by seeing others “think like he or she does”

(Clardie 2017, p. 7; Kuran 1995). These reputation costs can refer to “social shaming, loss of employment or even physical harm” (Clardie 2017, p. 6). The person’s integrity function is, itself, disturbed, and a considerable level of stress is created; because, out of fear of consequences, the person lies to herself about what she really desires (Clardie 2017; Kuran 1995). Seeing others act in one’s own preferred (but hidden) manner, is able to rebuild trust and sincerity, releasing the pressure caused by self-dishonesty. The desire to become free and authentic becomes more powerful than the fear of risks and negative consequences. The next step is a logical reactive phenomenon: “Once a relatively small number of highly-motivated individuals decide to participate” (Hoffman and Jamal 2014, p. 595; Kuran 1991, 1995), a chain-reaction is created inside the dynamics of the movement—uncertain people become powerful, efficacious and willing to go out on the street, for publicly expressing their preferences. It is about collective identity here, about transforming the ‘I’ into ‘We’: This self-definition makes people “think, feel and act as members of their group and transforms individual into collective behaviour” (Klandermans and van Stekelenburg 2013, p. 890; Turner 1999). By analogy to our subject of interest, seeing religious people behave in a certain manner may have the motivational power to create a duty of acting together. In the results section, we will attempt to find out to what extent trust, collective identity and efficacy can indeed be initiated inside religious groups, in the course of a political protest.

2.3. Clergy—The Political Motivators

Besides the logistical function of religious institutions, and the potential of (religious) groups to mobilize a social movement—people transmitting messages to congregants have a “capacity to serve as opinion leaders for their parishioners seeking spiritual and moral guidance from them” (Omelycheva and Ahmed 2018, p. 8). Clergy can turn from spiritual waymakers to *political motivators*. Speaking against the government “encourages others, who may have otherwise been reluctant, to express their true preferences as well” (Clardie 2017, p. 2). Referring, again, to the Arab Spring, Hoffman and Jamal notice the importance of sermons heard by Muslims in mosques—supposed to determine people to walk “from Friday prayers to central squares, in order to demand the removal of the regime” (Hoffman and Jamal 2014, p. 1). As a mediator and communicator, the religious leader, priest or reverend may become a central actor in the process of mobilization; although, clergy are generally supposed to have “less credibility when they communicate political, rather than religious messages” (Calfano and Djupe 2009; Kohut et al. 2000; Glazier 2015, p. 7). On the other hand, parishioners often go to the priest not only for spiritual guidance, but to address their day-to-day grievances. Under these circumstances, congregants can “hear political messages even when clergy don’t intend to deliver them” (Glazier 2015, p. 12). This happens especially under an authoritarian regime: For instance, speaking about the concept of free will can easily be translated into the ideas of freedom of travel, or of expression, when members of the audience are being denied these basic human rights. Priests are God’s servants; they embody basic moral values, like altruism and lack of personal interests, their religious belief becomes a foundation for credibility.

Resuming, the collective mobilization factor of religion in relation to protest behavior is expressed by *church or mosque as logistical centers* for preparing the demonstrations (organizational resources), as well as by the *social network* providing meeting opportunities for exchanging opinions. Then, we have the potential *chain reaction* inside certain groups and, finally, the response to *political cues coming from congregational leaders*. All these relational factors are able to foster trust, which, in turn, lowers the costs of participation and allows individuals to share true preferences and resources. In the end, it creates solidarity and a collective identity—the fundament for the emergence or continuation of a political protest.

3. Materials and Methods

To test the above theoretical assumptions and connect the results to the concept of pilgrimage—through the lens of religious mobilization, this article studies the Romanian

anti-communist revolution in Timișoara, from December 1989. The main reasons for analyzing this event—even with 30 years passed from its unfolding, are firstly related to the fact that, in the Romanian city, the demonstrations against the authoritarian regime had visible religious implications. The role of the Churches, of the clergy, of religious people, in mobilizing protesters, is worth to be studied, for a clearer picture on the mobilization potential of collective religious elements towards radical political activism. Then, the Eastern European revolutions in 1989 were offered too little attention by social scientists, with respect to mobilization. Third, Romania—as the only Latin Orthodox country in the world, deserves to be looked at with respect to the manner in which collective identities can be shaped by “emotive mobilization”. Last, but not least, the religious implications of the protests are the ones supporting our main analytical goal—to see if and under what circumstances religious collective mobilization can produce similar effects in the case of protests and pilgrimage. Timișoara provides the appropriate empirical setting for this purpose.

The events began in December 1989 with a few dozen supporters of the Reformed pastor Laszlo Tökes gathering in front of his house and manifesting their support for his courageous attitude against the regime. Romania was sitting on a “gunpowder barrel” at that time, like one of our interlocutors was to describe the tense situation: lack of freedom, low living standards, restrictions on the social and cultural level. The support for the Reformed pastor turned into an anti-communist demonstration, with subtle and circumstantial influences from the side of Christian Churches. Authorities attempted to oppress the protests in a violent manner and many people were arrested, wounded, or sacrificed their lives. The social movements soon expanded to the capital Bucharest and to the whole country; in the end, the dictatorial regime led by Nicolae Ceausescu was overthrown.

To study this case, we performed a content analysis of documents and video recordings, as well as 30 semi-structured interviews with former participants to the demonstrations. The analysis of documents involved a search for relevant information coming from local magazines issued during or immediately after December 1989, as well as from public websites. Data from the periodical of the local Orthodox Church Metropolitanate (Mitropolia Banatului Magazine Timișoara 1989), as well as from the “Renasterea bănățeană” magazine—a main (and almost single) source of written information in Timișoara back then—is based in the archive of the Memorialul Revoluției Association in Timișoara: <https://cercetare-memorialulrevolutiei1989.ro/>, accessed on 3 September 2021. Another source of information was the website www.procesulcomunismului.com, accessed on 3 September 2021, containing a significant archive of documents related to the communist period. The research also included collecting video recordings: an interview carried out by representatives of the Memorialul Revoluției Association in Timișoara, and a TV broadcast containing declarations from one of the religious leaders who played an important part at that time (Alfa Omega TV Timișoara 2002). The content analysis of these documents and video recordings pursued to extract the most relevant data for answering the research questions.

With respect to the interviews, respondents were selected using the homogeneous purposive sampling—we were interested in their direct participation to the protests. There were around 800 men and women arrested and we chose to speak to 30 people from this category. Variables such as gender, age, denomination level of education and level of faith applied randomly, for providing the sample with a heterogeneous character (see Table 1). The number of 30 interviewees is related to the data saturation principle—stating that the researcher should stop collecting information when no more relevant data can be obtained. The potential of generalization is lower in qualitative studies, but it can be compensated by the quality and profoundness of the obtained data.

Table 1. An overview of the respondents' profiles.

No.	Initials	Interview Date	Gender	Birth Decade	Level of Education	Denomination	Level of Faith
1.	R.H.	12 December 2018	Male	1950–1959	N/A	N/A	N/A
2.	C.L.	16 January 2019	Male	N/A	N/A	Orthodox	N/A
3.	B.K.	17 January 2019	Male	N/A	N/A	Neo-protestant	High
4.	C.B.	24 January 2019	Female	1950–1959	College graduate	Roman-Catholic	Moderate
5.	F.W.	31 January 2019	Male	1960–1969	High-school graduate	Orthodox	Moderate
6.	G.F.	31 January 2019	Female	1950–1959	High-school graduate	Orthodox	High
7.	I.P.	1 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	College graduate	Orthodox	High
8.	Z.I.	1 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	Technical studies graduate	Moderate	Moderate
9.	K.G.	4 February 2019	Male	1970–1979	High-school graduate	Roman-Catholic	Very high
10.	M.C.	7 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	Technical studies	Orthodox	High
11.	M.I.	7 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	High-school graduate	Neo-protestant	Very high
12.	N.B.	8 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	High-school graduate	Orthodox	Not a believer
13.	N.L.	8 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	High-school graduate	Reformed	Low
14.	O.L.	8 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	College student	Orthodox	Low
15.	M.S.	9 February 2019	Female	1960–1969	Technical studies graduate	Orthodox	Low
16.	P.M.	11 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	Sec. school graduate	Orthodox	Low
17.	P.O.	11 February 2019	Male	1940–1949	Technical studies graduate	Orthodox	High
18.	P.V.	12. February 2019	Male	1960–1969	High-school graduate	Orthodox	Moderate
19.	H.K.	13 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	College student	Orthodox	Low
20.	L.M.	15 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	College student	Orthodox	High
21.	S.E.	15 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	High-school graduate	Reformed	High
22.	S.T.	15 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	High-school graduate	Orthodox	Low
23.	S.V.	15 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	High-school graduate	Orthodox	Low
24.	S.C.	18 February 2019	Female	1960–1969	High-school graduate	Orthodox	Very high
25.	T.C.	18 February 2019	Female	1950–1959	College graduate	Orthodox	High
26.	C.J.	19 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	College student	Orthodox	Very high
27.	F.O.	20 February 2019	Male	1940–1949	College graduate	Orthodox	Not a believer
28.	K.B.	21 February 2019	Male	1950–1959	College graduate	Orthodox	Moderate
29.	C.I.	22 February 2019	Male	1940–1949	College graduate	Orthodox	Moderate
30.	C.H.	23 February 2019	Male	1960–1969	High-school student	Orthodox	Moderate

Discussions were carried out during three months, at the end of 2018—beginning of 2019, on several topics related to religious motivations for protesting. We spoke around 30 min to each participant on the specific subject of collective religious mobilization. Talks were not recorded, but all the notes are kept in an archive. Interpretation was performed later by means of content analysis and coding the information—extracting and arranging ideas and sub-concepts according to their relevance and to the previously established connections. The qualitative analytical and interpretative process led to the final conceptual image upon the social practice and to answering the initial research questions.

4. Results

4.1. Networking and Mobilization

4.1.1. The Majoritarian Orthodox Church

Let us move to presenting the information obtained as a result of the analytical process. During the interviews, most of the respondents denied any influence from Church as an

institution on their decision to take part in the demonstration. Regarding the Orthodox denomination, they spoke about the incapacity, during dictatorship, to create structures, to organize movements, to produce social capital, as long as “part of the clergy was hand in hand with the regime and the Church was controlled” (C.I.). In fact, shortly after the events in 1989, the Orthodox Church apologized to the public, speaking about a necessary compromise to keep faith and traditions alive, and to ensure a continuity for Orthodox Christianity in the region (Popescu 2015, p. 7): “This is why we apologize to God and to you, dear beloved sons, for all our public statements and pastorals by which we were forced to tell you that we enjoy a total religious freedom, whereas a lot of different constraints and pressures were set upon the Church”. The statement appears in the official magazine of the local Orthodox Church Metropolitanate (Mitropolia Banatului Magazine No. 4–6, July–December 1989—Message of adhesion to the National Salvation Front Council, from the Romanian Orthodox Church), cited by Ionel Popescu in one of the articles from the archive of the Memorialul Revolutiei Association in Timisoara (Popescu 2015, p. 65). Studying this archive was part of the content analysis of documents we have performed for this research. Our interlocutors further refer, in the interviews, to the Greek-Catholic denomination as being forbidden in the communist times, and to Roman-Catholics as being attached to Rome and, thus, independent from the regime. The last ones are seen as “more reticent and cold”—with the potential to generate opposition left for the Reformed and Neo-protestants (K.B., K.G.): Protestants in general “show more solidarity: they call themselves brothers and sisters” (C.J.).

With respect to the Orthodox Church—interviewees mention especially 18 December 1989, when, some say, clergy closed the doors of the cathedral in Timișoara; demonstrators, who were shot at by the Militia and Military, are said to have remained without shelter. Participants and witnesses declared that ambushes led to the impossibility for some to enter the place. A young man, aged 23, was shot in his forehead and brought inside the cathedral. Shortly after, he died. Many other protestors, with candles in their hands, stood in front of the church and confronted the violence. A lot of teenagers tried to enter and panic spread all over the place. Priests from inside attempted to evacuate some of the people on the side doors. They also helped to carry wounded to ambulances. One of the priests mentions that, in the evening, doors have been closed, with cleaning ladies tidying up the blood spread from the body of a wounded young boy. The declaration is to be found in the *Renasterea bănăţeană* magazine from 1 February 1990, cited by Dumitru Tomoni in one of the articles from the archive of the Memorialul Revolutiei Association in Timisoara (Tomoni 2011, p. 91). Some witnesses state that persons wishing to enter the edifice could do it, even under the controversial circumstances (Tomoni 2011, p. 90). Revolutionaries blame the former political police, the Securitate, for initiating the action: “It was an ugly gesture, during daytime. Maybe an officer from the «Securitate» stood behind the priest who did this” (N.L.). One of the protesters, perceived as a leader, told us that, up to the present day, he sees only speculations about locking the entrance: “What role could have been played by the Church, when we think about what happened on that day? Perhaps they were afraid of repressions... Or there was an interest to have as many victims as possible” (P.V.). Others defend the institution, saying that doors were only closed, not locked, either because it was cold, or in order to protect religious artifacts: “Besides, under the circumstances, you run for your life, do not think to take refuge in the church anymore. To say that priests have locked the doors is a hideous manipulation” (R.H.).

4.1.2. The Minorities

Basically, there are no indications towards a possible organizing role from the Orthodox, Roman- and Greek-Catholic institutional sides. Mobilization was possible inside the Neo-protestant and Reformed Churches—in the last case, due to the essential part played by Laszlo Tökes. The pastor referred later to a schism inside his institution, between a small group showing solidarity, and others staying aside. Tökes sent several letters, in September that year, to the Roman-Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical and Jewish local

communities, and asked for support: “The only one who invited me for discussions and showed solidarity was the chief rabbi” (Mioc et al. 2001). In front of the perspective of forced evacuation, Tökes makes an announcement in the church; it was one week before the protest started: “I asked parishioners to come on site and witness these injustices” (Mioc et al. 2001). The statements have been extracted from a discussion with the Reformed pastor carried out by people dedicated to gather information about the Revolution and clarify the events, and are part of our content analysis of existing documents and materials. According to other personal statements, “my parishioners knew what to do. I did not have to tell them; hundreds were there, from the first hours of the morning” (Suciu 1990, p. 14): The pastor had supporters in “an ecumenical community of believers (Adventists, Baptists, Catholics, Orthodox, and Pentecostals), who in turn inspired the community at large to take their destiny into their own hands” (Pope 1992, p. 8). The former Baptist pastor Petru Dugulescu (meanwhile, deceased) played an important part in the debut of the demonstrations. Back in 1992, he declared that Tökes, whom he had not known personally, asked him, through an intermediary, a doctor, “to gather some young people and send them in front of the Reformed church—to sing, protest in peace, bring some candles and pray”. The declaration is part of a TV broadcast from Alfa Omega TV Timișoara (2002), where Dugulescu recounts the start of the revolution. In another interview, for Traian Orban (head of the Memorialul Revoluției Association in Timișoara), One of the members of the Baptist Church states that Dugulescu was suffering because of the communist regime, he felt spiritually and materially persecuted; his family was struggling to earn their living. The movement against the regime thus appears as a reaction of the Church to own endured injustices, too. The person declares in the interview that “we were supposed to mobilize the young. They told us so, in the church, and from person to person” (Memorialul Revoluției Association in Timișoara Research Center 2016). Both statements above are part of our content analysis of video recordings. According, further, to our respondents, the Baptist leader “was an informed person, things were known before it all started; they mobilized themselves accordingly” (M.I.): “Dugulescu told me personally that he asked parishioners to go and support Tökes. I saw them on the street” (F.O.). Another Baptist Church member declared: “I liked the religious service on that morning, but my thoughts were at what happened outside. Together with my wife, we left before it was over, and joined the already large mass of demonstrators” (Memorialul Revoluției Association in Timișoara).

Resuming, religious organization/logistics appear to have been the attribute of minorities in the incipient stage of the protest. People’s main reason for gathering and taking part at the demonstrations did not have a direct connection to Church. Religious social capital and logistics were the frame, a catalyst to unlock people’s grievances and desires: The initial “group coherence provided by religious institutions was of critical importance” (Hall 2000, p. 1076) for the protests to expand and precipitate “the revolutionary bandwagon, through lowering reputation costs, and thus thresholds for others in society to express their private preferences” (Clardie 2017, p. 19). A member of the Pentecostal community finally declares: “It was not the Church influencing me; our motivation was to get rid of communism. But the Church gathered us: We encouraged each other there and felt like a family” (B.K.).

4.1.3. Community vs. Communion

With respect to the later stages of the demonstration—respondents referred to a special feeling of communion between them during the protest, with denominations having no part to play whatsoever. Not a planned activity, according to norms, carried out by a certain religious institution, group of people or network, but an ad-hoc social capital, built on the street: “There was no organization inside the religious institution, besides some individual initiatives; anyway, church was visited rather secretly at that time” (T.C.). This trans-religious solidarity is defined as an “exceptional understanding”, taking authorities by surprise and looking “even more beautiful, as it started from defending a foreigner, a Hungarian” (F.O.). Ethnic and religious affiliations did not count anymore, in front of the

“fantastic communion—I felt love was present among us” (M.S.): The female respondent, describing herself as non-religious, told us she felt a particular attachment, a friendship with others, developed in a short time between people of different nationalities, ethnicities and denominations. Strong believers, on the other hand, see this communion as emerging from religious convictions and feelings, too: “Everybody had a faith in God” (M.I.).

4.2. The Snowball Effect

When it comes to the influence of religious people around in the same, second phase of the action, interviewees are basically divided into three categories: Most of them admit to have been encouraged by people around—however, with no religious connections. Students were motivated by groups they decided to join; workers, or other professional categories, urged each other to take action. One former student remembers: “I cannot say if people around me were religious or not... colleagues and many others whom I did not know” (C.J.). Courage was like an impulse transmitted from person to person and spreading through the crowd: “It was not about being religious or not, not about faith; if you found someone courageous, you were there” (O.L.). And once *in* the crowd, “hearing them scanning and shouting out, the courage grows and you do not think about repercussions anymore. People were thinking like me” (C.I.). Another respondent defines the situation as “a rolling snowball” (N.L.), taking shape when more and more people decided to leave reputation costs aside, defeat uncertainty and become efficacious. Under these conditions, solidarity and collective identity were created, to push the protest forward. The second category of respondents, less numerous, is the independent one—having nothing to do with getting inspired by people around, or mechanisms of chain reactions—neither in a religious sense, nor in a secular one. “I had clear, personal opinions, nobody motivated me” (S.T.), and “It was the age when we were doing things on our own, not from looking at others; religion was also not so present in our lives” (C.H.). These people simply took their fate in their hands, detached from any possible models or inspirations. The third category—also less numerous and mostly belonging to the Neo-protestant and Reformed denominations, speaks about real impulses, coming from religious people around. One female respondent told us about the “priest of the revolution”—a man who, from the (meanwhile) symbolic Opera balcony in Timișoara, initiated the Lord’s Prayer, spoken by tens of thousands together with him. She had been around him and his gestures encouraged her to move on, despite the threatening conditions (S.C.). “Those messages moved me—this state of mind and soul can hardly be described in words”, says another respondent (M.S.). A man further admitted he had joined members of the Baptist Church “when I saw they dare to demonstrate” (B.K.). Non-practitioners finally also emphasize the religious communion: “The feeling during the protest was that everybody is a believer” (S.E.). The idea of communion between denominations is expressed by another interlocutor, too: “Catholics, Orthodox, Reformed—it did not matter anymore; we were like a single, united people” (Z.I.).

Basically, the decisions to unveil preferences—developing into a chain reaction/snowball effect, had less to do with religious impulses coming from fellow protesters. In this second stage of the protest, collective religion seems to have played a less significant part, compared to the initial phases, when mobilization inside the Churches helped igniting the demonstration. On the street, efficacy and collective identity were built on a rather secular basis, with courage spreading inside the group and contributing to the expansion of demonstrations. However, respondents accentuate the spiritual communion, like they did when they spoke about religious institutions. There were situations when religious people and non-practitioners alike perceived this motivation as a religious one. This perception encouraged them to carry on and ignore the most dangerous cost—the threat of losing their lives.

4.3. The Opinion Formers

Results underline the separation of the Orthodox Church during communist times from politics, or from any kind of intervention/opposition to the regime: “You did not hear any words against the authorities from priests—sometimes they prayed for the president. They were not allowed to express their opinions” (T.C.). Interviewees remember that part of God’s servants collaborated with the political police: “It did not have to do with mobilizing messages. You went to confession and could later find out that data about what you went further, to the Securitate” (P.O.). One priest, who took part at the revolution, told us he made a request during the protests, for “informers who bothered us to immediately leave the Church” (P.M.). Some sources refer to the Secret Police as actually monitoring private religious rituals without knowledge of priests, with listening techniques installed in people’s houses (Mocioalcă 2010, p. 143). However, there were messages coming from clergy in the years before the revolution, which mobilized people: Priests persecuted and arrested by the communist authorities—dissidents like Dumitru Staniloae, Arsenie Boca and Gheorghe Calciu-Dumitreasa—spoke either on Radio Free Europe in Munich, or directly to congregants. “There were no direct messages (if so, they were condemned to rotten in prison)—they spoke about hope, for instance, and everyone understood it was about the regime” (G.F.). People were encouraged by these opinion formers and felt a need to support them (e.g., H.K., C.I., S.C.).

A separate category of respondents refers to Tökes Laszlo and his messages, in and outside the church, or in the foreign media (especially radio and TV stations in Hungary), where he complained about difficult conditions for the Reformed denomination, but also for the Romanian people. “In front of his parish, in the Blessed Virgin Mary Square, he spoke about the evacuation, about human rights, and belief in God—his messages influenced me” (C.J.). His sermons turned to have a considerable impact: “He spoke about religion. If it was not for him, to hold a sermon, people would have not gathered” (M.C.). “We were a group of young Catholics, goading our Reformed friends—what have you heard new at the meetings (religious services)?” (K.G.); the same respondent, among others, considers Tökes “a chemical catalyst, like a substance you pour into a glass and it starts to boil—it provided that necessary spark for the revolution”. To the same extent, people speak about Tökes as a “model of dignity”, a “person with spine” or a “symbol of courage”, whom they respected due to the human attitude of resistance and opposition towards the regime (C.B., F.W., H.K., Z.I., S.V.). Many did not go to his parish to defend him: “We went there out of curiosity. We were told to go home, but people became courageous in their turn, due to his example” (I.P.). In those moments, his attitude was a symbolic, mobilizing one: “He was the spark; he influenced me, through the role he had—a victim of the regime. This had a great impact on people—he was the one bringing the crowd together; indirectly, but in an auspicious and decisive manner” (C.L.).

Messages coming from clergy finally appear to have had a circumstantial, but significant mobilizing role, in the precursive and initial phases of the social movement. There were people who listened to voices of dissident priests. Most of the clergy were not involved in politics and afraid to speak against the regime. And when one pastor separates from the mass and speaks up, this extraordinary attitude gives birth to solidarity and collective identity.

5. Discussion

The aim of this article was to establish potential connections between religious mobilization, political protests and pilgrimage. It was built on a qualitative basis, with results deriving from content analysis of documents, declarations issued on TV broadcasts, and of 30 semi-structured interviews carried out with former participants to the Romanian anti-communist revolution in Timișoara, from 1989. In terms of religious mobilization, we analyzed three theoretical factors—institutional religion as a logistical source and provider of social capital, the chain reaction inside a particular religious group, and the influence of clergy/religious leaders, by means of messages with political connotations. With re-

spect to the first element, theory reveals that Church can function as a logistical center for preparing demonstrations and as provider of social capital: It can act as a catalyst in the incipient stage of a protest—strengthening trust and ties between congregants, creating and activating a collective identity. In the former communist Romania, it was, indeed, about spaces for people to meet, to be informed, to discuss and to be drawn towards following their goals (at least in the case of Neo-protestant and Reformed denominations). Similarities to pilgrimage can be tracked down in common needs, aspirations and goals, with a sacred organization able to activate them. Secondly, theory speaks about a chain reaction taking place in a later phase of the protest: people potentially mobilizing others and contributing to the feeling of efficacy, to unveiling their true preferences and, finally, to creating trust, solidarity and collective identity. With respect to religious mobilization under these circumstances, results reveal marginal empirical evidence: According to most of the respondents, they felt a communion having less to do with religion or a certain denomination, and more with an overall getting together of people with similar thoughts and intentions. Nevertheless, some statements from non-believers confirm a religious type of solidarity driving them forward. Similarities to pilgrimage are to be found here in the elements of converting self-interest into common good, communion and collective action, arising from “emotive mobilization”. Last, but not least, the voice of the “sacred actor” (charismatic religious leader) can, theoretically, play a determinant part in the precursive and initial phases of the process, in mobilizing pilgrims and protesters alike: Results of this study confirm the supposition partially; religious leaders, able to act as political opinion formers and mobilize protesters—although, especially under a dictatorial regime, their role in this direction is limited. Messages with political connotations are isolated and rather have a subtle and circumstantial character, but they contribute to feeling trust, courage and efficacy—consequently, to creating the collective identity necessary for protesting.

6. Conclusions

The analysis in this article confirms the theoretical connections established between political protests and pilgrimage: common agenda and goals, remembrance, imagination, testimony, transformation, communion. These potential relational elements were investigated with respect to collective religious mobilization, found to play a similar, but slightly different part in the two processes. By means of the resourceful actor—in the form of an organizations, through religious people, or clergy/charismatic leaders—pilgrims *and* protesters can be stimulated, supported, mobilized towards reaching their goals. The elements of transformation and communion are the most important ones: “I” becomes “We”, in the search for a utopian society. The emerging state of *communitas*—as part, or result of the liminal, transformational process (the new orientation towards common interests)—develops the feeling of trust, it encourages the testimony about beliefs/true preferences; in the end, it creates solidarity and efficacy. The mechanism is a direct one in the case of pilgrims and a circumstantial—however, potentially decisive one—in the case of political protests: taking the shape of the *opportunity* for people to meet, of “the spark” igniting a demonstration. Differences appear not as much in terms of religious mobilization, but regarding the characteristics of the two types of movements: following spiritual vs. sociopolitical goals, respectively living a higher socio-religious experience vs. pursuing freedom and justice in a more secular manner.

The relevance of the article derives from the focus on a predominant Orthodox society in Eastern Europe, studied previously to a very small extent with respect to the chosen thematic area. In this particular context, political protests against a dictatorial regime have been found to be connected to the phenomenon of pilgrimage, through the common element of religious mobilization. This result adds significant knowledge to the tangential previous scientific approach. Further research can look at contemporary pilgrimage on a more substantial and empirical basis—what we did was to merely extract theoretical inputs on pilgrimage—and attempt to develop the comparison with protest behavior by means of a deeper and more direct analysis of the two, apparently very different, social phenomena.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all persons involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Research results (statements obtained during the interviews carried out in deleted for peer review) are kept in a personal archive and can be made available at any time to anyone interested.

Acknowledgments: I am grateful to Mariano Barbato for his support, to the editors of *Religions* and to the reviewers. Special thanks to the ‘Memorialul Revoluției’ Museum in Timișoara, to the local revolutionary associations ‘ALTAR’ and ‘17 December 1989’, and to the persons who agreed to be interviewed.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Article

Geopolitics of Catholic Pilgrimage: On the Double Materiality of (Religious) Politics in the Virtual Age

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Abstract: This article explores geopolitical aspects of Catholic pilgrimage in Europe. By exploring the representations of pilgrimage on Catholic social media, it shows that the increasing influence of the virtual is accompanied by a particular reassertion of the material aspects of pilgrimage. Two types of Catholic pilgrimage emerge, each with a particular spatial and political orientation. The first type of pilgrimage is predominantly politically conservative, but also spatially static, focusing on objects, be they human bodies or sacred sites. The second type is politically progressive, but also spatially dynamic, stressing pilgrimage as movement or a journey. The classic Turnerian conceptualization of a pilgrimage as a three-phase kinetic ritual thus falls apart, with liminality appropriated by the progressive type and aggregation almost entirely taken over by the conservative, apparitional pilgrimage. As a result, pilgrimage has once again become a geopolitical reflection of the broader ideological contestation both within Christianity and beyond.

Keywords: geopolitics; Catholic Church; Europe; pilgrimage; materiality; politics; ideology; Virgin Mary

Citation: Kratochvíl, Petr. 2021. Geopolitics of Catholic Pilgrimage: On the Double Materiality of (Religious) Politics in the Virtual Age. *Religions* 12: 443. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060443>

Academic Editor: Mariano P. Barbato

Received: 15 May 2021
Accepted: 12 June 2021
Published: 16 June 2021

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1. Introduction

“You cannot do a pilgrimage on your couch” was the message of the rector of the Lourdes sanctuary, which he recently posted on YouTube (KTOTV 2020a). The paradox of the insistence on the material aspects of pilgrimage and the simultaneous ever-growing virtualization of religious pilgrimage is difficult to ignore. In the context of the Catholic Church alone, hundreds of virtual pilgrimage tours are offered on the Internet, and pilgrimage videos and documentaries belong among the most frequently posted videos on religious websites. The pilgrimage centers also follow the trend, encouraging e-pilgrimages and offering hybrid forms of vicarious pilgrimage, which combine physical and virtual elements. The coronavirus pandemic further accelerated the trend towards virtualization. The online attendance of pilgrimages skyrocketed, with a 5-fold increase in virtual attendance of Lourdes (Virtual Pilgrimage 2020). Moreover, online transmissions of the rituals at pilgrimage centers have become a staple of religiously oriented YouTube channels and Facebook sites.

However, the more virtual pilgrimages flourish and the more social media are employed, the more the physical elements seem to be stressed. No matter how popular virtual pilgrimage tours have become, the importance of a “real” or “proper” pilgrimage is repeatedly underlined. The heightened attention to the material, however, takes different forms. Some pilgrimages focus on the human body, on its physical healing, and on corporeality in general; others tend to see pilgrimage as a walk through a landscape, and yet others look for parallels between movement through space and the temporal movement of human life. All of these share one thing in common, though. The spatiality of pilgrimage, no matter how diverse it is, is always also political. The diversification of pilgrimage types means also a diversification of political claims about what the church is and how it should relate to the late modern world of today. In short, pilgrimage has become a geopolitical reflection of the ideological contestation both within Christianity and beyond.

The transformation and diversification of pilgrimage have serious consequences for the way we understand the phenomenon of pilgrimage as such. In their classical

account of pilgrimage, Turner and Turner (Turner and Turner 2011) describe pilgrimage as a ritual consisting of three phases—*separation*, *limen*, and *aggregation*. Pilgrims remove themselves from their ordinary, secular social order (separation); experience the limits of the normal order and the possibilities for its transcendence (liminality); and are, in the final phase, reintegrated in the community (aggregation). While the three phases were always represented in any pilgrimage in varying ratios, all three were nonetheless always present. However, as this article will try to show, the recent evolution of pilgrimage in Europe challenges this received wisdom as different types of pilgrimage prioritize one dimension, marginalizing or entirely suppressing the others. The impact of the fragmentation is substantial as different types of pilgrimages now not only serve different purposes for the pilgrims, but their theopolitical orientations also start to radically differ.

2. The Late Modern Revival of Catholic Pilgrimage

The revival of pilgrimage in Europe is, in a sense, both a product of Europe's secularization and a reaction to it. There is no doubt that Europe remains the most secularized part of the world (Martin 2017; but see the discussion in Berger 2002 and in Voas and Chaves 2016). However, while secularization in terms of organized religious practice continues to decline in all parts of Europe (Molteni and Biolcati 2018), pilgrimage enjoys an unprecedented level of growth, both in terms of intra-European pilgrimage and in terms of travel to sacred places elsewhere (Reader 2007; Albera and Eade 2016). Pilgrimage is thus an area that shows that the secularization process in Europe is uneven and that particular religious/spiritual activities are becoming more popular, the general trend notwithstanding.¹

The reasons for the growing popularity of pilgrimage are manifold, and only some of them are related to traditional Catholic religiosity. While Catholic media typically refer to the pilgrimages to the Marian sites, that is, to the "apparitional" type of pilgrimage (e.g., pilgrimages to Fátima, Lourdes, or Međugorje), the spectrum of pilgrimages is substantially wider. Importantly, pilgrimages are part of the burgeoning religious tourism (Nolan and Nolan 1992), and many pilgrims exhibit attitudes closer to secular tourists than to devout Christians (cf. Collins-Kreiner and Kliot 2000). Some traditional Christian pilgrimages such as the Santiago camino have become popular with yet another segment of the European population which is skeptical both of organized religious traditions and of pilgrimage tourism (Reader 2007).

The reappropriation of the old, medieval pilgrimage (such as the above-mentioned Way of St. James) by people of various non-Catholic spiritualities was made possible by the new focus of the Catholic pilgrimage itself. The rise of the mass "apparitional" pilgrimage in Europe is a relatively novel phenomenon, as it was only in the 19th and 20th centuries when the Marian devotion started to play a primary role in Catholic European piety. "The Age of Mary"² brought attention to the Virgin Mary not only as the Theotokos of old, but as a much more dynamic figure actively intervening in human affairs (Turner and Turner 1982). The reorientation to apparitional pilgrimage and its mass character resulted in a dramatic redefinition of what a Catholic pilgrimage is about and what its destinations are. As a consequence, while new Catholic pilgrimage centers continued to appear in the last two centuries, the vast majority of those were related to Marian devotion. Medieval pilgrimage centers then either lost their once immense popularity (Cologne, Canterbury) or redefined themselves in novel ways (Rome, Santiago de Compostela).

3. Two Variants of Pilgrimage, Two Variants of Catholicism

The rise of the pilgrimage centered upon the Virgin Mary is connected to the specific political and economic context of 19th century Europe.³ Urbanization, industrialization, and the growth of socioeconomic disparities are among the key background factors against which the Marian pilgrimage gained its modern contours. The 19th century Marian devotion and pilgrimage movement were thus characterized not only by "fervent personal piety" (Turner and Turner 1982, p. 18), but also by their apologetical attitude vis-à-vis the emerging liberal secularism. This latter feature became one of the key distinguishing aspects

of the Marian pilgrimage, and, in the end, this pilgrimage type became the ultimate popular embodiment of the 19th century *ecclesia militans*, a response of the embattled church to the changing world, and a bastion against the errors of modernism and liberalism (Margry 2009a; Sorrel 2016). The struggle of the church against its earthly and supernatural enemies often gained an explicit political dimension, such as in one of Fátima's hidden secrets which focused on the then atheist Russia (cf. the excellent analysis in Warner 2013, 320ff).

Correspondingly, the theological underpinnings of the Marian pilgrimage were also closely related to the popular Catholic theology of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. The visions of Catherine Labouré,⁴ the miraculous medal, the famous Lourdes song "Ô Vierge Marie", and the veneration of the immaculate heart (made famous in Fátima) are not only central for Marian pilgrimages, but also form the popular underpinning of Catholic Mariology and the dogma pronounced in 1854. To sum up, the "apparitional" Marian pilgrimage has not only become the most popular kind of Catholic pilgrimage worldwide, but in Europe, it also turned into the most visible popular reaction against modern secularization. Interestingly, the Marian pilgrimage retained many of these political features for the entire 20th century and beyond. The binary opposition between faith and the idolatrous world all but further sharpened in many pilgrimage centers in the course of the 20th century. A fervent anticommunism then became one of the hallmarks of Marian devotion and further stressed the duality of Catholic piety vs. the depravity of the godless (see, for instance, Donnelly 2005).

Interestingly, the Catholic Church has often been, on the official level, rather skeptical of some aspects of the Marian pilgrimage. The Second Vatican Council, while integrating popular religiosity in its liturgical reforms, tried to de-emphasize Mariology, which resulted in partially curbing the zeal of the popular Marian devotion (Preston 2017). The Christological focus of the Council and its rejection of "externalism" were also interpreted as blows targeting Marian devotion (Donnelly 2005). The convenor of the Council, Pope John XXIII, was openly skeptical towards some elements of the conservatively oriented pilgrimage movement, and he fought actively against the popular pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo (Di Giovine 2011, p. 252).⁵ Some tension between the spirit of the Council and popular Marian pilgrimage persists even today. The publications (including those by Catholic authors) that are critical of some Marian pilgrimage sites and question their authenticity often argue that their appeal is due to the confusion of many Catholics following the Second Vatican Council (Medjugorje's Mystery 2006; see also Foley 2002).

However, a second, less conservative type of pilgrimage developed in parallel with the rise of the Marian pilgrimage. This second type emerged as a result of a coalescence of several alternative spiritual movements. One of the sources was the secularized version of pilgrimage in the form of trips to the ancient civilizational centers of Europe, Rome in particular. The British *Grand Tour* of the 17th and 18th centuries is a typical example thereof. While outwardly, this kind of travel was decidedly nonreligious, it still bore a close relationship with pilgrimage, while also serving spiritual purposes (Colleta 2015, p. 74). In the second half of the 20th century, a second element of this less church-centered pilgrimage movement gained importance: the spirituality of ecumenical cooperation among Christian churches and of the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of all people. Ecumenical communities such as that of Taizé have contributed to the reinvention of this less institutionalized and less hierarchy-dependent form of Christian pilgrimage (Vilaça 2010). This form of pilgrimage became more popular not only in the Christian ecumenical milieu, but also beyond it. Those projects which transcend the boundary of Christianity and focus on interreligious dialogue, such as Hans Küng's global ethics, have had a very similar effect on the intellectual perception of pilgrimage as a general expression of every human's spiritual journey (Küng 2006). Finally, the above-mentioned suspicious attitude of the Catholic hierarchy towards some forms of traditional Marian pilgrimage and the general reorientation of the Catholic Church towards a more accepting attitude toward the modern world (*aggiornamento*) have had a decisive impact on both of

the types of pilgrimage discussed here, deflecting the attention from the first and indirectly encouraging the second.

Having said this, it is important to note that the two types of pilgrimage described here are ideal types, and many mixed forms exist in the grey zone between the two positions. In particular, pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem often contain elements of both, and unlike in the cases of Fátima and Međugorje, the likely ideological orientation of a particular group of pilgrims cannot be derived from the destination alone. The pilgrims on the *camino* to Santiago also show elements of both types of spiritualities (Vilaça 2010). The same caveat applies to the Marian devotees themselves. While the conservative features of the Marian *cultus* remain dominant, Marian devotion is expressed in increasingly diverse forms. Some of these are more sympathetic to the modern world, focusing on a reconciliation with it. Others even include a stress of gender emancipation with the Virgin serving as a role model (see, for instance, Margry 2009b).

4. Pilgrimage and Materiality

These two types of Catholic pilgrimage do not, however, serve only as ideal types. Specific pilgrimage sites and routes are associated with one, and other pilgrimage destinations with the other. Fátima, Lourdes, and Međugorje, to name some important European pilgrimage destinations, are clearly connected with the conservative, apparitional type of pilgrimage. Others, most notably, Taizé, but also increasingly Santiago de Compostela, are connected with the progressive type. Interestingly, a number of studies have shown that this difference does not only pertain to the type of theology propounded at the site. The pilgrimage sites are visited by different segments of the Catholic Church, with different expectations and with different aims (Vilaça 2010; Pack 2010).

Pilgrimage is not only spatially differentiated, though. It is spatial in a deeper sense as well. Pilgrimage is essentially “a kinetic ritual” (Turner and Turner 2011, p. xiii), and the transformative element of pilgrimage is not only related to individual conversion, but it is also fundamentally a “spatiotemporal social change” (Turner and Turner 2011, p. 2). Spatiality and more broadly materiality are a key element of pilgrimage, as a movement of spirit and *body* through space. The question is how far recent societal changes pose a serious challenge to this essential aspect of pilgrimage. One such challenge is the virtualization of pilgrimage as a consequence of the growing popularity of the virtual space in general and social media in particular. The recent coronavirus pandemic is another, more recent, but equally profound challenge.

The key questions this article wants to explore are thus related to these developments: Is the materiality of pilgrimage still relevant in spite of the virtualization of the social (as well as spiritual) life of today’s European societies? If so, do the two different types of pilgrimage approach materiality differently? Finally, what is the geopolitics of pilgrimage, including both the political contestation within the church and the broader positioning of the church in Europe’s late modern politics?

The article offers answers to these questions based on a detailed analysis of some of the most popular Catholic social media outlets and their depiction of pilgrimage. Four popular Catholic Facebook groups were analyzed: Catholic and Proud (6.0 million followers), Catholic Online (3.1 million followers), I Love My Catholic Faith (2.6 million followers), and Catholic Church (2.6 million followers). Additionally, three Catholic YouTube channels with a broad audience were explored: the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN, 515,000 subscribers), KTO télévision catholique (434,000 subscribers), and Rome Reports en Español (346,000 subscribers). While the Facebook groups were predominantly oriented towards English speakers, the YouTube channels were intentionally chosen to represent a more diverse audience, as they cover not only English language news, but also news in Spanish (Rome Reports) and French (KTO). In each case, the posts/statuses/videos that contained the key words related to pilgrimage were collected (“pilgrim”, “pilgrims”, and “pilgrimage” in English; “peregrino”, “peregrinos”, and “peregrinaje” in Spanish; and “pèlerin”, “pèlerins”, and “pèlerinage” in French), and the sample covered the period

of January–December 2020. Altogether, 232 Facebook posts (including videos or texts from other websites which were hyperlinked in these posts) and 146 YouTube videos were collected and analyzed.⁶ The analysis was conducted in two rounds. First, the two types were identified and analyzed in a small sample. Second, this analysis was extended to the entire corpus of texts and videos.

A final, terminological caveat is due here. I position my research within the broader field of the geopolitics of religion, which is part of the broader tradition of critical geopolitics. While geopolitics deals with the relationship between space and politics, its classical version explores (a) the impact of space on politics (and not vice versa) and (b) the relations among the traditional actors of global politics, i.e., sovereign states. My critical understanding of geopolitics is different in both these dimensions. Critical geopolitics of religion deals (a) with the impact of space on politics, but also of politics on spatial representations and practices and (b) with the activities of nonstate entities such as churches, religious communities, or movements.

5. The Double Geopolitics of Pilgrimage

One might expect that the growing popularity of social media and the onset of the coronavirus pandemic would modify the overall narrative, including the very definition of what a pilgrimage is and to what extent a pilgrimage has to contain material elements. Indeed, virtual pilgrimages have become a popular genre on the Catholic YouTube channels, and so have regular transmissions of masses and prayers via social media. Paradoxically, this virtualization has had the opposite effect of reducing the importance of the materiality of a pilgrimage. While previously, materiality was taken for granted, in 2020, the insistence on the physical aspects of pilgrimage became one of the hallmarks of pilgrimage-related texts and videos.

The virtual pilgrimages, while sometimes seen as useful props, started to be frequently compared to “proper” pilgrimages. Strongly worded statements such as that taking part in a pilgrimage online “will never replace proper physical experience” (EWTN 2020e) have become commonplace. A video from September 2020 where the Pope himself speaks about the joyful experience of a face-to-face meeting as opposed to a “screen-to-screen” meeting was widely shared and watched (ROME REPORTS en Español 2020). The online participation in a pilgrimage continued to be encouraged, but the asymmetry was firmly established: meeting “in spirit” serves only as a consolation for those who cannot be “really” present (EWTN 2020a). The expression “vicarious pilgrimage” started to be used frequently. It not only denoted the substitutionary dimension of the pilgrimage of somebody who cannot physically take part, but also reaffirmed the hierarchy between the proper pilgrimage and the vicarious type (EWTN 2020d). However, what the “proper” pilgrimage was and what constituted its materiality were expressed substantially differently in each type of pilgrimage. These different materialities brought with themselves also different political orientations, giving rise to two markedly different geopolitics of pilgrimage.

6. Corporeality and Its Absence in Conservative/Progressive Pilgrimage

The first distinguishing feature is the focus on corporeality in the conservative, Marian pilgrimage and the lack thereof in the progressive type. The reports on the conservative type insisted on the importance of a physical pilgrimage, on “honoring Mary in a physical manner” (Benedict 2020a). However, the stress on corporeality distinguishes the apparitional pilgrimage from all else. In particular, the physical healing of the bodies of the pilgrims was always a central element of the Marian pilgrimage narrative, in particular in Lourdes. This element gained further traction during the coronavirus pandemic as the healing waters of Lourdes were seen as an effective remedy against the virus—a universal healing source against a universal virus. “Let every believer touch the healing water please. So that through their belief, they will be cured” was a comment below a report on the closure of Lourdes (Catholic and Proud 2020b). Statuses and articles connecting pilgrimage with bodily health and the effects of the faith on physical renewal were very common.

Often, the corporeality was stressed to the minute detail. A pilgrimage-related article, which was shared on a conservative website, insisted that the Lent period is a pilgrimage that also cleanses our body: “Floss your teeth . . . your gums need a little extra and this will make your mouth feel NEW again” (Weiss 2018). Several other corporeal topics were frequently discussed in connection with the conservative type of pilgrimage: one such is the miraculous medal and the importance of wearing the medal on the believer’s body so that its healing power can take effect (EWTN 2020a). Another common trope was topics related to conception and birth: Mary’s immaculate conception and the Virgin’s breastfeeding and their impact on the miraculous power of pilgrimage, again with no equivalent in the progressive type (Benedict 2020b).

However, corporeal metaphors were also often used to describe pilgrimage sites, ranging from the stress on the “community of hearts” to which the sacred site gives rise (KTOTV 2020d) to the broadly shared depiction of Lourdes as “the lung of prayer” (Lourdes Rector: Closed Shrine Remains a “Lung of Prayer for the World” 2020). Finally, questions of the gendered body also featured prominently here, linking this type of pilgrimage and the Marian cultus with the conservative political agenda of today. Especially the EWTN focused on this type of connection: “Americans are confused in terms of their identity, their role in the world, what is the role of a father, what is the role of a mother . . . I don’t know of any time in the history when we would have needed rosary more than right now” (Power in My Hands the Movie n.d.).

The absence of corporeality in the progressive type of pilgrimage is not accidental as it is tied to an entirely different understanding of what pilgrimage means. Although the materiality of pilgrimage in this type is as important as in the conservative type, here it is expressed in terms of physical movement (of bodies), not the bodies themselves. Relics, such as a saint’s remains, healing water, and a blessed souvenir, which are central in the conservative narrative about pilgrimage and its corporeal as well as spiritual benefits, never come up as a topic in the progressive type. Illness and health are almost never discussed in it, and if ever the healing effects of pilgrimage are mentioned, it is only in terms of fitness and the benefits of physical movement for the human body. This is also the reason why the visual focus in the analyzed videos about progressive pilgrimage is not on kneeling or sitting persons, or persons moving within the holy precinct, but on people walking in open ground, in a forest, or in a meadow (KTOTV 2020b).

7. Geopolitics of Pilgrimage: The Journey, or the Destination?

As important as the stress on corporeality in conservative pilgrimage and its absence in progressive pilgrimage are, they do not constitute the most important difference between the two. The most fundamental distinguishing element is the way the spatiality of pilgrimage is constructed. For the conservative, Marian type, the pilgrimage is about the destination, which is static, fixed in space: the sacred place, the birthplace of a saint, the shrine, the grotto. Hence, the videos about pilgrimages to Fátima, Lourdes, or Međugorje almost never address the way the pilgrims came to the sites, as if this were entirely irrelevant. The movement from the ordinary to the extraordinary (*separation* in the established Turnerian vocabulary) is not discussed. What pilgrimage means is not *moving* elsewhere, but *being* at the holy place. Hence, when describing a pilgrimage to Lourdes during the COVID-19 times, the typical message is not about *leaving* the secular social structure, but about *being* in Lourdes, as it is “a place of grace, a place of hope and thus also a place of resilience” (KTOTV 2020c). A pilgrimage, in the end, equals being at the holy site, not experiencing movement, change, or liminality.

Another typical feature that confirms this observation is the frequently used analogy between a pilgrimage and a life’s journey. This comparison is nigh omnipresent in both types of pilgrimage. However, in the conservative one, the analogy is focused almost exclusively on the destination, the final goal of one’s life. The prayers which are used in connection with pilgrimage typically stress the dichotomy between the life on earth as a journey through the valley of tears and the heavenly rewards afterward. A typical example

is the much shared and “liked” prayer by Thomas Kempis from *Catholic and Proud*: “Keep yourself as a pilgrim, and a stranger upon earth, to whom the affairs of this world do not in the least belong. Keep your heart free, and raised upward to God, because you have not here a lasting home.” (Catholic and Proud 2020c; but there are many other examples such as Catholic and Proud 2020a).

In the conservative framing, the stories that present a believer’s life as a pilgrimage stress the end point, very often in the form of a conversion to the Catholic Church. “The pilgrimage of faith” of one such (originally Protestant and later Anglican) Christian shared on the *Catholic and Proud* Facebook site is a case in point. His life’s journey as an Anglican came to a crisis when ordination of women became an important topic in the Anglican Church (Benedict 2016). The answer and solution, which is discussed in great detail, was the conversion to the Catholic faith. The journey serves as a relatively short introduction to the lengthy description and justification of the destination, the Catholic Church. Importantly, the decision is argumentatively linked to two highly politicized markers of conservative/progressive positions in Christianity today: ordination of women and the attitudes toward LGBT+ people.

A similar story appeared on EWTN. In the video, a Catholic author discussed his book *Unlikely Pilgrim* (EWTN 2020c). The structure of the narrative is almost identical to that in the previous example. Originally a Quaker, the author first converted to the Episcopalian Church, but then he found God and himself in the Catholic Church, with the conversion again given ample attention. The book itself explores interesting pilgrimage sites in Europe, once more focusing on places, not the journey. The connection is made to the struggle of the Catholic conservatives against the sinful world, comparing the situation of today with glorious times in the past. The importance of Christianity is “lost on our current generation”, and schools forgot to teach people that “what Jesus Christ started was the foundation of the world” (EWTN 2020c).

In the progressive type, on the other hand, pilgrimage is defined as movement, not as a destination. This applies to both the actual pilgrimage and life seen as a pilgrimage. God is not waiting at the end of the journey, but he accompanies the pilgrims on the way: “Living one’s life as a pilgrimage, encountering God along the way” (7 Things 2020) is the motto of this type of pilgrimage that was shared by one of the analyzed Facebook sites. If there is a formal destination (such as in the case of the many pilgrimages along the *camino* to Santiago di Compostela), it is not even shown in the video or shown just briefly at the very end (KTOTV 2020b). The focus on movement is then reflected in the attention dedicated to the nature and the physicality of the journey through mountains or forests (KTOTV 2020e). The pilgrims themselves, in their testimonies, confirm that for them, Christianity and pilgrimage are best expressed in terms of metaphors of movement and change, as the aim is to show “the living church, a dynamic church, which always carries the message about Christ” (KTOTV 2020e).

Even the liturgical elements often take place in the open, as people usually pray sitting in meadows, standing in a copse of trees, or while walking along the route (KTOTV 2020b). Not surprisingly, the shift away from the officially designated Catholic places of worship towards moving through the landscape also renders pilgrimage more attractive for those less strongly affiliated with the Catholic Church. This is one of the reasons why the progressive type of pilgrimage is often tied to a more ecumenical orientation and why the Catholic Church or the Catholic faith is seldom explicitly mentioned in this case (KTOTV 2020b).

The overlap between a pilgrimage as a religious ritual and spiritually motivated tourism is present in both of the types of pilgrimage, as the many articles and videos about pilgrimages to Rome or to the Holy Land attest (Catholic and Proud 2020d; Ryan 2017; 7 Things 2020). However, the overlap is much more pronounced with the progressive type. Sometimes, it is even difficult to tell the religious and the touristic aspects apart. For instance, a pilgrimage documentary shared by KTO reiterates the story of St. Augustine and then follows a group of pilgrims on *Via Augustina*. While the Christian focus of

the pilgrimage is clearly visible in the report (KTOTV 2020d), it targets a much wider audience of those interested in “cultural roots” of Europe and the European spiritual heritage, broadly speaking. Those who comment on the pilgrimage in the documentary are not there as religious authorities but as students of Christianity or historians of antiquity. Even the Catholic priest who speaks at length in the documentary is introduced as a historian of Christianity (KTOTV 2020d). Not surprisingly, the pilgrimage is then focused on walking through the North African countryside, and the destination of the pilgrimage is not prioritized over the walk itself.

8. Pilgrimage as the Experience of *Communitas*?

One last differentiating element between the two types of pilgrimage is the community-building dimension. The Turnerian interpretation of *communitas* (Turner 1969) rests on the shared feeling of community among fellow humans (for instance, during a rite of passage, but also on a pilgrimage). At the same time, *communitas* works in a dialectical relationship with the normal social structure, nurturing and sustaining it, but also pointing beyond it to the limits of this structure and the possibility of overcoming it. The focus on *communitas* was later criticized by Eade and Sallnow (Eade and Sallnow 2000), who pointed out that pilgrims often bring their own presuppositions and discourses, which are then reflected back at them during the pilgrimage. Hence, Turner’s community of pilgrims was contrasted with the individual quest of each pilgrim, which often differs from the ideas, imaginations, and goals of others participating in the same pilgrimage or visiting the same sacred site.

My expectation was therefore that if the community-related aspect were to be found in one of the two types of pilgrimage, it would be the conservative, Marian pilgrimage type. The conservative pilgrimage is typically hierarchically structured, with a well-visible disciplinary power of the Catholic clergy. A (conservative) sacred place is also easier to regulate than a (progressive) route. Hence, I expected a conservatively oriented community-building to be found in the reports on the Marian pilgrimages, with none or very little of it in the progressive type, with its multiplicity of spiritualities and greater diversity of pilgrim backgrounds.

However, the opposite proved to be true. The social media reports about the conservative pilgrimage type are, almost without exception, focused on individual goals of the believers. These goals may differ, as in some cases the goal is the physical healing of the pilgrim or a prayer for somebody else’s health, and in others, the central narrative revolves around spiritual benefits, such as deepening of faith. Community is virtually never addressed in these reports, neither in the form of a sense of togetherness among fellow pilgrims nor in terms of strengthening the community from which the pilgrim comes. Even when the prayers do not focus on an individual, they do not target concrete communities, but abstractions such as humanity, the war-afflicted, the suffering, and, recently, those ill with COVID-19 (Virtual Pilgrimage 2020). The storytellers are individuals too, typically Catholic priests or sometimes elderly women (KTOTV 2020c).

For the progressive pilgrimage, on the other hand, the community is absolutely central. In virtually all the reports and videos of this type, we follow groups of people, not individuals (KTOTV 2020b, 2020d, 2020e). They share the same route, jointly prepare food, and eat together. Unlike in the conservative type, the reader is amply provided with intimate details about the group, such as their shared accommodation or camps in nature (KTOTV 2020b). Often, the common purpose of those on the pilgrimage is stressed, such as renovating a church or evangelizing through singing. Even the titles of the documents, such as “Travelling Sowers” (KTOTV 2020b), stress this unified purpose. The typical speakers are young, and often a couple or the entire group are recorded giving their responses together.

9. Conclusions

I started my analysis by challenging the still widely respected Turnerian account of pilgrimage. On the one hand, even in an era of virtualization, pilgrimage seems to have

succeeded in retaining its “kinetic”, spatial nature. However, the spatiality (or rather spatialities) of pilgrimage is undergoing a fundamental transformation. This transformation is linked to the pluralization of the geopolitics of pilgrimage, the political *and* spatial differentiation of what pilgrimage means and what its aim is. The two types of pilgrimage I identified in the article also challenge the understanding of pilgrimage as a series of three subsequent phases, i.e., separation, liminality, and aggregation.

The conservative type of pilgrimage is based almost entirely on the third aspect, the aggregation. The existing religious order is not to be challenged, but rather reaffirmed. Separation and liminality are suppressed, both in terms of the discourses surrounding the pilgrimage and in terms of the geopolitics of pilgrimage.⁷ The Catholic woman who moved to Lourdes and lives there to experience Lourdes permanently (EWTN 2020b) is the ultimate example of this type of devotion. There is no need for separation, no place for a subversive challenge to the established order, and only the aggregation remains.

The progressive type is also closely tied to spatiality, but in a different way. The focus on movement transfers the attention from the *site* to the *journey*. What matters is experiencing the separation and liminality, often expressed as the spiritually enriching hardships of the pilgrimage compared to the comfortable, yet repetitive everyday life. The aggregation is secondary, and so is the destination of the pilgrimage. What matters is being exposed to the transformative potential of the pilgrimage, be it in the form of an encounter with God or a spiritual transformation of the pilgrim’s life.

The virtualization of pilgrimage is undoubtedly one of the most visible sociopolitical phenomena accompanying pilgrimages of today. The ascendance of social media and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic have, paradoxically, led to the reassertion of the physical, corporeal, and spatial as essential aspects of pilgrimage. Seeing materiality as an essential part of pilgrimage is common to both of the types of pilgrimage that this article analyzes. However, the different ways of defining the spatiality of pilgrimage are markers of two different types of geopolitics of pilgrimage as well. One, focusing on static objects, sites, places, and bodies, extolls the conservative acceptance of the idealized status quo (which is often discursively moved to the past, to a golden age of faith and devotion). The other discards these objects almost entirely and is carried by a strong skepticism towards the static and the unchanging, but also towards the institutional aspect of faith.

This geopolitical division impacts all the dimensions of pilgrimage, ranging from the sites/routes chosen, via the type of devotion exhibited, to the way these two types are presented on social media. It would be therefore a mistake to see the revival of pilgrimage as a revival of a certain narrowly defined spirituality. Instead, we witness two inter-related and yet independent processes, both of which are, confusingly, labeled as pilgrimage. Both of them certainly attest to the vitality of spirituality, or rather, spiritualities in Europe, but they also show that these spiritualities have far-reaching political consequences which often stand at odds with each other.

Funding: This work was supported by the Grantová Agentura České Republiky [GA19-10969S].

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ The revival of pilgrimage in Europe has its roots in the combination of the advancing European secularization and the religious reactions to it, the search for nontraditional forms of spirituality, the growth of religious tourism, and a number of others. However, it is interesting to note that a similar trend can be observed across the globe, ranging from the growing popularity of the pilgrimages to Jerusalem to the boom of Hindu mass pilgrimages (including Kumbh Mela in Haridwar this year). Although some of the causes may be identical, this article deals specifically with the revival of pilgrimage in Europe.
- ² Within Catholic Mariology, the Age of Mary is a term sometimes applied to the period starting around 1830 when Marian apparitions became much more frequent and the related Marian cultus much more typical for the popular devotion.
- ³ The study of the Marian devotion and Marian pilgrimage is a narrow, yet thriving subfield of the religious studies. Among the popular studies on the topic, I would like to mention Zimdars-Swarz’s *Encountering Mary. From La Salette to Medjugorje*. (Zimdars-Swarz 2014) and the two great collections of studies edited by Jansen and Hermkens (2009) and by Di Stefano and Ramón Solans (2016).

- 4 Catherine Labouré was a French nun whose Marian visions led to the creation of the miraculous medal. Even today, wearing the medal belongs to the most distinctive features of traditional Marian devotion.
- 5 San Giovanni Rotondo is connected with the life of the Catholic saint Padre Pio. Padre Pio was known for his wounds, stigmata, and for his devotion to Virgin Mary, particularly the prayer of rosary.
- 6 In this article, references are made directly to the shared videos or texts, even if these texts are on a different website, and the Facebook posts only offer links to them.
- 7 A clarification is needed here. It could be argued that the conservative type of pilgrimage is, in fact, a liminal ritual if what is at stake is the liminality vis-à-vis the society. However, I would argue that in the Turnerian account, there is a deep connection between liminality and the subsequent aggregation. The pilgrim becomes liminal towards her or his community (be it the church or the society) and then becomes reagggregated within the same community. That is obviously not happening in the cases I described above.

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Article

Religiosity and Spirituality of German-Speaking Pilgrims on the Way of St. James

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Abstract: The article examines the intensity and structure of religiosity and spirituality of German-speaking foot and bicycle pilgrims on the Way of St. James within the framework of a multidimensional model of religiosity. The following nine aspects are distinguished: religious questions, faith, religious and spiritual identity, worship, prayer, meditation, monistic and dualistic religious experiences. Data of $N = 425$ German-speaking pilgrims of the Way of St. James from the years 2017 and 2018 are analyzed. The data of the Religion Monitor 2017 from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland ($N = 2837$) serves as a population-representative comparison sample. Descriptive statistics, t -tests, and multiple regression analyses are used to analyze and to compare the two groups. The results show that German-speaking pilgrims in the analyzed sample have substantially higher values on all dimensions of religiosity than the general population in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. This difference is most pronounced in the spiritual self-concept. However, for most pilgrims, the categories religious and spiritual are not mutually exclusive. Rather, spirituality forms a basis shared by almost all pilgrims in the sample, to which religiousness is added for many. Further, results are discussed in the light of the existing foot and bicycle pilgrimage research. Conclusively, it can be said that tourism and church actors should consider the religious character of pilgrims, which remains despite all changes in the religious landscape.

Keywords: pilgrims; German-speaking; Way of St. James; religiosity; spirituality; multidimensional structure of religiosity; centrality of religiosity scale; religious self-concept; spiritual self-concept

Citation: Lienau, Detlef, Stefan Huber, and Michael Ackert. 2022. Religiosity and Spirituality of German-Speaking Pilgrims on the Way of St. James. *Religions* 13: 51. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13010051>

Academic Editor: Mariano P. Barbato

Received: 1 December 2021

Accepted: 23 December 2021

Published: 6 January 2022

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1. Introduction

Walking (and cycling) pilgrimage has experienced a renaissance in Europe in recent decades¹. Even though the numbers of pilgrims arriving at their destination in Santiago de Compostela on the Camino de Santiago, at ca. 347,000 registered pilgrims in 2019 (Oficina del Peregrino Homepage n.d., statistics of pilgrim's office), fall far short of traditional Catholic pilgrimage sites, non-motorized pilgrimage can be understood to be a vital expression of religious motifs and therefore also their dynamic. Prototypical of pilgrimage is the Camino Francés through Spain, which is considered *the* pilgrimage route in Europe and has by far the highest number of pilgrims. Therefore, a lot of the pilgrimage research in Europe today refers to it. For a good three decades, the numbers of pilgrims on foot have been steadily increasing on a constantly growing network of pilgrimage routes. Correspondingly, the media presence, which goes far beyond the actual practice, in film (e.g., "The Way," Estevez 2010) and book (e.g., the most widely printed German-language non-fiction book is HaPe Kerkeling's pilgrimage account "Ich bin dann mal weg." (Kerkeling 2006)) which indicates through popular literature that pilgrimage has noticeable appeal. In multiple cases, pilgrimage is taken as a metaphor or in its practice as an indicator that can show the current change in the shape of the religious (Hervieu-Léger 2004).

1.1. Research Object and Research Question

One focus of interest in research on contemporary pilgrimage in Europe is the sociological classification of pilgrimage in the context of the current transformation of religion, religiosity, and spirituality (e.g., Lienau 2018). In this context, one of the main questions is the motivation of pilgrims (e.g., Gamper and Reuter 2012). In contrast, there are few studies on the general structure and relevance of pilgrims' religiosity and spirituality beyond the act of pilgrimage (e.g., Oviedo et al. 2014). Given this state of research, this paper brings pilgrims' religiosity and spirituality into focus. The attention is on the following questions, which are always in relation to German-speaking pilgrims on the Way of St. James:

1. How does the multidimensional model apply to pilgrims' religiosity and spirituality? More precisely:
 - a. How strongly do pilgrims believe in the existence of a spiritual realm?
 - b. How often do the pilgrims think about transcendence?
 - c. Do they seek contact with the transcendency, and how often do they have experiences with it?
 - d. Furthermore, how strong are pilgrims connected with churches?
2. How do the pilgrims understand themselves in relation to the following terms:
 - a. "religious" and
 - b. "spiritual"?
3. To what extent can the religious and spiritual self-concept of pilgrims be explained by the dimensions of the multidimensional model or religiosity?
4. How do pilgrims differ from the population in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland regarding the dimensions of the multidimensional model of religiosity and religious and spiritual self-concept? What aspects are typical of pilgrims?

Regarding these main questions, the paper discusses the phenomenon of pilgrimage in the context of contemporary transformations of the religious landscape in Western Europe. While doing so, this study bases on a substantive concept of religion, which, however, is not narrowed theistically, but is broadly conceived to include pantheistic concepts (Huber 2009). "In this perspective, the essential characteristic of religious experience and behavior consists in a meaningful reference to a reality perceived as higher, to which an essential relevance for one's own life is attributed. In the history of religion this higher reality is often named as God, divinity, higher power, spirit, or spiritual world." (Huber et al. 2020, p. 7).

1.2. Research Overview

Pilgrimage is no longer a distinctly religious phenomenon, or even one that follows solely the trajectories of traditional Catholic forms (Collins-Kreiner 2016's article is influential in this regard). Rather, religious, spiritual, secular, touristic, sporting, social, biographical, and cultural aspects intersect in the phenomenon of pilgrimage. Accordingly, the study of pilgrimage involves a broad field of disciplines, such as geography, sociology, ethnology, theology, psychology, history, religion-, media-, and tourism-studies. For the field of quantitative-empirical studies, which is particularly relevant here, social science studies are especially important.

In the diversity of facets and corresponding perspectives on the phenomenon in the literature, the question of the relevance of the religious-spiritual dimension remains predominant. Most studies refrain from taking extreme positions; neither purely secular-touristic motivations nor purely religious-spiritual ones are asserted. Within the broad consensus that pilgrimage is *also* a religious phenomenon, there are gradations in the assessment of how essential religious aspects are, whether an increasing or decreasing trend can be observed, and how more traditional-religious and newer moments relate to each other.

Pilgrimage is changing continually, in terms of human beings on the way, their motivation, as well as the accomplishment of the pilgrimage itself. Pilgrimage has habitually

been characterized by diverse interests (Herbers 2006; Oviedo et al. 2014), but a clear shift in emphasis is evident in the current upsurge of foot pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago. Studies have come to different conclusions about the weight given to religious, spiritual, and other motivations. In some cases, the Way of Saint James is considered an example of a shift from a purely religious to a touristic-spiritual phenomenon (Kim et al. 2019; Lois-González and Santos 2015; Lopez et al. 2017). In this frame Amaro et al. (2018) identify a trend from older studies emphasizing religious motives (e.g., Fernandes et al. 2012; Millán Vázquez de la Torre et al. 2012) to more recent ones emphasizing spirituality, personal clarity, sport, and experience seeking (e.g., Nilsson and Tesfahuney 2016; Oviedo et al. 2014; Schnell and Pali 2013). Besides, Margry (2015) observes shifts between different forms of the religious. The data though are not fully consistent in every regard. Most recently, Heiser (2021) highlighted the relevance of the religious, noting a coexistence of traditional religious and contemporary spiritual aspects. Clear oppositions and dichotomies such as individual instead of communal/institutional, profane instead of sacred, fun instead of serious, and invisible instead of public do not do justice to the phenomenon, because besides undisputed trends such as experiential orientation and corporeality, other aspects can only be grasped in a differentiated way. Against the juxtaposition of a few church-traditional and many contemporary non-church pilgrims in Gamper and Reuter (2012), Heiser (2021) and Lienau (2014, 2018) emphasize the relevance of institutional religiosity for broad areas of pilgrimage. Pilgrimage—even if, as here, the focus is placed solely on pilgrimage on foot along the Way of St. James—is a phenomenon that is as complex as it is fluid and challenging to grasp.

As the phenomenon of pilgrimage is fluid and at the same time encompasses many motivational aspects it makes sense to use it as a paradigmatic indicator and trendsetter of a broader development. Pilgrimage can serve as a good example of the direction in which the religious field in Western Europe is currently moving. A traditional phenomenon is changing and taking on its own contemporary elements. The development of pilgrimage on foot on the Way of St. James was able to take hold quickly also because it had been largely dormant for decades (30 years ago, only 1/50 of the pilgrims registered today arrived in Santiago). This vacuum could be filled with new practices and therefore meanings.

Reflections on the religious–spiritual valence of pilgrimage can follow two perspectives. On the one hand, pilgrimage can be used as a mere metaphor without differentiated reference to practice. On the other hand, insights gained from the practice can be extrapolated exemplarily as indicators of late modern religiosity. On the one hand, the practice of pilgrimage is surveyed. On the other hand, pilgrimage is seen as a mere image of religious–cultural change (Schwaderer 2019).

As a metaphor, pilgrimage is encountered early on by Zygmunt Bauman (1994, “Vom Pilger zum Touristen”), and formatively by Danièle Hervieu-Léger (2004, “Pilger und Konvertiten. Religion in Bewegung”) as an image of searching spirituality that does not commit itself. In Gebhardt et al. (2005), the “spiritual wanderer” becomes the ideal type of late modern religiosity. The outer movement of pilgrimage and its fluid shape become the image of the inner religious quest. Pilgrimage is not only a metaphor, but also an indicator of popular spirituality in Hubert Knoblauch (2009).

Lastly, a look at the media reveals some attractive features of pilgrimage to the mass. Media communication about pilgrimage is relatively independent of the practice, but it does provide indications of attractive aspects of pilgrimage that can be linked to it. An analysis of feature films popular in Germany shows that in many cases non-religious (sometimes even religion-rejecting) protagonists are religiously stimulated and affected from the outside by an imprinted ritualistic anachronistic-religious setting (Lienau 2015a). The contrast thus constructed between modern areligious pilgrims and anachronistic-religious settings precisely does not prevent the efficacy of the religious. Rather, it presents pilgrimage as attractive to modern people imagined as areligious. Through the framework, the pilgrim is given possibilities of behavior and interpretation that he no longer has of his own accord, but which can become significant for him despite all strangeness.

1.2.1. Results on Pilgrims' Religiosity and Spirituality: Motives and Self-Concept

The general overview indicates that, beside all others, religious and spiritual (R/S) motives for pilgrimage coexist side-by-side. Acknowledging the multidimensionality of R/S the question arises about its dimensions. This question has been addressed only *indirectly* in previous studies. Three areas have been dealt with in the analyses so far, but in many cases, they give only the following secondary indications:

1. the question of the denomination or religious affiliation of the pilgrims;
2. the question about the motives for pilgrimage;
3. the question about the experience on the road.

The subject of formal religious affiliation (1) says something only to a limited extent about the relevance and the content-related orientation of religiosity. Data on the motivation to go on pilgrimage (2) tells something about the situational interest in relation to the concrete intention to go on pilgrimage. Data on experiences on the road (3) also allow statements to be made about religiosity in the situation of pilgrimage, but not necessarily about the fundamental religious attitude and practice of the people on the way. Nevertheless, these aspects can be of heuristic use as secondary indications. At the same time, it must remain conscious that there is a clear deficit in knowledge about pilgrims here. In the following passage, some quantitative studies relevant to present research questions will be presented.

As a source on the relevance of religious and denominational affiliation and the religious self-concept for pilgrimage, the study by Farias et al. (2019) offers itself, which for the first time looks at decidedly atheistic pilgrims ($N = 360$, including 290 members of a Christian church and 70 nondenominational). The two groups show no significant differences with respect to the following three of six motivation types: "closeness to nature", "search for live direction", and "spiritual seeking". In addition to many shared motives, there is an additional motive, "religious growth," among Christians, without this leading to relevantly weaker values for other motives. Overall, Farias et al. see pilgrimage as a flexible form for the religiously convinced, seekers and non-religious alike.

A comprehensive questionnaire studies ($N_{total} = 1147$) by Gamper and Reuter (2012) and Gamper (2014) show high values for a religious self-concept (43.9% religious and 20.1% very religious), while only 7.6% described themselves as not religious. The values for self-designation as spiritual (32%) and very spiritual (13.9%) are comparably high with 17.1% rejecting any spiritual self-concept. Gamper and Reuter survey motivations and use them to form five types of pilgrims, with the non-religious-spiritually motivated pilgrims making up about half of the respondents. Among the individual items, "find yourself" (51.8%), "escape from everyday life" (40.2%), "enjoy silence" (39.2%) and "feel spiritual atmosphere" (34.6%) are at the top, as well as "nature"—, i.e., motives that go in the direction of one's own self in the context of nature. These motifs form a kind of common denominator for many pilgrims, while explicitly religious motifs are still relevant for a subgroup.

Another comprehensive study that focuses on motivation comes from Amaro et al. (2018, $N = 1140$). Four of the eight assessed dimensions are strongly pronounced, i.e., "spirituality," "new experiences," "experience of nature," and "culture"; the other four motivations are significantly weaker, with values between two and three on a five-point scale: "religious motives," "keeping a vow," "getting to know places and people," and "breaking out of routines." In the case of respondents from religiously Catholic countries of origin (e.g., Portugal, Spain, Brazil), religious motives are more pronounced than in the case of pilgrims from more secularized and Protestant countries of origin.

Additionally, informative on the topic of motivation is a questionnaire study by Oviedo et al. (2014) with $N = 470$. They are concerned with the question of whether pilgrimage is a "religious revival," a secular or post-secular form of nature tourism, or part of the trend of eclectic fuzzy spirituality. The result is that the latter type of spiritual pilgrim is predominant, but the different types can coexist well on the Camino de Santiago. Motives related to self ("spiritual growth," "sensations seeking," and "seeking life direction") are prioritized, with "religious growth" in the middle range, but certain traditional religious

practices such as “penance” and “taking a vow” are rare. Self-designation as religious ($M = 3.97$ on a scale of 1 to 10) is noticeably lower than as spiritual ($M = 5.90$ on a scale of 1 to 10). When asked about religious experiences on the road, only the item “Feeling the presence of God/the divine” achieved a slightly higher value with a mean of 3 on a 6-point scale. The two individual items with the highest values “to be close to nature” ($M = 4.89$) and “to find my deeper self” ($M = 4.80$) are interpreted by the authors as meaning that pilgrimage serves self-discovery, which is pursued through everyday distance and mystification of nature. Therefore, the authors conclude that the fact that the self-designation as spiritual has the strongest values speaks against the assumption of a strengthening of traditional religion and for a further development and a change in form of the religious towards the spiritual. In particular, the weak values for “religious devotion” show how much today’s pilgrims differ from the pilgrim tradition. At the same time, traditional religiosity still plays a substantial role.

A study by Schnell and Pali (2013) emphasizes the moment of “quest”, which 2/3 of pilgrims cite as motivation, in opposition to “conviction”. A two-dimensional scheme is elaborated on by the authors, as follows: dimension 1 represents the strength of vertical transcendence, dimension 2 the continuum from “quest” to “conviction.” The dispersion on the transcendence scale showed average values compared to the normal population. At the same time, on dimension 2, the high values for self-knowledge, freedom, challenge, and self-realization show that the aspect of quest clearly distinguishes pilgrims from the normal population. The search for personal clarity is thus what most pilgrims have in common; the transcendence orientation is variable.

In an interview study, Heiser (2021) distinguishes between traditional religious and contemporary spiritual pilgrims. Although both types can be differentiated, there are fluid transitions and interferences at the same time. Millán Vázquez de la Torre et al. (2012) arrive at 91.4% (exclusively or also) religious motives (and thus higher values than in the comparison group of a traditional pilgrimage in Andalusia). Gomes et al. (2019) construct a “touripilgrimage,” that is, a pilgrimage that is more spiritual, ambiguous, and multi-motivational rather than solely religious. Because motives are increasing personally and spiritually, there is an increasing overlap between tourism, religion, and pilgrimage, they argue. Fernandes et al. (2012, $N = 204$) arrive at only 35% religious motives (with 39% recreation, 33% culture, 23% curiosity, 17% sports, and 5% spirituality). Rather than tourist secularization or contrasting setting apart from one another, creative interactions of traditionally religious and non-traditionally religious pilgrims occur, they argue, and initially secular motives may shift toward spiritual ones along the way. In an analysis of online social network sources, Kim and Kim (2019) underscore the fluid self-attributions of pilgrims, most of whom are no longer clearly religious in the traditional sense, but neither are they secular or anti-religious, but rather oscillate between different religious stances. Pickard and Aitch (2020), using an online survey ($N = 487$) found significantly more pilgrims to have a spiritual (81%—only 3% reject it outright) than a religious (45%) self-concept.

1.2.2. Religiosity and Spirituality as a Topic of Pilgrimage Research

In summary, the following can be said: the question of R/S plays a substantial role in pilgrimage research despite the diversity and amalgamation of the motives in this field. The diversity leads to description of R/S via different concepts. Quite common in quantitative studies seems to be the approach via the motives of the pilgrims. However, in the narrower sense, this can only tell something about what the people intend with their pilgrimage. Only statements which are mediated and derived from this can be made about the religiousness of the pilgrims. In addition, there are—mainly qualitative—studies that examine expressions in relation to the carrying out of the pilgrimage, whether in interviews or in the analysis of digital media. In this way, something can be said about the religious valences of the pilgrimage practice (experiences, behavior, communication), but here too only derivatively does it speak of the pilgrims’ religiosity. In addition to motives

for pilgrimage and descriptions of the pilgrimage process, the question of denominational affiliation in quantitative studies forms a third access route. These data reflect the religiously diverse composition of the population and show that pilgrimage (on the Way of St. James) is no longer a purely Catholic phenomenon but also attractive to Protestant Christians and people without denominational affiliation (but hardly to people of other religions). However, it is questionable to what extent the mere denominational affiliation can provide information about the pilgrims' religiosity. For this, different aspects of religiosity would have to be surveyed, as the survey of the five dimensions in the centrality index of religiosity does. However, this has not yet been applied to pilgrims. This is the reason for the present study. Moreover, the subgroup of German-speaking pilgrims, which is important for a comparison with the normal population in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, has almost never been studied specifically (Amaro et al. 2018).

2. Method

2.1. Sample and Procedure

The questionnaire for the study was developed in German and then translated into Spanish, English, and French. Thereby, it was understandable for a large part of the pilgrims on the Way of St. James. In the years 2017 and 2018, the questionnaires were displayed in different hostels or handed out in paper form by the hospitaleros upon arrival. Questionnaires were distributed exclusively in pilgrim-only hostels. This ensured that only pilgrims were surveyed. The completed questionnaires were largely handed-in directly on site, some were sent in by mail.

In total, 1142 filled in questionnaire forms were collected. However, the partial sample evaluated here includes only the 425 German-language questionnaires. Thereby, a comparison of the average population of German-speaking countries is possible and is intended. Table 1 shows how many questionnaires in German were completed at which location.

Table 1. Composition of the Sample of German-Speaking Pilgrims by Location.

Country	Amount	Location	Amount
Spain	317	La Faba	151
		Pamplona	55
		Güemes	53
		Astorga	49
		Santander	9
Germany, Austria, Switzerland	78		
Other country	6		
Not applicable	24		
Sum	425		

Note. Only the questionnaires in German are listed.

As shown in Table 1, ca. 75% of the German-language questionnaires were completed in pilgrim hostels in Spain. Another 19 percent can be assigned to places in Germany and Switzerland. The survey location hostel and the selection of locations have a sufficient distance to Santiago de Compostela, ensuring that the pilgrims, who completed the survey had mostly been on the way for a longer period. The survey sites in Spain are located on the main Camino Francés and the Camino del Norte, reflecting the different types of paths: the Spanish Main Way, the Secondary Way in the Iberian Peninsula, and the Camino de Santiago in the area of origin. Table 2 documents some demographic data of the German-speaking pilgrimage sample. In addition, it contains information on who the respondents are traveling with and whether they have previous experience with pilgrimages.

Table 2. Demographics of the Sample of German-Speaking Pilgrims ($N = 425$).

Category	Group	Percent
Gender	female	61.0
Age	up to 25	23.5
	26–40	26.8
	41–60	31.3
	over 60	18.5
Education	without school degree	1.4
	secondary, vocational school	26.9
	baccalaureate	25.0
	college, university	46.7
Confession	none	26.6
	roman-catholic	40.9
	evangelical	23.5
Traveling	alone	46.9
	with 2–4 pilgrims	49.3
	with at least 5 pilgrims	3.8
Pilgrimage Experience	first pilgrimage	53.6
	pilgrimage at least once before	16.1
	pilgrimage multiple times before	30.3

Note. Gender was assessed dichotomously.

2.2. Instruments

The four-page (A5-format) questionnaire consisted of 9 introductory questions about age, gender, education, health, and general information about the pilgrimage, 17 questions about the motivation for the pilgrimage, 22 questions on experiences during the pilgrimage, and 17 questions on R/S, which were asked at the end. Of the 17 questions on R/S, the answers to 9 questions are evaluated in the present study (see Table 3).

Table 3. Indicators for the Measurement of Religiosity and Spirituality.

Facet	Indicator	Measure
RSC	All in all: How religious would you describe yourself to be?	Single item
SSC	Regardless of whether or not you consider yourself a religious person, how spiritual would you describe yourself to be?	Single item
Public practice	How often do you participate in church services?	Single item
Ideology	How strongly do you believe that there is God or something divine?	
Intellect	How often do you think about religious issues?	
Experience	(a) interactive: How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or the divine is intervening in your life? (b) participative: How often do you experience situations in which you feel that you are one with everything?	Centrality of Personal Religiosity Scale
Private practice	(a) interactive: How often do you pray? (b) participative: How often do you meditate?	

Note. RSC—religious self-concept. SSC—spiritual self-concept. The dimensions of experience and private practice are operationalized by two indicators each (a and b), in which an interactive and a participative relation to transcendence is expressed.

The theoretical foundation of the indicators used in the study is a multidimensional model developed to measure religiosity (Huber 2003; Huber and Huber 2012; Huber et al. 2020). The model presents a synthesis of the sociological approach to religion by Glock (1962; Stark and Glock 1968) and the psychological approach to religion by Allport (Allport and Ross 1967). The backbone of the model consists of five core dimensions (public practice, ideology, intellect, religious experience, and private practice), which are operationalized by indicators that are formulated as generally as possible. Moreover, to increase sensitivity to newer forms of religiosity and spirituality, private practice not only asks about prayer but also about meditation, and experience not only asks about the interactive experience by the intervention of a divine counterpart but also about the participatory experience of oneness with all. The scale used to measure the centrality of personal religiosity consists of one indicator each for the core dimensions ideology and intellect, and two indicators each for experience and private practice. However, only one value from these two core dimensions is included in the calculation of the scale value of the Centrality of Personal Religiosity Scale, namely the higher value in each case. The scale achieved an internal consistency of Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$ among participants in the sample.

The model and the nine indicators are the theoretical and empirical core of the International Religion Monitor (Huber 2009; Huber and Krech 2009). In 2007, 2012, and 2017, representative surveys were conducted in a total of 23 countries as part of the Religion Monitor. In the 2017 survey wave, Germany, Austria and Switzerland were integrated, among others. For this reason, the responses of German-speaking pilgrims can be compared with population-representative data from the three countries. Moreover, meanwhile, a study has found evidence that the model for measuring religiosity has corroborated itself as a theoretical framework for coding qualitative interviews on spirituality (Demmrich and Huber 2019). Therefore, the five dimensions of this model can be used for the description and explanation of spirituality.

2.3. Analyses

In the first step, the analyses are based on descriptive statistics for each of the nine indicators from the multidimensional model of religiosity (see Table 3). Pairwise analyses lead to the fact that the N differs slightly for the individual variables. Since findings from German-speaking pilgrims as well as from the representative comparison sample from Germany, Austria and Switzerland from the Religion Monitor 2017 are available for the same indicators, a comparison is also integrated into the description and interpretation of the results. To enable comparisons of German-speaking pilgrims with the normal German-speaking population in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, the representative data collected by the Religion Monitor 2017 in the three countries were pooled and then weighted according to the country shares of German-speaking pilgrims. Therefore, t -tests for independent samples are calculated on all available religious indicators. The results are reported with 95% confidence intervals and Cohen's d effect size with Hedges' correction. Further, correlations between the indicators as well as the religious and spiritual self-concept are analyzed using cross-tabulations and multiple regression analyses.

3. Results

The presentation of the results is delivered in the following steps: Firstly, there are the results of the centrality of personal religiosity scale. The distributions of the responses and mean values of the six indicators on the four core dimensions of religiosity that make up the scale for measuring the centrality of personal religiosity are presented (cf. Table 4). Thereafter, these are compared with representative results of the same indicators from the Religion Monitor 2017 in German-speaking countries (cf. Table 5).

Table 4. Percentage distribution of responses and mean values of the six indicators on the four core dimensions of private practice, experience, intellect, and ideology among German-speaking pilgrims.

	Private Practice			Experience			Intellect	Ideology ^b
	Prayer	Meditation	HV ^a	Part.	Inter.	HV ^a		
N	407	408	414	395	397	409	411	392
never	21.1	24.5	8.5	5.6	12.6	2.4	3.2	8.7
rarely	29.2	28.4	25.6	21.5	18.6	11.7	20.4	11.7
occasionally	17.2	27.0	25.8	39.5	31.5	36.2	31.4	15.3
often	18.4	13.0	22.9	25.6	20.4	30.3	26.8	22.7
very often	14.0	7.1	17.1	7.8	16.9	19.3	18.2	41.6
Mean ^c	2.75	2.50	3.15	3.09	3.10	3.52	3.37	3.77

Notes. (a) “HV” (higher value) stands for the higher value of each of the two indicators on private practice and experience. If one of the two values is missing, the higher value counts as the missing value. For this reason, the N of the HV variables is higher than the N of the indicators from which they are calculated. (b) For religious ideology, the response scale does not consist of frequencies but of five intensity levels (“not at all”, “not very much”, “moderately”, “quite a bit”, “very much so”). (c) The mean should be interpreted in the given range of the scale of minimum 1.0 to maximum 5.0.

Table 5. Percentage distribution of responses and mean values of the six indicators on the four core dimensions of private practice, experience, intellect, and ideology in the normal population in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (weighted data).

	Private Practice			Experience			Intellect	Ideology ^b
	Prayer	Meditation	HV ^a	Part.	Inter.	HV ^a		
N	2826	2847	2854	2751	2828	2863	2863	2826
never	39.4	57.7	29.4	21.4	32.9	15.2	10.4	25.0
rarely	26.2	20.5	27.2	33.2	26.1	26.1	24.5	18.1
occasionally	10.6	9.5	14.3	27.7	24.3	31.5	33.9	16.4
often	6.4	5.2	8.9	14.0	10.5	18.7	20.5	15.2
very often	17.4	7.0	20.2	3.8	6.3	8.5	10.7	25.3
Mean population	2.36	1.83	2.63	2.46	2.31	2.79	2.97	2.98
Mean pilgrims ^c	2.75	2.50	3.15	3.09	3.10	3.52	3.37	3.77
Mean difference	0.39	0.67	0.52	0.63	0.79	0.73	0.40	0.79

Notes. (a) “HV” (higher value) stands for the higher value of each of the two indicators private practice and experience. If one of the two values is missing, the higher value counts as the missing value. Therefore, the N of the HV variables is higher than the N of the indicators from which they are calculated. (b) For religious ideology, the response scale consists of five intensity levels (“not at all”, “not very much”, “moderately”, “quite a bit”, “very much so”) not of frequencies. (c) The penultimate row shows the mean values of the pilgrim sample from Table 3 for comparison. The last row “mean difference” shows the difference between the mean value of the pilgrims and the population (mean value pilgrims minus mean value population). All mean differences are significant ($p < 0.001$ —detailed information on significant tests can be found in the Appendix A).

Secondly, the results of the analyses of the R/S self-concepts are presented. Later, the distribution of answers and mean values on the R/S self-concepts as well as the centrality of personal religiosity and the frequency of worship participation are described and compared in the pilgrimage sample (cf. Table 6) and the representative German-language samples from the Religion Monitor 2017 (cf. Table 7).

Table 6. Percentage distribution of responses and mean values on religious and spiritual self-concept as well as the centrality of personal religiosity and the frequency of public religious practice among German-speaking pilgrims.

	Religious Self-Concept		Spiritual Self-Concept		Centrality of Personal Religiosity	Public Practice
N	385		395		418	406
not at all	16.9		7.9			16.5
not very much	22.3	39.1	13.2	18.0	7.9	34.5
moderately		28.1		34.7	56.5	23.9
quite a bit	19.0		35.6			15.0
very much so	13.8	32.8	18.5	47.4	35.6	10.1
Mean	2.90		3.43		3.43	2.68

Note. In the case of public practice, the response scale does not consist of intensities but of five frequency levels (never, rarely, occasionally, often, very often). For the Centrality of Personal Religiosity scale, the three sections are defined by the following scale values: low: 1.0–2.0, medium: 2.1–3.9, high: 4.0–5.0.

Table 7. Percentage distribution of responses and mean values on religious and spiritual self-concept and the centrality of personal religiosity and public religious practice in the normal population in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (weighted data).

	Religious Self-Concept		Spiritual Self-Concept		Centrality of Personal Religiosity	Public Practice
N	2839		2808		2871	2856
not at all	29.2		36.4			29.7
not very much	24.0	53.2	28.6	65.0	29.5	33.2
Moderately		29.2		21.9	50.3	21.2
quite a bit	12.8		8.6			8.2
very much so	4.8	17.6	4.4	13.1	20.1	7.7
Population mean	2.40		2.16		2.84	2.31
Pilgrims mean	2.90		3.43		3.43	2.68
Mean difference	0.50		1.27		0.59	0.37

Note. Regarding worship attendance, the response scale does not consist of intensities but of five frequency levels (“never,” “rarely,” “occasionally,” “often,” “very often”). For the Centrality of Personal Religiosity scale, the three sections are defined by the following scale values: low: 1.0–2.0, medium: 2.1–3.9, high: 4.0–5.0.

The third step focuses on the in-depth analyses of the R/S self-concepts of the German-speaking pilgrims. For this, the distributions of the R/S self-concepts are first cross-tabulated (cf. Table 8). Subsequently, step-by-step multiple regression analyses are reported to explain the religious and spiritual self-concept (cf. Table 9).

Table 8. Cross-tabulation of low, medium, and high expression of religious and spiritual self-concept among German-speaking pilgrims in percent (N = 376).

		Low	Spiritual Medium	High	Total
religious	low	11.7%	15.2%	12.2%	39.1%
	medium	3.7%	13.3%	11.2%	28.2%
	high	2.4%	6.6%	23.7%	32.7%
total		17.8%	35.1%	47.1%	100.0%

Note. The following response categories are combined in three categories: low (“not at all”, “not very much”), medium (“moderately”), high (“quite a bit”, “very much so”).

Table 9. Stepwise Regression Analyses to Explain the Religious and Spiritual Self-Concept.

	RelSelf			SpirSelf		
	N	341		N	351	
	R ²	0.68		R ²	0.30	
	IV	β	T	IV	β	T
1.	Prayer	0.20	3.87	Intellect	0.22	3.89
2.	Ideology	0.25	5.29	Meditation	0.27	5.56
3.	Public Practice (service)	0.31	6.98	Ideology	0.30	4.84
4.	Intellect	0.18	4.54	Experience (particip.)	0.11	2.37
5.	Experience (interact.)	0.10	2.13	Prayer	−0.13	−2.08

Note. RelSelf: religious self-concept. SpirSelf: spiritual self-concept. IV: independent variables. The order of the IV is based on the stepwise inclusion of the IV in the model.

3.1. Descriptive Analyses of Personal Core Dimensions of Religiosity

The four dimensions of private practice, experience, intellect, and ideology can be characterized as personal religiosity because they can be lived independently of membership in a religious community. Therefore, they are particularly meaningful for individualized religiosity and spirituality.

Notably, the results in Table 4 show that religious ideology is the most pronounced when comparing the five core dimensions among German-speaking pilgrims. Around 63% are fairly or very convinced that God or something divine exists. Thereafter, the intellectual dimension follows in second place, with 45% thinking about religious issues often or very often. Religious experiences are also highly pronounced. It is worth noting that the frequent presence (“often” or “very often”) of interactive experiences is somewhat more widespread (about 37%) than participatory experiences (33%). Thus, if the higher frequency of both experiences is counted for each respondent, it can be stated that religious experiences are “often” or “very often” present in 50% of pilgrims. On the other hand, only two percent of pilgrims report “never” having either form of religious experience. In terms of private practice, prayer is slightly more common than meditation, with 32% of pilgrims reporting that they pray “often” or “very often,” compared to only 20% for meditation. At least one of the two private practices is followed “often” or “very often” by 40% of pilgrims. Therefore, regardless of the specific form, high frequency in private practice is remarkably common among pilgrims.

In the comparison with population data, it is immediately apparent that all dimensions of personal religiosity are significantly more pronounced among pilgrims. The difference is highest in religious ideology and the frequency of interactive religious experiences. In the normal population, only 40.5% “fairly” or “very” believe in God or the divine. In contrast, among pilgrims, the number is 64.3%. Moreover, only 8.7% of pilgrims “do not believe at all,” whereas this percentage is almost three times higher in the normal population at 25%.

In the normal population, only 16.8% report that they “often” or “very often” experience situations in which they feel that God or something divine intervenes in their lives; among pilgrims, the amount is more than twice as high, at 37.3%. In addition, only 12.6% of pilgrims say they “never” have interactive religious experiences, whereas this percentage is about two and a half times higher in the normal population, at 32.9%.

Moreover, participative religious experiences are more pronounced among pilgrims than in the normal population. 33.4% of pilgrims say they “often” or “very often” experience situations in which they have the feeling of being one with everything. In the normal population, this number lies at 17.8%. However, the difference of 15.6% points is smaller than for interactive religious experiences.

Finally, the difference between pilgrims and the normal population is weakest in the frequency of prayer and reflection. While only 23.8% pray “often” or “very often” in the normal population, this is the case for 32.4% among pilgrims. Moreover, when it comes to thinking about religious issues, the corresponding figures are 31.2% and 45%. All reported differences are statistically significant on a α -level of 5%, two-sided. Please consider the

information provided in the Appendix A Table A1 on the *t*-tests for more details on all difference calculations.

3.2. Descriptive Analyses of Religious and Spiritual Self-Concept, Centrality of Personal Religiosity Scale, and Worship Attendance

Table 6 shows the means and distributions of responses on items relating to R/S self-concepts, frequency of worship attendance, and three areas of the scale on the centrality of personal religiosity (low: 1.0–2.0, medium: 2.1–3.9, high: 4.0–5.0). A low score on this scale indicates that a respondent rarely to never has religious experiences, does not engage in private religious practice, hardly thinks about religious issues, and does not believe in the existence of God or anything divine. Therefore, people in this group can be characterized as “non-religious.” However, this is the case for only about eight percent of pilgrims. On the other hand, all four dimensions of personal religiosity are highly expressed in about 36% of pilgrims. Religiosity is often present in their life horizons in many ways. Therefore, they can be described as “highly religious” and religious content likely plays a central role in their lives. Around 57% belong to the middle group. It is typical for them to have medium or fluctuating values for the four dimensions, both high and low. For this group, religiosity is important but not central. In other words, religion reappears again and again throughout the individual’s lifespan but generally remains in the background.

The construct of the centrality of personal religiosity refers to private elements of the religious. To a certain extent, it expresses the “objective” occurrence and relevance of religious content in the horizon of life. However, the constructs of the R/S self-concepts are to be distinguished from this. They primarily refer to the level of religious consciousness and express how a respondent understands him/herself concerning the religious or spiritual. Nonetheless, there are correlations between these constructs; for example, the centrality of personal religiosity correlates very highly with the religious self-concept ($r = 0.74$) and highly with spiritual self-concept ($r = 0.49$). Nevertheless, it may be instructive to observe how religious-spiritual being and consciousness relate to each other in detail.

The values in Table 6 strongly indicate a preponderance of spiritual over religious consciousness. More than 80.0 percent of pilgrims consider themselves at least “moderately” spiritual, and almost half (47.4%) consider themselves “fairly” or “very” spiritual. Being spiritual is thus a wide-spread self-image of pilgrims. In contrast, the situation is different for the religious self-concept. Only around one-third of pilgrims (32.8%) describe themselves as “fairly” or “very” religious and another 28.1% as “moderately” religious. This contrasts with 39.1% of pilgrims who cannot identify with “religious” as a self-description. Thus, being religious is not a widely shared self-image of pilgrims, but rather a construct on which opinions differ. This issue is analyzed in more depth below in Table 7. Before doing so, it makes sense to compare the degree of personal religiosity of pilgrims as well as their R/S self-images with the corresponding values in the representative sample of the Religion Monitor 2017. The corresponding numbers can be found in Table 7.

Hence, a comparison of the values in Tables 6 and 7 shows that the mean value of the spiritual self-concept is higher the most—namely by 1.27 from 2.16 for the normal population to 3.43 for the pilgrims. In contrast, the mean values of the religious self-concept and the centrality of personal religiosity increase only by +0.50 and +0.59, respectively. The mean difference is reflected in the response categories. While 65% of the normal population describe themselves as “not at all” or “not very” spiritual, only 18% of pilgrims do so. On the other hand, the opposite is true for the self-description as “quite” or “very” spiritual. In the normal population, only about 18% describe themselves as “quite” or “very” spiritual; among pilgrims, this figure rises to 47.4%. That is more than two and a half times higher. Finally, the difference is smallest in the frequency of public practice. More information on the significance tests of pilgrim’s and population’s values can be found in the Appendix A Table A1.

3.3. Cross-Analyses of the Spiritual and Religious Self-Concept

How does spiritual relate to religious self-understanding? The bivariate Pearson's correlation coefficient between the two variables is $r = 0.40$ ($N = 376$; $p < 0.001$). This coefficient has a medium magnitude, indicating that the two constructs mostly go hand-in-hand. At the same time, it is low enough that substantial variation is possible in addition to the general tendency. Therefore, it makes sense to analyze the relationship of the answers to both constructs in more detail in a cross-tabulation. For this purpose, Table 8 compares three levels of the two self-concepts: low ("not at all", "not very much"), medium ("moderately"), high ("quite a bit", "very much so").

Primarily, it can be seen that the two concepts "spiritual" and "religious" are equally pronounced in 48.7% of the pilgrims—11.7%: low, 13.3%: medium, 23.7% high. See the diagonal in Table 8. A gradual shift is found in another 36.7%—26.4% emphasize the spiritual self-concept somewhat more strongly (15.2% + 11.2%), and 10.3% give gradual priority to the religious self-concept (3.7% + 6.6%). In contrast, a mutually exclusive understanding of R/S is present in 14.6% of pilgrims. Only 2.4% of pilgrims see themselves as "highly religious" and at the same time as "low" spiritual. After all, 12.2% of pilgrims exclusively describe themselves as "highly spiritual" and reject the term "religious" as a category relevant to identity. In summary, the following results can be drawn regarding the use of the terms "religious" and "spiritual" among the pilgrims surveyed:

- ¹ Most pilgrims in the sample see themselves as spiritual (35.1% as "medium spiritual" and 47.1% as "highly spiritual").
- ² For most pilgrims, the concepts of "spiritual" and "religious" are not mutually exclusive. For 37% of pilgrims, both categories are equally pronounced in a medium or high degree. Another 26.4% report a gradual dominance of the spiritual self-concept. A gradual dominance of the religious self-concept is present in 10.3%.
- ³ A minority of around 15% of pilgrims use the concepts of "spiritual" and "religious" as mutually exclusive categories. The largest part of this group (about 12%) exclusively sees itself as highly spiritual.

Finally, the question of how the R/S self-concepts are related to the core dimensions of religiosity is addressed. To clarify this question, stepwise regressions were calculated on both variables. Therein, the religious self-concept (RelSelf) and spiritual self-concept (SpirSelf) are defined as dependent variables (DV). The other seven indicators from Table 1 are defined as independent variables (IV) and are integrated into the regression analyses stepwise according to their explanatory potential. Table 9 documents the most important statistical parameters of the final solutions. For the correlations of the variables in the regression equations please see Table A2 in the Appendix A.

Regarding the two multiple regression analyses documented in Table 9, the following aspects can be highlighted: globally, the regression analysis on religious self-concepts explains 68% of the variance in the dependent variable. The strength of the religious self-concept can thus largely be explained based on the expressions of the five core dimensions of centrality of religiosity. The explanatory potential of the frequency of public practice is highest among all ($\beta = 0.31$). This indicates that attachment to a religious institution plays an essential role in the self-attribution of religious identity. However, in addition, all four core personal dimensions make substantial contributions in explaining the religious self-concept. This means that seeing oneself as religious is not only related to a religious social body but also substantially related to lived personal religiosity. In the dimensions of private practice and religious experience, only the interactive forms of prayer and the experience of God's intervention are significant predictors.

Around 30 percent of the variance of the spiritual self-concept is based on the expression of the core dimensions of centrality of religiosity. Compared with the religious self-concept, this is less than half. This shows that other factors besides lived religiosity play a significant role in the pilgrims' spiritual self-concept. The highest explanatory potential is that of religious ideology ($\beta = 0.30$). This indicates that the belief in the existence of a spiritual level of reality plays a significant role in the self-attribution of a spiritual

identity. Further, it can be highlighted that public practice does not play a significant role in explaining the spiritual self-concept. In the dimensions of private practice and experience, only the participatory forms of meditation and unity experience are significant predictors with a positive association. Moreover, regarding the interactive practice of prayer, there is a negative correlation. That is, as the frequency of prayer increases, the likelihood of a high expression of spiritual self-concept decreases. In conclusion, these findings suggest that the strength of the spiritual self-concept more strongly corresponds with other forms of religious practice than it is the case with the religious self-concept.

3.4. Summary of the Results

The following main results can be highlighted from the analyses:

- German-speaking pilgrims in the present sample have substantially higher values on all dimensions of religiosity than the general population in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The differences are highest in the dimensions of religious ideology and the experience of the intervention of divine authority. Pilgrims believe more strongly in the existence of a spiritual reality and experience interaction with this reality more often.
- More than 80% of pilgrims of the sample consider themselves to be moderately (35%) or highly (47%) spiritual. In this respect, the difference to the population in Germany, Austria and Switzerland is by far the greatest.
- For most pilgrims, the categories religious and spiritual are not mutually exclusive. However, there is a qualified minority of around 12% who define themselves as spiritual in an exclusive way.
- Compared to the religious self-concept, the expression of the spiritual self-concept is less dependent on lived religiosity and is partly shaped by other forms of religiosity.

4. Discussion

4.1. Sample of German-Speaking Pilgrims

The German-speaking pilgrims in the present study are mostly female (61%), mainly have high school diplomas or higher (72%), about half are making their first pilgrimage (54%), most are traveling alone (47%) or in a small group (49%), and most are members of the Catholic Church (41%)-cf. Table 2. Restraining from comparisons one thing to point out is that this demographic pattern is similar in terms of most parameters to the data from the two comprehensive studies by Amaro et al. (2018) and Gamper and Reuter (2012), in which the proportions of women are 57% and 44%, respectively, 83% and 80% have high school diplomas or higher, respectively, and 52% and 70% are first-time pilgrims, respectively. The proportion of members of the Catholic Church is higher in Gamper and Reuter (2012), at 66%. This might be explained by the fact that most of their sample is composed of three Catholic countries (Spain, Italy, France). All the studies use convenience samples to analyze their questions. Therefore, conclusions in the presented examination are limited to German-speaking walking and cycling pilgrims on the Way of St. James. However, this is a valuable piece of information for the study of the pilgrimage on the Way of St. James.

4.2. Dimensions of the Pilgrims' Religiosity

An important question in pilgrimage research is to what extent today's pilgrims are religious. The data of the present study provide an approach to that question with empirical evidence about German-speaking pilgrims on the Way of St. James in the light of the multidimensional model of religiosity. They show considerably higher values in all dimensions of religiosity compared to the normal German-speaking residents of Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. Religiosity is most elevated in the dimensions of experience, ideology, and private practice of meditation. This illustrates that pilgrimage on the Way of St. James is particularly characterized by a strongly heightened awareness of the existence of a spiritual level of reality and that this belief is also expressed in religious experiences and practices. Pilgrimage on the Iberian Peninsula today is thus also essentially

characterized by a lived religiosity. In contrast, the type of a purely secular pilgrim is minoritarian in the present sample. Only 9% do not believe at all in the existence of a spiritual reality and even only around 2% state that they have no religious experiences at all.

These results are relevant for walking and cycling pilgrimage research, insofar as comparisons with representative data from the normal population have rarely been made in the literature. An exception is the results of Oviedo et al. (2014), which are based on data from the year 2010. With respect to the Spanish pilgrims in their sample ($N = 134$), when comparing them to Spanish data from the 2010 European Social Survey (ESS), they found that there was little difference in the frequency of prayer and worship attendance between pilgrims and the normal population (“*ibid.*”, p. 436”). Based on this, they concluded that the Way of Saint James “does not draw a specific type of person from the general population—the most religious, for example—but rather a representative subset of the general population” (*ibid.*). Regarding the German-speaking pilgrims who traveled the Way of St. James in 2017 and 2018, such a conclusion cannot be made. On the contrary, the religiosity and spirituality of pilgrims is higher compared to the normal population. Pilgrims to the Camino de Santiago are sensitive in religious and spiritual terms. The extent to which the strong difference in the results of the two studies can be attributed to different pilgrimage cultures in Spain and in German-speaking countries or to temporal changes in pilgrimage culture in general must be clarified by further studies.

The strong values for faith and the existence of God in absolute terms and in comparison with the normal population questions the assumption that pilgrims on the Way of St. James trend toward a fluid, vague and indeterminate religiosity (according to Oviedo et al. 2014). It seems that not vagueness, but a concise certainty of God is typical for at least the pilgrims in the present sample, not a specific style that is clearly distinguishable from the normal population, but an overall significantly stronger religiosity on all indicators of the centrality of religiosity.

4.3. *Spiritual and Religious Self-Concepts*

The results of the present study bring evidence that the lived religiosity of German-speaking pilgrims on the Way of St. James in the sample is significantly higher than that of the normal German-speaking population. Their awareness of their own religiosity and spirituality is more pronounced. The difference is particularly high in the spiritual self-concept. Around 47% of the sample describe themselves as fairly or very spiritual, which is almost four times the proportion in the normal population. In contrast, only around 33% of the respondents describe themselves as fairly or very religious, which tends toward doubling the proportion in the normal population.

The finding that pilgrims identify more strongly with the concept of spirituality than with the concept of religiosity is well documented in pilgrimage research. Pickard and Aitch (2020) report that 39% of pilgrims in their study describe themselves as “very spiritual” and 11% as “very religious” on a four-point scale. Oviedo et al. (2014) found that for pilgrims, the goal of “spiritual growth” is much more important than “religious growth.” Amaro et al. (2018) report that for pilgrims, “spiritual motivations” are significantly higher than “religious motivations.” In this regard, the results from present study are in line with the previous research. This leads to the next point of discussion.

4.4. *Spirituality as ‘Commonsense’*

In the present study, over 80% describe themselves as moderately and highly spiritual. Highly religious and at the same time low spiritual participants are hardly found. Among them, it seems that almost universally shared spiritual self-concept forms a commonsense. A religious and a spiritual self-image are not mutually exclusive. Pointedly, religiosity saddles itself to spirituality, extends and complements it. In the present study, of pilgrimage, there is spirituality without religiosity, but hardly any religiosity without spirituality.

Thus, the results differ from those of other studies that work (based on motives) with a juxtaposition of religion and spirituality (including Oviedo et al. 2014; Farias et al. 2019; Gamper and Reuter 2012). A contrasting juxtaposition, which is often linked to attributes such as traditional and contemporary, seems therefore to be too simplistic here. In the self-image of the participants, this either exists or it does not exist. Among them, spirituality is a common denominator. For many pilgrims, religiosity is added to spirituality. A subgroup is exclusively spiritual.

4.5. *Pilgrimage as a Religious, Spiritual or Secular Phenomenon?*

Many studies question whether the religious aspects of pilgrimage are dissipating, blending, becoming diluted, or relating only to subgroups of pilgrims. Often, a shift from a purely religious to a touristic-spiritual phenomenon is claimed (Kim et al. 2019; Lois-González and Santos 2015; Lopez et al. 2017). Moscarelli et al. (2020) state, “Currently, it is acultural, touristic, monumental, spiritual, and sports route . . . As a result, its original ‘space of faith’ is now a ‘liveheritage space’”. Gomes et al. (2019) construct under the term “touripilgrimage” an ambiguous amalgamation in which tourist and religious-spiritual motifs are mixed. Others emphasize the diversity of motives and structure them into different types of pilgrims (Gamper and Reuter 2012; Oviedo et al. 2014). What stays?

Based on the results of the present study, some claims from the past can be questioned, as follows: the above-average religiosity of participants of the present study would be an argument against a tourist leveling without wiping it out. Other aspects (such as sports, nature, or sociability) may well also play a role. This said, based on the underlying observations, religiosity remains an essential aspect of pilgrimage.

From the perspective of the present study, how does the formation of different pilgrim types—according to which religion is relevant for a subgroup of pilgrims but not for pilgrims as a whole—unfold (Gamper and Reuter 2012)? In view of only 2.4% pilgrims with a low religious *and* spiritual self-concept, the construction of secular-only pilgrim types can be doubted. Relative to the normal population, but also in absolute terms, the number of exclusively non-religious pilgrims is very small.

4.6. *Interactive-Participative Patterns*

Spirituality can be defined in terms of various aspects. One distinction is that made by Huber between interactive and participatory (Huber et al. 2020), which finds evidence support in a broad worldwide application in the Religion Monitor (Huber 2009). It can be described in terms of types of religious experience—‘God’s intervention’ versus ‘being one with all’. It can be linked to an analogous distinction of private practice—prayer versus meditation. Additionally, it can be associated with a transcendent versus immanent understanding of God. Pilgrims and pilgrimage (Lienau 2015b, and some argue ultimately contemporary spirituality in general) are sometimes claimed to have a strong prevalence of participatory experience and practice, and worldview, respectively. Is pilgrimage an indicator or a trendsetter for this? The present study suggests being cautious with this kind of assertion. The absolute values of the pilgrims in the sample show a certain dominance of interactive spirituality in terms of practice and experience. This remains true in comparison to the normal population. The relatively stronger increases in participatory practice and experience are presumably due to the strong bodily and natural experiential possibilities of pilgrimage. Participatory patterns are also prevalent among pilgrims. It is rarely the case that one pattern excludes the other. Here, the same observation as with R/S self-concepts seems to fit into the picture. It is more a kind of interplay than counterplay.

4.7. *Conflict or Interaction of Traditional and Contemporary Religiosity/Spirituality?*

In the discussion of contemporary pilgrimage, the juxtaposition of two topoi is often encountered—traditional religion and contemporary spirituality. Besides models of detachment or demarcation, there are also models of creative and enriching interaction of

traditional and contemporary religiosity (Heiser 2021; Fernandes et al. 2012), with pilgrims oscillating between both poles.

This observation can in some respects be deepened and clarified by the present study; whereas Kim et al. (2019) describe pilgrims' shifting self-attributions as change and fluidity, the present study suggests explaining this fact rather as a conjunction of spirituality and religiosity, vertical and horizontal self-transcendence in the pilgrims' self-concept. Virtually all pilgrims in the present study have a spiritual self-concept. Many, but by no means all, participants supplement this with a religious self-concept. This is not at the expense of the spiritual self-concept, but in many cases augments it. The results provide evidence for the picture of a fusion rather than switching or interaction between two different types drawn in other studies. Rather, it is a matter of a shared basis in spirituality that a large subgroup supplements with religiosity, which can also be shaped by denominational affiliation and public practice, e.g., Sunday service or alike.

Future studies may focus more on behavior and experiences on the Way and relate these to pilgrims' self-concepts, motives, and centrality of religiosity. Why do certain rituals, such as the pilgrim's blessing in Roncesvalles, the stone-laying at the Cruz de Ferro and participation in the pilgrim's mass in Santiago, have very broad participation, while this is often not the case for participation in evening masses, for example? How (intensively) do exchanges occur between pilgrims of different religions? Are there conflicts among pilgrims related to their different religiosity? For example, do differently religious pilgrims have different experiences and behave differently? Another point of research can refer to the change of religiosity and spirituality on the way. One can hypothesize that the R/S is changing all the way down to the destination point and a study designed to collect data systematically along the way could inform evidence to this question.

5. Conclusions

Pilgrimage's rising attraction over the last decades offers the possibility to have a deeper insight in the underlying structure of its motives, as well as religiosity, and spirituality of the pilgrims. The present study takes the step to look at the phenomenon closer through the lens of the multidimensional model of centrality of religiosity. Coming back to the principal questions of the examination after the discussion, some brief inferences can be made.

1. Generally, said multidimensional model worked out for pilgrims' religiosity and spirituality with no detectable flaws. Questionnaires worked well to assess the phenomenon on the journey of pilgrims on the Way of St. James.
 - a. Pilgrims in the sample do believe in the existence of a spiritual realm.
 - b. Most pilgrims in the sample think about transcendence at least rarely, only 3.2% never think of religious issues.
 - c. Pilgrims in the sample seek contact with the transcendence by prayer or meditation to different degrees. Only about 9% never do private religious practice. In terms of experience regarding transcendence it is the case for about 98%, only 2% never have such religious experiences.
 - d. About 3/4 of the sample are affiliated with a Christian church. Most of them identify themselves with the Catholic church.
2. Pilgrims in the sample could provide information on both the religious and the spiritual self-concept.
 - a. "Religious" seems to be to a lesser extent a point of reference to the participants of the study (about 60%), whereas
 - b. "Spiritual" provides a point of reference to more participants (about 80%)
3. The religious and spiritual self-concept of pilgrims can partly be explained by the dimensions of the multidimensional model or religiosity. The religious one more than the spiritual one, 68% and 30%, respectively, of explained variances, respectively.

4. The pilgrims in the present sample differ from the population in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland regarding the dimensions of the multidimensional model of religiosity by showing higher mean values on every core dimension. Regarding the religious and spiritual self-concepts same conclusion can be drawn. The aspects of higher ideological and experiential values are especially pronounced for pilgrims.

The results show the facets of the R/S on a convenient sample of German-speaking pilgrims on the Way of St. James. Clearly, there are limits to generalization of the results. The sample in the present study is not collected systematically enough to represent most of the pilgrims. Research in the field is always a trade-off. However, with several hundred participants of walking and cycling pilgrims on the way of St. James from different location on the path it provides a view on the phenomenon for the German-speaking of them. Additionally, the collected data has some ecological validity, insofar as some practical derivations can still be made. The next two paragraphs focus on implications for tourism professional and church institutions as well as for researchers.

5.1. Stakeholders: Tourism Professionals and Churches

What are the tasks for tourism and religious actors in the field? The discussion of pilgrimage in tourism science shows that the tourism potential of pilgrimage has been recognized. Two partial results of the present study are predominantly relevant for tourism: pilgrims on the Way of St. James are more religious than average. How can their specific needs, in contrast to the rest of tourism, be met? Additionally, there is a spiritual core, on which a religious matter is built upon. Besides a small subgroup that sees itself as exclusively spiritual, there is a larger group that combines religion and spirituality in the self-concept. Tourist operators can assume that they can reach virtually all walking and cycling pilgrims on the Iberian Peninsula with a spiritual approach, but they should not ignore the relevant group with a pronounced religiousness.

In pilgrims, church actors on pilgrimage routes have an attractive target group of people with above-average religious-spiritual resonances. At the same time, many of the pilgrims are not church members—both nominally as non-members and by the form of their religiosity. Pronounced interactive religiosity stands next to pronounced participatory religiosity, highly religious next to less religious pilgrims. A differentiated understanding of the target group of walking and cycling pilgrims and their internal structure helps in the development of adequate offers.

It is essential for the church institutions to understand that a trend toward spiritual patterns does not have to be at the expense of (church) religiosity. Rather, a “superimposition” of religious self-concept on spiritual one can be observed. For the church, it is not advisable to wean itself off spirituality, because it can build its religiosity well on it.

The fact that many pilgrims with pronounced religiosity do not describe themselves as religious should make the churches sit up and take notice. The current perception of religion leads people to distance themselves from it rather than identify with it. If this reticence is due to a distancing from outdated ecclesiastical pilgrimage practices such as vows, relic, and indulgence piety, then it is advisable for churches to offer other accessible and attractive practices that tap into the religious potential that pilgrims bring with them.

5.2. Outlook: Research Perspectives

A principal question for walking, cycling and other forms of pilgrimage research is whether the strong orientation toward motives is sustainable. Apparently, self-designations allow valid statements about pilgrims’ motives only to a limited extent. Therefore, the present study—which has only evaluated a part of the data collected on the Way of St. James, namely the one in German language—surveys the following different levels: demographic data, accomplishment of pilgrimage, motives for pilgrimage, experiences during pilgrimage and R/S of pilgrims. This informs the examination from different points of view and allow a broader look on the phenomenon. A multidimensional view on the phenomenon seems

to find corroboration in the evidence of the present examination. This aligns with the common understanding of R/S as multidimensional.

By concentrating on the R/S of pilgrims in the analysis, correlations between the facets should come into view, e.g., how does religiosity shape motivation for pilgrimage? Do people expect pilgrimage to renew their religiosity and spirituality or rather reinforce their existing attitudes?

The following is another question for future research, one which might be related to the actual experiences made during pilgrimage: (how) does religiosity shape experiences along the way? Does an interactive or participatory religiosity match a corresponding experience on the road, or are the two rather independent? Additionally, the association with the type of pilgrimage as a factor (stage length, type of co-pilgrims) could help to deepen the insight between religiosity and pilgrimage practice.

The presented examination referred solely to the German-language subsample. A comparative evaluation of the other sub-samples with the languages English, French and Spanish can tie in more closely with the international discussion and enable an international comparison.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, D.L. and S.H.; Data curation, M.A. and S.H.; Formal analysis, M.A. and S.H.; Investigation, D.L., Methodology, S.H. and M.A.; Project administration, D.L.; Software, S.H. and M.A.; Supervision, D.L. and S.H.; Validation, D.L., S.H. and M.A.; Writing—original draft, D.L., S.H., and M.A.; Writing—review and editing, M.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Statistical Disclaimer: Any rounding errors are due to the software used in this investigation. The authors report any numbers with the best given method available at the time of manuscript writing.

Appendix A

Table A1. *t*-tests of the mean differences between the pilgrim sample and the weighted sample of German speakers from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Core dimension	Test Results for the Difference of Sample and Population Data
Ideology	$\Delta Mean = 0.79$, 95% CI[0.67;0.92], $t(545.49) = 13.39$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.52$, 95%CI[0.42;0.63]
Intellect	$\Delta Mean = 0.40$, 95% CI[0.28;0.51], $t(3271.89) = 6.65$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.35$, 95%CI[0.25;0.45]
Interactive Experience	$\Delta Mean = 0.63$, 95% CI[0.52;0.74], $t(536.56) = 11.55$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.58$, 95%CI[0.48;0.69]
Participatory Experience	$\Delta Mean = 0.79$, 95% CI[0.67;0.92], $t(3222.66) = 12.20$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.65$, 95%CI[0.55;0.76]
Prayer	$\Delta Mean = 0.39$, 95% CI[0.25;0.53], $t(556.20) = 5.36$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.27$, 95%CI[0.16;0.37]
Meditation	$\Delta Mean = 0.66$, 95%CI[0.54;0.79], $t(3252.71) = 10.30$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.54$, 95%CI[0.44;0.65]
Public Practice	$\Delta Mean = 0.36$, 95%CI[0.23;0.48], $t(3269.26) = 5.59$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.30$, 95%CI[0.19;0.40]
Religious Self-concept	$\Delta Mean = 0.50$, 95%CI[0.38;0.63], $t(3222.33) = 7.86$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.43$, 95%CI[0.32;0.53]
Spiritual Self-concept	$\Delta Mean = 1.27$, 95%CI[1.15;1.39], $t(3201.05) = 20.88$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 1.12$, 95%CI[1.01;1.23]

Table A2. Correlations of the nine indicators of religiosity and spirituality.

	Ideology	Intellect	Interactive Experience	Participatory Experience	Prayer	Meditation	Public Practice	Religious Self-Concept
Intellect	0.53							
Interactive Experience	0.69	0.52						
Participatory Experience	0.17	0.26	0.41					
Prayer	0.66	0.51	0.60	0.27				
Meditation	0.23	0.29	0.28	0.28	0.35			
Public Practice	0.49	0.45	0.38	0.15	0.70	0.21		
Religious Self-concept	0.69	0.60	0.60	0.20	0.73	0.22	0.69	
Spiritual Self-concept	0.42	0.42	0.40	0.26	0.31	0.39	0.26	0.39

Note. All correlations listed are significant at the $\alpha < 0.05$ level, two-sided.

Note

- ¹ When speaking of pilgrimage in the following, it refers exclusively to contemporary pilgrimage on foot (or by bike), which has spread from the Camino Francés to Camino de Santiago and other pilgrimage routes in Europe—and still prototypically and frequently takes place on the great Camino de Santiago to Santiago de Compostela. Knowing that there are many other forms of pilgrimage, here, for the sake of ease of reading, the term pilgrimage is used in the text.

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Article

Pilgrimage and Religion: Pilgrim Religiosity on the Ways of St. James

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Abstract: Pilgrimages on the Ways of St. James are becoming increasingly popular, so the number of pilgrims registered in Santiago de Compostela has been rising continuously for several decades. The large number of pilgrims is accompanied by a variety of motives for a contemporary pilgrimage, whereby religion is only rarely mentioned explicitly. While pilgrimage was originally a purely religious practice, the connection between pilgrimage and religion is less clear nowadays. Therefore, this paper examines whether and in which way religion shows itself in the context of contemporary pilgrimages on the Ways of St. James. For this purpose, 30 in-depth biographical interviews with pilgrims are analyzed from a sociological perspective on religion by using a qualitative content analysis. This analysis reveals that religion is manifested in many ways in the context of contemporary pilgrimages, whereby seven forms of pilgrim religiosity can be distinguished. They have in common that pilgrims shape their pilgrim religiosity individually and self-determined, but in doing so they rely on traditional and institutional forms of religion. Today's pilgrim religiosity can therefore be understood as an extra-ordinary form of lived religion, whose popularity may be explained by a specific interrelation of individual shaping and institutional assurance of evidence.

Keywords: pilgrimage; Way of St. James; religion; lived religion

Citation: Heiser, Patrick. 2021.

Pilgrimage and Religion: Pilgrim Religiosity on the Ways of St. James. *Religions* 12: 167. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12030167>

Academic Editors: Mariano P. Barbato and Denise Starkey

Received: 12 February 2021

Accepted: 2 March 2021

Published: 5 March 2021

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1. Introduction

The relation between pilgrimage and religion is often difficult to grasp, especially with regard to contemporary pilgrimages. Historically, pilgrimage on the different Ways of St. James has been documented since the 9th century (Herbers 2016). In those early and initial pilgrimages, we are undoubtedly faced with a religious practice. That is to say, because the destination of the Way of St. James is the Galician town of Santiago de Compostela, where the tomb of Apostle James the Elder is presumed to be located (Herbers 2007). The Gospel of Luke (Lk 5,10) as well as the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 4,21; Mt 17,1–13; Mt 26,37) report about his life. Both gospel writers portray not only James' calling as a disciple of Jesus Christ, but also his participation in various stages of Jesus' ministry. Furthermore, the Acts of the Apostles deals with James' execution by King Herod Agrippa I in 43 AD (Acts 12:1ff.). According to the 12th century *Liber Sancti Jakobi* (Herbers 1984), James had endeavored to mission the Iberian Peninsula, but failed and returned to Jerusalem, where he was martyred. His body was then taken by two of his disciples to a boat that was guided by an invisible hand to the coast of Galicia. Here they searched for a dignified resting place for James and finally found it in a remote forest, where they built a crypt. Over the centuries, this burial place was initially forgotten until the beginning of the 9th century, when the hermit Pelagius spotted stellar constellations that seemed to point to a specific location (Drouve 2007, p. 61). Bishop Theodemir and King Alfonso II then had a church built over the supposed tomb, which was replaced by the present cathedral in the 11th century. Whether or not the bones of St. James the Apostle are actually in the crypt is disputed among historians. Nevertheless, this religious tale initiated the first pilgrimages to Santiago des Compostela, so that the Ways of St. James became well-travelled in the Middle Ages. In addition to religiously motivated pilgrimages for the purpose of petition

and thanksgiving, penitential and punitive pilgrimages imposed by the church were also widespread that time (Ashley and Deegan 2009).

A similar strong link between pilgrimage and religion can be found in some major religions until today. Consider, for example, the Islamic Hajj to Mecca, which, as one of the five pillars of Islam, still has a high theological significance and the character of a religious obligation (Hammoudi 2007). In regard to Christian pilgrimage, by contrast, the relation between pilgrimage and religion is less obvious today (Chemin 2012). Though the Ways of St. James are still managed by a religious institution: the Catholic Church. It registers pilgrims in Santiago de Compostela and issues pilgrimage certificates to those who arrive at the destination. In addition, the Catholic Church periodically proclaims so-called Holy Years, during which the number of pilgrims increases on average to two and a half times the usual level. Finally, the Catholic Church offers a wide range of services along the Ways of St. James, such as pilgrim hostels and blessings, as well as pilgrim services and confessions in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. At the same time, the number of registered pilgrims has increased impressively in recent decades—not least due to successful branding campaigns, European political support, and massive investments in the infrastructure of the Ways of St. James routes (Frey 1997; Lois González 2013; Pack 2018). In 2019, more than 350,000 pilgrims were registered in Santiago de Compostela, for the most part from Spain, Germany, Italy, France, and Portugal (Figure 1). After a COVID-19-related collapse in the number of pilgrims in 2020, the Galician regional government expects growth rates of around eight percent per annum again in the coming years (CETUR 2009; Lopez et al. 2017).

Popular travel reports and pilgrimage novels suggest that contemporary pilgrimage on the Ways of St. James is not always a religious practice (Belmonte and Kazmiercak 2017)—consider, for example, Kerkeling's (2009) book "I'm off then" or Estevez's (2010) movie "The Way". Also social science studies show that the multiplicity of pilgrims is accompanied by a wide diversity of pilgrimage motives (Amaro et al. 2018; Farias et al. 2019; Lois González and Solla 2015; Oviedo et al. 2012; Reader 2007; Sime 2009). Motives related to the own self are mentioned with particular frequency (Gamper 2016; Gamper and Reuter 2012). In a multilingual survey of 1,142 pilgrims, more than half of the respondents said they wanted to "find themselves" during the pilgrimage (51.8%), followed by "escape from everyday life" (40.2%), "enjoy silence" (39.2%), "feel spiritual atmosphere" (34.6%), "enjoy nature" (34.4%), and "view beautiful landscapes" (32.9%). Thus, the most frequently mentioned motives were those that could be described as spiritual in a broad sense. Contemporary pilgrims are looking for silence, meaning in life and extra-ordinary experiences (Gamper and Reuter 2012, p. 220). With greater distance follow genuine religious motives for a pilgrimage such as "religious reasons" (23.4%), "get to know other religions" (22.4%), "repent toward God" (16.6%) and "visit Christian sites" (12.1%). Sporting ambitions, the search for adventure or touristic motives are mentioned even less frequently. Furthermore, it is remarkable that hardly anyone goes on pilgrimage "to reach the pilgrimage destination" (6.6%) (Table 1). On the basis of this frequency distribution, Gamper and Reuter (2012, p. 129) conclude that for today's pilgrims, the goal of their pilgrimage is not the tomb of the Apostle James, but the journey to themselves.

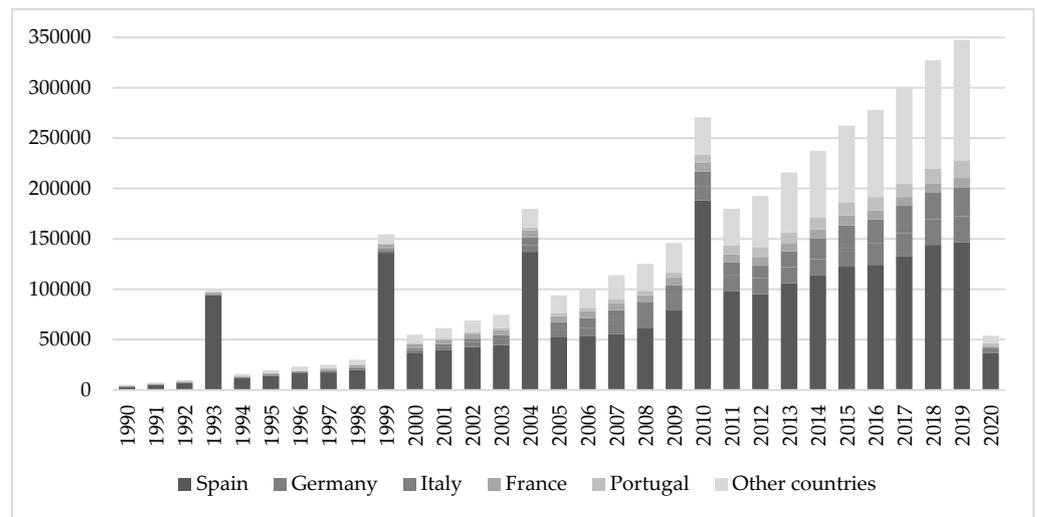


Figure 1. Pilgrims registered in Santiago de Compostela by nationality. Data: Archdiocese Santiago de Compostela. <https://oficinadelperegrino.com/estadisticas/> (accessed on 3 April 2021).

Table 1. Motives to undertake a pilgrimage on the Way of St. James ordered by frequency.

Motive	Total Frequency	Touristic Pilgrim	Sports Pilgrim	Fun Pilgrim	Traditional Religious Pilgrim	Contemporary Spiritual Pilgrim
find yourself	51.8%					0.781
escape from everyday life	40.2%					0.591
enjoy silence	39.2%					0.688
feel spiritual atmosphere	34.6%				0.526	0.544
enjoy nature	34.4%	0.727				
view beautiful landscapes	32.9%	0.645				
meet people from other cultures	23.7%	0.537				
religious reasons	23.4%				0.833	
get to know other religions	22.4%	0.647				
be together with my family	22.2%	0.510				
experience adventures	20.9%			0.594		
be part of pilgrims' community	19.1%				0.469	
exercise	17.3%		0.542			
sightseeing	17.2%	0.727				
repent toward God	16.6%				0.734	
overcome a crisis	14.2%					0.604
visit Christian sites	12.1%				0.795	
interest in flora and fauna	9.5%	0.467				
celebrate	7.4%			0.756		
reach destination	6.6%		0.683			
cheap vacation	5.2%			0.582		

Rotated component matrix of motives. Extraction method: Principal Components Analysis; rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Own compilation and translation. Data: Gamper and Reuter (2012, p. 220f.), Gamper (2016, p. 135f.).

Gamper and Reuter cluster this broad spectrum of motives for a pilgrimage into five types of pilgrims by using a Principal Components Analysis (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin: 0.813, Bartlett test of significance: 0.000): culture- and landscape-interested touristic pilgrims (“Tourigrinos”), who often undertake pilgrimages together with relatives and friends, goal-oriented sports pilgrims (“Sportpilger”), for whom the physical challenge of a pilgrimage is paramount, and mostly younger fun pilgrims (“Spaßpilger”), who are looking for adventure and low-cost vacation opportunities. These three types of pilgrims play a subordinate role for this study and will not be considered in further detail below. In contrast, two other types of pilgrims distinguished by Gamper and Reuter are of high interest for the relation between pilgrimage and religion: traditional religious pilgrims (“traditionell religiöse Pilger”) and contemporary spiritual pilgrims (“Postpilger”). The relatively small group of traditional religious pilgrims is characterized by a firm, mostly denominationally bound faith. They see their pilgrimages as a confession of faith with the purpose of petition and thanksgiving. They often mention religious motives as an explicit reason for their pilgrimages. Contemporary spiritual pilgrims, on the other hand,

represent by far the largest group of respondents. Their religiosity is characterized by a search for meaning and self-empowerment as well as by a relative independence from denominations. Accordingly, contemporary spiritual pilgrims most frequently mention self-related pilgrimage motives. Most of them started their pilgrimage, usually planned for several weeks or even months, without accompaniment, in order to find enough time for themselves. Gamper and Reuter therefore understand contemporary spiritual pilgrims not only as a prototype of contemporary pilgrims, but also as a prototype of a late modern need for individually shaped spirituality (Gamper 2016, p. 137; Gamper and Reuter 2012, p. 224). The two types of traditional religious and contemporary spiritual pilgrims will be explored in more detail below with regard to the significance and shaping of religion during their pilgrimages.

2. Materials and Methods

In order to elaborate whether and how religion is evident in the context of contemporary pilgrimages on the Ways of St. James, a secondary analysis of an interview study by Kurrat (2015) was carried out. In 2010, he conducted 30 in-depth biographical interviews—so-called narrative interviews (Schütze 1983)—with pilgrims, showing that contemporary pilgrims undertake their pilgrimages in typical biographical situations in order to reflect on their lives, cope with crises, take time off, shape biographical transitions, and construct new identities (Heiser and Kurrat 2015). Kurrat (2019) distinguishes five types of pilgrims, which emerged from his data: *Balance pilgrims* reflect and balance their lives. They are certain of their oncoming death on account of their advanced age or an illness. These pilgrims seek silence and moments of solitude for intensive reflections to remember the stations of their lives and to carry out balancing classifications. *Crisis pilgrims* reflect on a crisis and search for processing possibilities. An unplanned experience has shaken their lives massively. This occurrence is perceived as a shock and the pilgrimage shall be a way to overcome this feeling. *Time-out pilgrims* experience high demands in their profession at home and invest a lot of time in their occupations. The balance between private life and professional life is not given anymore and the occupational everyday life is considered as excessively burdening. These pilgrims undertake their pilgrimage to escape from their everyday life temporarily and to let ideas arise for priority changes. *Transitional pilgrims* find themselves in a rite of passage, e.g., after graduating and before becoming an employee or after their professional life and before retiring. Within these transition phases, the pilgrim's past is reflected and future options are experimented. Finally, *new start pilgrims* have given up their profession and/or left their partners after a phase of massive irritation and want to begin a completely new life. During their pilgrimage, they try to find interpretation patterns for their 'failed career' and seek options for their future life. Their pilgrimage fulfills the function of an initiation.

For this paper, the original German-language transcripts of these interviews were translated into English and reanalyzed using a structuring qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2015). The main categories were formed deductively and theory-based according to a multidimensional understanding of religion, which considers its cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions (Glock 1962; Molteni and Biolcati 2018). The subcategories were formed inductively and material-based. In this way, a total of 190 analytical units could be paraphrased and generalized to a defined level of abstraction. After the reduction of redundancies, 103 generalized paraphrases could be categorized. The sample includes 30 pilgrims from Germany and Switzerland who walked at least 400 km—and who started their pilgrimage unaccompanied. For this reason, only individual pilgrim religiosity can be examined in the following. However, one can assume that also religiously motivated social concerns can be found in the context of contemporary pilgrimages, especially among (religious) pilgrim groups. Among others, the survey data discussed in Section 1 provides indications of this.

3. Results

Altogether, seven forms of religion could be identified which are significant in the context of contemporary pilgrimages on the Ways of St. James: the feeling of having been called to the Way of St. James by a higher power, the intention of thanksgiving towards God through a pilgrimage, the interpretation of the physical strains as penance for sinful behavior in the past, the visit of churches as places of meditation, the search for religion, and the interpretation of experiences and meetings as miracles and sending. The first three forms are more common among traditional religious pilgrims, the other three among contemporary spiritual pilgrims. In addition, there is a seventh form of religion that is found with equal frequency among both types of pilgrims: the self-determined execution of core religious practices such as praying and attending church services (Table 2).

Table 2. Forms of religion in the context of contemporary pilgrimages.

Form	Traditional Religious Pilgrims	Contemporary Spiritual Pilgrims
Called on Way of St. James by a higher power	x	
Pilgrimage as thanksgiving	x	
Physical pain as penance for sins	x	
Religious core practices (praying and attending church services)	x	x
Visiting churches as places of meditation		x
Search for religion		x
Interpretation of experiences and meetings as miracles and sending		x

All seven forms of religion during contemporary pilgrimages on the Ways of St. James are explored below via exemplifying interview quotations.

3.1. Called on Way of St. James by a Higher Power

In many cases, traditional religious pilgrims feel called to the Way of St. James by a higher power. This applies, for example, to a 22-year-old Catholic who will finish his job training soon and who wants to ritually shape his transition into professional life by the pilgrimage¹:

"I had the feeling: The way is calling me." (P02, par. 11)

This feeling is also shared by a 51-year-old Catholic nurse who recently divorced:

"I'm actually here because I think somehow I was sent here from above." (P28, par. 125)

As well as a 78-year-old Methodist who, as a former soldier, wants to reflect on his life and deal with his experiences during combat missions:

"I went into the church and stayed and came out wanting to do the Camino." (P23, par. 14)

While the feeling of being called to the Way of St. James for the former soldier was already present before starting the pilgrimage, for a 70-year-old Catholic pensioner who also wants to look back on his life, it has developed in the course of the pilgrimage:

"By now I have to say: It is [...] not a wish, but it has been a calling [...]. In the beginning there was the wish to go the way, but more and more it became a calling." (P26, par. 5)

Also for a 65-year-old former therapist, her pilgrimage is related to her retirement. She attributes her calling to the Way of St. James to angels:

"In 2006 I retired, on July 1 [...], and in December I received the message from my angels that I was prepared to go on the Way of Saint James. [...] I got the message in the evening and in the morning, I checked the internet. I said to my husband: 'My angels told me to walk the Way of St. James, and now I have to see where it is.'" (P09, par. 11)

¹ For more detailed descriptions of the pilgrim's biographies see Kurrat (2015, p. 132ff.).

3.2. Pilgrimage as Thanksgiving

In many cases, traditional religious pilgrims mention motives that were already typical for historical pilgrimages in the Middle Ages and early modern times, especially that of thanksgiving towards God. The pensioner, who wants to reflect on his life, describes it with the following words:

“I see the whole thing as a thankyou upwards. [...] I was successful in my life. And for that I would like to say thank you somehow.” (P26, par. 5)

A 35-year-old Russian Orthodox cashier would like to thank God especially for the well-being of her family. She has given up her life in Germany and wants to return to her Macedonian homeland after the pilgrimage.

“In a way, this is also a thankyou I want to say to God. My brothers and sisters are healthy, the baby is healthy, my family. This is so the main reason for me to be grateful.” (P12, par. 191)

3.3. Physical Pain as Penance for Sins

The desire for penance and forgiveness represents the third classical form of religion, which is still evident among traditional religious pilgrims today. Forgiveness plays an important role, especially for the former soldier:

“I walked for forgiveness. I am asking for forgiveness. And each of my Caminos has been asking for forgiveness. And then when you get older you may think about things you’ve done and you want to confess and you do.” (P23, par. 14)

The pensioner who wants to reflect on his life does so in a very systematic way: Every day he consciously thinks back to a distinct phase of his life. If he strongly feels the physical strain of long-distance walking on that particular day, he interprets this as a sign that he has made mistakes in the corresponding phase of his life—for which he now has to do penance:

“There are, of course, things you did wrong in your life, things you regret. That is what you think about here. And I ask for forgiveness. I think back a lot about the stations in my life and about my experiences. [...] And for the negative ones, I gladly accept the one or other blister or any joint pain. May it be as a penance or whatever.” (P26, par. 47)

3.4. Religious Core Practices

Traditional religious core practices are regularly performed by both traditional religious pilgrims and contemporary spiritual pilgrims on the Ways of St. James. However, these practices are not experienced as obligatory acts imposed by denominations, but rather as choices provided by religious traditions that can be taken whenever the individual pilgrim feels it is appropriate and helpful. This applies, for example, to praying. A 66-year-old Protestant retiree who started his pilgrimage after separating from his wife prefers to pray in community:

“These days, it’s like we embrace each other in the morning at the start, all three of us, and then we say a prayer and sing a Taizé song.” (P27, par. 35)

A 70-year-old Catholic retiree who started her pilgrimage after the unexpected death of her son prays regularly on the Way of St. James with the help of her rosary:

“I even took a rosary with me, which is blessed, and I sometimes say when I’m walking: Please help me move forward well.” (P08, par. 42)

Attending church services also counts among the core religious practices that contemporary pilgrims self-determinedly rely on. The many churches along the Ways of St. James regularly offer church services, which often include a blessing of pilgrims. For a 19-year-old Protestant student who has just graduated from high school and who is looking for inspiration for his future life, attending church services is a natural part of a pilgrimage:

“Whenever I walk through a town and have a look at the church, I also [...] take part in a church service. Because it’s just part of it for me. But at home I don’t go to church. Simply because I can do other things there that move me forward more in my life.” (P10, par. 59)

Also in the monasteries along the Ways of St. James, which often provide accommodation for pilgrims, regular services are celebrated, which are described as particularly impressive due to their special atmosphere:

“We were accommodated in a monastery hostel and in the evening a mass was celebrated in the monastery church followed by the blessing of the pilgrims. That was so moving. That was really so... The monks [...] asked the pilgrims to come to the altar and prayed together with them. [...] The spirit there, that was such a deep experience, [...] such a deep impression. From then on, I just walked and walked.” (P26, par. 05)

For some of the contemporary spiritual pilgrims, attending church services is a completely new experience. For example, for a 46-year-old non-denominational media executive who is taking time out from her stressful professional life on the Way of St. James:

“I’m not pious and faithful and walk into every church, although I take hundreds of pictures of them here. [Pilgrimage] doesn’t have the religious background for me so that I would say: I’m on the way spiritually and I’m searching for God. No. I also visit church services here and have had the pilgrim’s blessing given there. I found that very impressive. But people at home really shake their heads and [...] absolutely do not understand why. [...] I think the churches here are beautiful because you are really a part of it, whether you live in this place or not. From that point of view, I think it’s quite great. I’ve had communion here twice [...]. And the priest comes and even shakes hands with everyone, even though I don’t belong to the congregation. I don’t know something like that from home, but I find it very impressive. [...] It’s wonderful.” (P24, par. 56)

3.5. Visiting Churches as Places of Meditation

However, contemporary spiritual pilgrims in particular use churches not only to attend services, but also as places of meditation where they can retreat to find silence and contemplation. One example is a 30-year-old non-denominational technician who came to the Way of St. James to reorient himself professionally. After some years of dissatisfaction with his occupation, he recently quit his job and wants to start a new professional life after his pilgrimage:

“I often go to churches on the way, sit down for five or ten minutes, enjoy the silence, contemplate, have a prayer as well. I include people who have become close to me on the way or friends and family from home in prayer. I believe for myself, have my own way. [...] At home I never went to church, I never did that at home, but I think when I’m back home I’ll do that from time to time, go to church. Because maybe it’s also good for you to have five minutes of peace.” (P15, par. 137)

Similarly, churches along the Ways of St. James are used by a 62-year-old senior executive, who is confronted with high professional demands in his everyday life:

“We always looked when we were resting somewhere where there is a church in such a small village. And then we usually went into this church, put our luggage down and each of us said a prayer in silence or simply tried to have a dialogue with God or at least with the feelings that one has in a church.” (P04, par. 23)

Also for a 46-year-old Catholic alternative practitioner who wants to cope with the death of her father, churches are important places to find peace and new strength:

“This entering into the churches. I think churches have always been built at places of power, and you feel that. You enter a church and suddenly there is silence, peace. You are also surrounded by such a... Okay, come down again. All this atmosphere, colorful windows, the sun shining in. It’s always a very special mood. I think that’s totally important.” (P07, par. 62)

3.6. Search for Religion

The pilgrimages of contemporary spiritual pilgrims are often related to biographical processes: They go on pilgrimage in specific life situations in order to cope with crises, to take time out and/or to undergo biographical changes. Their religiosity is more individually shaped and less dependent on denominations than that of traditional religious pilgrims. The search for religion can be reconstructed in all interviews conducted with contemporary spiritual pilgrims; however, it is expressed explicitly and proactively only in a few cases. For example, a 25-year-old Catholic student who has lost her also due to an experience of abuse in her childhood:

"It is also a motivation to reconnect a bit with what I've lost. [...] Now I have chosen the Way of St. James, simply, if I'm honest, because there is something religious there. And I think that I actually long for it a bit, because I can't feel it at home." (P01, par. 5)

Also a 23-year-old student who is about to graduate lost his connection to religion in recent years. Looking back, he is quite dissatisfied with his life as a student. After a few years of partying and leisure, he now wants to steer his life in a more reasonable direction. However, the desire for religion is less apparent in his case:

"For religious reasons I was thinking about walking the Way. I was looking for adventure. But religion was not a negative thing. It was something like: Oh, that could be good also. [...] I think it's what many people on the way are searching for. So, I think it's why I'm doing the Camino." (P19, par. 62)

For the alternative practitioner, religion is especially important during the transition into a new phase of life. In the context of biographical transformations, religious practices can function as rites of passage:

"I also do it [the pilgrimage, P.H.] for religious reasons. Because a period of life ends, a new one is coming. Just as an important final point, as the conclusion of a part and a new beginning, so to speak." (P07, par. 52)

3.7. Interpretation of Experiences and Meetings as Miracles and God-Sent Experiences

Meetings with other pilgrims are often experienced as particularly intense. Numerous interviews report how quickly deep conversations about highly personal topics arise between pilgrims and how soon relationships develop that are experienced as extremely strong and intimate. This intensity of social relationships during a pilgrimage can be explained by the fact that social differences are minimized by the greatly reduced lifestyle during a pilgrimage, that the infrastructure of the Ways of St. James offers sufficient space and time for intensive exchange, and by the fact that many pilgrims go on pilgrimage because of biographical situations that can only be coped with in communicative exchange (Heiser 2012). This can be seen, for example, in the following report by the recently divorced nurse:

"The first one started to cry and talked about his problems, then the next one talked about his problems and then it went around [...]. One of them has a sick father, the other one is divorced and can't cope with it [...]. So, everyone actually has his own reason for being here. The thesis we came up with, which no one could answer: Who sent us here at this time? Did someone send us here? And we all assumed that we were guided and sent by somebody, but we don't know by whom." (P28, par. 69)

In many cases, the interviewees describe the meetings during their pilgrimage as God-sent, for example, an 18-year-old Catholic high school student who wants to find out which profession he should choose:

"I don't believe in coincidence anymore since I've been walking here. For example, after school I want to.... To become a teacher, you have to have an internship, and I want to do that in the U.S. at an elementary school. Who do I meet at six in the morning at the cathedral in Leon? Well, the principal of the second-best elementary school in the U.S., who invites me to write her because she would be very happy to have me at her school for

two months. That's not a coincidence, I can't imagine. [...] Something brought up this meeting intentionally." (P29, par. 304)

Especially the meetings with pilgrims who help others in difficult situations are described as sending, for example in the following interview passage of the cashier who wants to go back to Macedonia:

"Here on the way, when you are all alone and can't continue walking because you have no more water, you say: God help me. He may not come in person, but someone comes. Another pilgrim or someone who helps or just shares a few words. [...] That's not a coincidence, I'm convinced." (P12, par. 239)

A similar story is told by a 52-year-old Protestant secretary who began her pilgrimage after separating from her husband:

"That stage of the way was very exhausting, but I managed to do it. Also with the help of an angel named Finn from Ireland, who appeared on my way as if he had just fallen from heaven. [...] I stopped once more with my backpack because it was too heavy for me, and I just ate my last banana, drank a sip of water. Then he came out of nowhere. [...] I got up, went along with him as a matter of course. [...] I saw this person as an angel, and he has been very good to me. He gave me a certain peace." (P13, par. 11)

Such experiences are repeatedly described as miracles in the interviews, for example by the alternative practitioner already quoted and by the recently divorced retiree:

"We were there in a godforsaken area and there was just nothing [...]. I remember it was cold and such a grey, foggy day and I was incredibly hungry. And suddenly a woman is standing there and just offers you something home baked. And you think: There's no such thing. [...] In the city you don't think about it, because there's Pizza Hut and McDonalds and [...] a bakery on every corner [...]. But here you might get the situation that you are really hungry. [...] And just at this moment there is an elderly woman who had just made fresh pancakes. It's a miracle. You perceive that at that moment as a gift from God." (P07, par. 106)

"At some point during the afternoon, both my calves said: Now we turn the power to zero, we don't want any more. And that was the crucial point for me: What to do? Continue or give up? I then decided to continue but said to the others: Let me rest for a moment, I need to gather my strength [...]. So, I rested for a few minutes and, under the critical eyes of the others [...], took tiny little steps. And the miracle happened: It worked. And then I said to myself: The fact that you are lying in the dark valley, that is now transmitted to my private situation [...]. You want to get back to the top of the mountain, where the sun is shining. And you have to take steps. Yes, and that's what I did. And that's just so beautiful to transfer to my personal situation, where I also took steps to get out of the dark valley." (P27, par. 3)

Finally, in describing contemporary pilgrim religiosity, two terms with religious connotations should not be ignored, which are used repeatedly in the interviews. The first is the term 'sign', which is used here by a 77-year-old Catholic pensioner who describes himself as a Templar:

"God sometimes shows me the way and also sometimes shows me that it's better to stop from time to time on the Way of St. James and say: Have a rest. When it rains or when it's really bad weather, I know: Okay, it's a sign. Your body needs rest." (P16, par. 75)

On the other hand, there are frequent reports of 'lessons' that can be learned during the pilgrimage. This is what a 23-year-old Catholic waitress does, for example, who came on the Way of St. James after a serious accident:

"You always get little lessons. Every person, in my opinion, has some kind of to-do list given to them by God or given to them by the universe. Like, for example, some people can never say no. And you are put in a similar situation until you act differently than you did before." (P30, par. 171)

4. Discussion

The above presented results of the pilgrimage research on the Ways of St. James show: Compared to other pilgrimage motives, religion is only rarely mentioned explicitly as a motivation for a contemporary pilgrimage. However, religion is present in many ways also in the context of contemporary pilgrimages: Pilgrims feel called to the Ways of St. James by a higher power, they use their pilgrimage for thanksgiving and penance towards God, they pray, attend church services, meditate in churches and interpret their experiences as signs and wonders as well as their meetings with other pilgrims as God-sent. Therefore, not only the historical pilgrimage in the Middle Ages and early modern times can be described as a religious practice, but also the contemporary pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. If there is a wide continuity between traditional religious pilgrims today and pilgrims who travelled the Ways of St. James decades or even centuries ago could only show a systematic comparison with historical sources. At least, there is one significant difference between historical and contemporary pilgrimages: While pilgrimage in early times had the character of a religious duty imposed on the individual by the Catholic Church as religious institution—e.g., for the purpose of penance and punishment—pilgrimage religiosity today is shaped by the pilgrims themselves. They do not carry out religious practices because religious institutions make it obligatory, but because they experience religion according to their own motivation and carry it out in a way that they themselves consider appropriate for a given situation. Pilgrimage can therefore be described as a form of lived religion. This approach argues for not looking at religion from a narrowed perspective on its institutionalized forms: “[I]nstead of starting from official organizations and formal membership, I want to begin with everyday practice; instead of taking the experts and official theology as definitive, I will join the lived religion scholars in arguing that we need a broader lens that includes but goes beyond those things” (Ammerman 2014, p. 189f.). From the perspective of lived religion, religion does not simply disappear in late modern societies—as at least certain readings of the secularization paradigm suggest. Rather, it is persistent in form of diverse religious practices: “Looking at religion as when one moves beyond adherence gave less support to declensionist narratives: when one moves beyond adherence to institutions as the indicator, rather than seeing religion as disappearing under modernity, religion—as practices—appears to be proliferating” (Neitz 2011, p. 47). Lived religion is understood as actuality in which a situational execution of certain practices reproduces religion on and on (Hillebrandt 2012, pp. 25, 51). Thus, lived religion is not an approach that is limited to institutions or organizations, neither it is a purely individualization-based approach. Rather, the focus of lived religion is namely the interrelation of lived religious practices with religious institutions and traditions (Neitz 2011, p. 54). This interrelation between lived and institutionalized religion is highly diverse: the former is framed by the latter (Hall 1997, p. viii) and insofar supported as religious institutions provide objects, meanings and acts that religious practices rely on in their execution (Ammerman 2014, p. 157). In the case of contemporary pilgrimages, for example, one can think of using ecclesiastical hostels, attending church services, performing traditional pilgrimage rituals, and referring back to religious narratives.

The protagonists of the lived religion approach cited here locate religion in everyday life. On the one hand, this is understandable, since everyday life is the space “in which the religious receives its own weight precisely because it is interwoven with the practical dimensions of life. Religiosity is not just an everyday phenomenon, but embedded in the practice of everyday life” (Schützeichel 2018, p. 94, translation: P.H.). On the other hand, such a focus on the relevance of religion to everyday life hides an important problem: it obstructs the view of extra-ordinary forms of religion. From the pilgrimage research, however, we know that it is particularly the extra-ordinary character of a pilgrimage that is a necessary condition for pilgrims to be able to reflect on their lives, to process life crises, to shape biographical changes, and to construct new identities (Heiser and Kurrat 2015, p. 149ff.; Kurrat 2015, p. 106ff.). Therefore, it seems appropriate to extend the lived religion approach to extra-ordinary religious practices.

Finally, if religion also has a major role to play in contemporary pilgrimages, it is imperative to discuss why the religious practice of pilgrimage remains so successful today, while other markers of the religious field (such as denomination membership or the performance of core religious practices such as attending church services and praying) have been in sharp decline in many parts of the world for decades. One possible answer to this question lies in the specific interrelation between individual shaping and the institutional context we find on the Ways of St. James. Namely, the self-determined shaping of pilgrimage religiosity is a necessary condition for the popularity of contemporary pilgrimage, but by no means a sufficient one. Rather, it must coincide with institutions and traditions that are able to ensure the evidence of religious practices. This is the case because self-determined religious practices are confronted with their own contingency in an increased manner. How is the individual pilgrim to know that the pilgrim religiosity he or she has shaped is 'right' and effective? What is needed here is an institutional context that guarantees the evidence of self-determined pilgrim religiosity. This is precisely why the majority of those affected in life crises and transitions do not go on pilgrimage just anywhere, but rather along the traditional Ways of St. James administered by the Catholic Church. The diverse individual shaping options and interpretation patterns thus meet on the same traditional path. Here, the church and the pilgrimage tradition provide contexts of meaning and forms of action, which pilgrims rely on in their individual execution of religious practices.

5. Conclusions

In the context of contemporary pilgrimages on the Ways of St. James one can find many forms of lived religion. Even pilgrims without any strong ties to religious institutions or traditions depend on these religious structures to get their agency as pilgrims. They still, and even increasingly, turn to traditional pilgrim routes rather than just going for random hikes in specific biographical situations. In addition, they do usually not invent new religious practices and interpretations along these routes but rather rely on old traditions for their individualistic journeys. Thus, there is a lot of individualism to be observed on the Ways of St. James—but just *within* traditional plots. To summarize: Individualistic spiritual agents get their pilgrimage agency from traditional religious structures without the intention to invent new practices. Thus, pilgrimage research impressively demonstrates that religious institutions and the individual shaping of religious practices do not represent dualistic opposites. On the contrary, both are constitutively depending on each other; it is only their interrelation that allows an explanation of the popularity of certain religious practices under the conditions of late modernity.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable due to secondary analysis that solely used anonymized data.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: 3rd party data.

Acknowledgments: I thank Christian Kurrat for sharing his interview transcripts, for our numerous discussions about pilgrimage, and for his review of this paper's manuscript. For their as critical as helpful comments I thank Frank Hillebrandt and Mariano Barbato as well as the journal's reviewers.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Article

Young Offenders on the Camino de Santiago—Theoretical Background of the Learning Walks

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Abstract: Delinquent behaviour is predominantly an expression of adolescent developmental phases, but at the same time a possible entry into criminal careers. Where socio-educational measures and admonitions no longer help, society reacts with youth detention and imprisonment as a last resort, in doing so it brings the young people into an environment of violence and power. The concept of the socio-educational pilgrimage as an alternative measure to imprisonment takes the young people out of this context and offers space for reflection and self-efficacy. In this article, different concepts of Learning Walks for young offenders are discussed and theoretically analysed.

Keywords: learning walks; hiking; socio-educational pilgrimage; delinquency; young offenders; Camino de Santiago

1. Introduction: Pilgrimage as Punishment

While religious pilgrimage today is mainly a voluntary decision of the pilgrims (for example Heiser 2021), the idea of an imposed penance is definitely part of the genesis of this religious tradition. In the 7th century AD, pilgrimages were proven punishment of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and in the 9th century secular courts also imposed long pilgrimage as an alternative to secular punishments (Wirsing 2006). Evidence of such punitive pilgrimage dates back to the 14th and 15th centuries, although punishment for petty offences such as rioting and property crimes could be decreed as a way out of an impending death penalty (Kraume 2008, p. 25). Often, condemned pilgrims had to wear additional signs of their guilt such as heavy chains, which may have significantly increased the risk of failure—but at the same time also affected the reputation of other pilgrims (Puszcz 2018, p. 24).

The draconian punishments of the Middle Ages are, for good reasons, a thing of the past in Europe. It may come as a surprise that for some years now, adolescents and young adults have again been sent on the Way of St. James in state judicial proceedings. Since 1982, more than 700 sentenced young people in Belgium and France have had the chance to escape a prison sentence by walking the Way to Santiago de Compostela (Ollivier 2017; Smits et al. 2018, p. 5) The Belgian organization Alba has been sending young people on the pilgrimage since 1982 (Murray 2021, p. 69) and the French organization SEUIL since 2002. These young people would otherwise have to face a longer prison sentence (Ollivier 2017). In Spain, too, since 2002, offenders have embarked on the religious path as part of the penal pilgrimage program known as the Caminos de Libertad (Murray 2021, p. 69). Serious and persistent theft, robbery, and assault are the crimes of the young people who are then given the chance to apply for the pilgrimage project. In the meantime, similar projects have been established in Italy and Germany (Cortella et al. 2018; Enger et al. 2018).

In this systematic analysis, we will introduce the modern concept of a penitential pilgrimage (2) and relate it to the modern pedagogy by first describing the situation of delinquent youth (3) and then reviewing how current socio-pedagogical methods can be implemented in the context of the pilgrimage (4). In doing so, we document a possible

Citation: Knospe, Yvonne, and Karsten Koenig. 2022. Young Offenders on the Camino de Santiago—Theoretical Background of the Learning Walks. *Religions* 13: 5. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13010005>

Academic Editor: Mariano P. Barbato

Received: 29 October 2021

Accepted: 11 December 2021

Published: 21 December 2021

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alternative to juvenile detention, which is considered problematic, and at the same time show which pedagogical mechanisms can be effective for other pilgrimage groups. The authors of this article analysed the method of “learning walks” in a European three-year research project called “Between Ages: Network for Young Offenders and NEET¹” (2015-2-DE04-KA205-012982), financed by Erasmus+ from 2015 to 2018 (JUGEND fuer Europa 2020; Koenig et al. 2017a).²

2. Marche de Rupture/Uprooting

While prisons are mainly characterised by monotonous sitting and an atmosphere related to the offence, the socio-educational pilgrimage projects provide a framework for continuous movement and a positive engagement with society. The initially simple activity of walking becomes a challenge with increasing duration, which leads to an inner confrontation. The projects are characterised by simple rules. For example, the entire journey must be made on foot, together, and on a shoestring budget for lodging and food. The country’s law has to be respected, and any behaviour which endangers the integrity of the project or the group leads to the termination of the journey (Boddez 2017, p. 12). The route mostly follows the major European pilgrimage routes, especially the Way of St. James, but routes to Rome or other destinations are also chosen. This has pragmatic reasons, as the paths are well signposted and equipped with hostels. The clear orientation towards the goal in one direction is also part of the pedagogical concept: just as on the path of life, one cannot turn back. Above all, however, the projects benefit from the positive assessment of pilgrimage in the present: the young people are no longer perceived as delinquents but as pilgrims, seekers, and as a rule this external view also shapes the young people’s self-perception. Nevertheless, the term pilgrimage is avoided in order to keep the projects connectable outside the church context. The names “Marche de rupture” and “Uprooting” refer to the goal of releasing young people from a culture characterised by deviant behaviour and preparing them for a new start in the context of a foreign environment. In Italian, this idea is clarified with the technical term “Reset”, while the German term “Arbeitsweg” (working path) focuses on working on one’s own self. In all countries, the path is preceded by a judicial instruction.

Juvenile courts may order participation in the pilgrimage and waive further serving of juvenile sentence if participation is successful. However, if the pilgrimage is cancelled, most often the young people have to serve the imposed juvenile sentences. In France and Belgium, the parent or guardian must agree to the pilgrimage. In Germany, only young people over the age of 18 have been involved in the projects to date, so parental consent has not been necessary. Due to legal requirements, the walk in Germany has been limited to a short, one-week section of the Way of St. James and is supplemented by educational exercises, e.g., on moral development, to initiate change. In the French and Belgian projects, young people walk the entire route from Paris or Brussels to Santiago de Compostela in two-to-three months. The pedagogical interventions consist of regular handwritten reflection reports. The discussion of the life plans usually happens casually in conversation with the guides or in silent reflection.

In the Belgian and French projects, one or two young people under the age of 18 are on the road with a volunteer supervisor. These volunteers take a biographical break themselves, and are not on the road as educators, but as equal companions. This is to avoid pedagogization of the way, but the professional team is available around the clock for emergencies. In Italy and Germany, on the other hand, professional social educators are on the road with a group of young people each (Koenig et al. 2017a; Koenig and Knospe 2021).

In the following section, we will briefly explain the personal situation of the young pilgrims and then use different theoretical perspectives to examine how a medieval punishment can become a modern educational measure.

3. Criminal Youth and the Aim of Reintegration

On their way to adulthood, young people do not always have socially adapted strategies for coping with life. Developmental tasks and social norms pose challenges for young people. Sometimes they come into conflict with society and the law when dealing with their developmental tasks (Weichold and Blumenthal 2018, p. 171). One goal of young people is to gain acceptance from their peers. In doing so, they sometimes tend to take risks in order to impress. The search for sensations and new experiences lead to unacceptable social actions (Weichold and Blumenthal 2018, p. 173). The “Problem Behaviour theory” describes risk factors (biological, psychosocial, and social background), protective factors, and the tendency towards risky behaviour or lifestyle as responsible for problem behaviour such as delinquency in adolescence (Jessor 2016). Among the specific risk factors, Jolliffe and his colleagues include, among parents: drug use (cigarettes and marijuana), lack of guilt, delinquency, and single-parent status; among adolescents: low intelligence, low academic achievement, high impulsivity, and hyperactivity; and, on the part of the environment: poor neighbourhoods, high-crime schools, and poor housing (Jolliffe et al. 2017).

The brain is in a state of upheaval in the adolescence phase. Familiar strategies are no longer accessible and new ones are not yet available. The abilities to regulate emotions and behaviour are only learned in progressive adolescence, when higher cognitive processes succeed due to the maturation of the prefrontal cortex at the end of puberty (Steinberg et al. 2006). This temporal delay is also explained by the term “maturation gap” (Moffitt 1993). In addition, adolescents do not have the status of adults who are expected to act responsibly and independently. In order to resist authority of parents, they sometimes use deviant behaviour, which can be understood as part of adolescence and dealing with developmental tasks (Moffitt 1993).

Figures from Germany show that the incidence of delinquent behavior among males in the adolescent phase (18 to 21 years) is almost twice as high as in later adulthood. Among adolescent males, 8 out of every 100,000 are accused of a crime, after which the proportion declines steadily to 4.4 accused per 100,000 population among 30- to 40-year-old males (Bundeskriminalamt 2019). Many of these can be explained as “developmental temporary juvenile delinquency”, but this age is also the time when criminal careers begin (Ostendorf and Drenkhahn 2017, p. 29). There are two types of delinquent people: the smaller group is called “life-course-persistent offenders”. This group consists of people who remain delinquent. The other, larger group is called “adolescence-limited offenders”. These offenders usually stop their delinquent behaviour after puberty (Moffitt 1993). Accordingly, juvenile justice in Germany and other European countries emphasises aspects of protection, education, and reintegration instead of punishment. For example, in Belgium “minors are ‘non-punishable’ under Belgian law, so it is theoretically a ‘protection model’.” (Koenig et al. 2017b, p. 15). As adolescents are in between children and adults, they should be responsible for their behaviour and actions and therefore be prosecuted. On the other hand, they are not fully responsible due to their development. They are still in need of education (Scherr 2018, pp. 17–18). Therefore, it seems to be important to find a way to bridge this time in life when either temporary juvenile delinquency ends or criminal careers begin.

In several European countries, society will react to juvenile crime firstly with educational measures, training courses, and social community service (United Nations 2004, pp. 201–5), but in the end, criminal youngsters will be excluded from society in children’s homes or youth prison. Though this is the most expensive form for educating young people, the results are not very good compared to the aim of reintegration in society: more than 60 percent of young offenders in German youth prison are likely to come back to court after they have finished the imprisonment (Bundesministerium der Justiz 2014, p. 7; Stelly and Thomas 2017, p. 82). Kawamura-Reindl and Schneider define the resocialisation idea as a societal task which cannot succeed between criminal young people and professional opponents (judges, enforcement officers, and social workers), but in the confrontation with society: “Resocialisation grows out of the cooperation of a society which, based on its

fundamental attitude, committed individuals, and existing services offers assistance and support for offenders . . . ” (Kawamura-Reindl and Schneider 2015, p. 70).

It is necessary to find opportunities or take action in promoting social integration instead of punishing youth. In Germany, this is a public task and written in law, but the reality shows a lot of problems with implementation (Seckinger 2018, p. 325).

To reach the aim of resocialisation, it is suggested to use multisystemic programs which include, rather than punishment by sending to prison, staying at home and involving the whole family. Looking at effectiveness, in an American research, there is a benefit of more than USD 13 for every dollar of effort, in comparison to the 40 per cent of punished youth who end up repeat offenders (Weichold and Blumenthal 2018, pp. 186–87).

4. Theoretical Background of the Learning Walk

The learning path can be grounded very well theoretically. In Section 4.1, we will use classical social pedagogical theories to evaluate pilgrimage with delinquent youth. Then, the model of personal resources will be explained as a frame of reference (Section 4.2). In Section 4.3, we will derive concrete pedagogical measures for socio-educational pilgrimage projects. The theories that we consider to be very important are taken up in the following and their explanatory contribution in relation to socio-educational pilgrimage is highlighted. An overview is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Theories and their facts relating the learning walk.

Theory	Facts for Learning Walk
1 Seek for the ability to act	Provoke attention, self-assertion, and reaching well-being by acting
2 Theory or pedagogy of recognition	Clients are recognized as subjects of their life
3 Experiential pedagogy or adventure education	Experience is better than teaching
4 Peer education or peer involvement	Better motivation for learning process when learning with peers
5 Reframing	People can focus other parts of their life story
6 Empowerment	People need professional help to make new experiences and start the process for a better life
7 Law of effect	People realize benefit from behaviour
8 Labelling approach	People often behave like they marked
9 Biographical break	People get a delay from their life

4.1. Social Pedagogical Theories

As described, learning walks result from ideas of social training courses. As a rule, they are intended to teach young people action strategies and behavioural patterns for resocialisation. They are considered an educational measure, in contrast to incarceration, which is associated with a high recidivism rate (Kawamura-Reindl and Schneider 2015, p. 139). Therefore, methods aimed at helping young people overcome the difficulties of puberty must focus on aspects of their lives. The selected theories focus primarily on the young person and explain how walking affects them and their living environment.

(1) Boehnisch’s theory, seek for the ability to act, explains that people seek agency, including through deviant behaviour. Critical life situations and a lack of coping strategies lead to feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. Aggressive and violent behaviour is also a way to gain attention, self-assertion, and well-being, despite norm-violating behaviour (Boehnisch 2017, pp. 218–19). The conclusion is to find methods for young people to increase their self-esteem and at the same time reduce deviant acts. To do this, it is necessary to separate the crime from the person. The suggestion to achieve these goals is to build a good relationship during the intervention and to avoid focusing on the crime (Boehnisch 2017, pp. 221–22). In this point, we find great difference between the concepts in Belgium and France on one hand and the German version on the other: In the long-distance-model great effort is spent on the fitting of clients and volunteer companions during the application process and the relationship is tested in a preparation-week. To avoid the labelling of each other, non-professional companions are chosen. As an equal

relationship is considered a prerequisite for development, the companion must openly question his roles (Boddez 2017, p. 9). This leads to friendship, lasting long after the walk, which gives the youngsters a new contact, a new role model, and is something which would not be possible in a professional context. In the long-distance walk, the idea of a team solving the task of walking is one of the most important principles. While there are not many rules in this concept, the most important one is to do the hike in this team. In the German walk lasting one week, the relation between youngster and the companion is understood as a more professional one: "The attitude of the trainer towards the participants must be unprejudiced, appreciative and at the same time preserving a professional distance." (Saechsische Jugendstiftung 2006, p. 23). The program focusses not on walking as a team process between trainer and participant, but on the peer group and individual responsibility. The trainer sets the framework, directs the pedagogical tasks, and supervises the included work assignments. Of course, only the participants perform the work, as they were sentenced, while the trainer is not involved. Perhaps this can be understood as part of restorative justice (Walgrave 2013, p. 44), although reparation is not an actual goal of the journey.

(2) The theory or pedagogy of recognition (Honneth 2016) means an idea of recognition for the clients as subjects of their life, and is committed to promote individuals in developing their self-determined decision capability, ability to act, and judgment ability. Requirement for that is recognition of the individual who owns these abilities in general and making them usable by pedagogical support (Hafeneger et al. 2013, pp. 8–9). When working with young people, it is important for professionals to establish a good relationship and accept the person and their actions as part of their development. Deviant behaviour must be reflected and confrontation with social norms and values must be established (Mueller 2013, p. 240). This is part of the method in different ways: In the long-distance concept, reflection is happening on the way. Walking gives the frame for thinking and the youngsters sometimes start to talk about past and future. In addition, weekly reports have to be sent to the organization, and the only way to communicate with the families are hand-written letters which is another form of reflection (Boddez 2017, p. 9). In the short German walk, reflection is included in formal units, which take place on the evenings about personal history and aims, "Ideas of Living" and a special unit for developing moral understanding. In this unit, the "Heinz-dilemma" according to Lawrence Kohlberg (Enger and Hein 2015) is used for the discussion of morally difficult situations, while on the next walk, the participants are explicitly tasked to think about personal dilemma in their actual situation (Enger et al. 2017, p. 7).

(3) Experiential pedagogy, or adventure education, as an action-oriented way of pedagogy can start learning processes through physical, psychological, and social challenges in order to promote the development of the personality (Borchert 2016, p. 148; Michl 2015, p. 13). Grounded on the ideas of Kurt Hahn, experience is better than teaching, and education should take place in society (Raithel et al. 2007, p. 212). Working with offenders is a promising and at the same time challenging field (Schlieckau 2017, p. 58). Several-day hikes are explicitly mentioned as one of the methods of experiential pedagogy. This happens in divergence to the living world of the youngsters and so gives them the opportunity to realize something completely different (Borchert 2016, p. 149). For pedagogical success in work with offenders, it is necessary to speak and reflect the experience in the life world (Borchert 2016, p. 150; Magoltz 2015, p. 25). Personal and social resources can be learnt by this method, e.g., autonomy, decision making, regulating own emotions, raising self-esteem, perseverance and endurance, integration in groups, action in a role, and cooperation (Galuske 2013, p. 258; Raithel et al. 2007, p. 215). As a method which is similar to social training courses, group interaction can lead to more effective changing of behaviour and attitude than in the work with only one mentor (Kawamura-Reindl and Schneider 2015, p. 150). Again, here the focus is different in both the concepts: while the long-distance walk in Belgium and France focuses very strongly on mastering the path and everyday tasks, in the German model this stands back behind the pedagogical concept.

The walk in Germany is organized around hostels, which are booked before; while some meals are cooked together, most are provided by the hostels, and the main focus lies on the walking process, the community service work which has to be undertaken in the hostels, and the reflection units in the evenings (Enger et al. 2018, p. 13). In the long-distance projects, youngsters and mentors have to organize overnight places, shopping and cooking together using a small amount of money. In addition, the hike passing the Pyrenees provides many more difficulties which must be solved. Furthermore, most of the youngsters are not familiar to long distance walking (as some others might be) and both concepts lead to the mental and physical limits of the participants. In the German model, too much luggage or using a rolling suitcase on forest paths might cause problems, while in the long-distance walk, looking for overnight places and struggling with the mountains and the daily distance of 25 km will require much motivation.

(4) Peer education or peer involvement means to educate and teach people of the same age. Theoretically this leads to more motivation to learn, and the results may be successful (Borchert 2016, p. 156). In addition to social learning theory (Bandura 1977), individuals are more likely to adopt a behaviour if the model is similar to the observer and has an admired status. Furthermore, a behaviour is more likely to be imitated if it has functional value, or if the results are meaningful to the individual. To reach good results by using such peer methods, it is helpful if adults also join the activities (Borchert 2016, p. 157). Therefore, for learning walks, the recommendation is to go on the walk with a small group of youngsters, accompanied by an adult person, who has a lot of knowledge in experimental pedagogy and communication. In the way of walks by one adult and one youngster, the adult mentor can be understood as a peer as both are on the same level; they see each other equal.

(5) Reframing helps to analyse deviant behaviour in different ways. It is establishing itself as an important method in social work. The concept originates from systemic counselling and is now also used as a basis for social pedagogical work. With reinterpretation, the attempt is made to question the previous view of reality, to allow alternative explanations and to actively search for them (Haselmann 2009, p. 179). Furthermore, reinterpretation processes enable new approaches to problems and the recognition of new strategies for action (Gloeckler 2011, p. 56).

(6) Empowerment is “[. . .] based on an action programme of professional social work [. . . and] supports processes of self-organisation and empowerment by service-users.” (Chiapparini 2016, p. 31). Chiapparini translated the definition from Herriger (2020, p. 13): empowerment is “a process of development (. . .) in which people gain strength, which they need for living a better life based on their own standards” (Chiapparini 2016, p. 32). To reach a better life, resources and strengths must be identified, new actions must be tried, and new experiences must be gathered to understand that changes in life are possible. Therefore, professional service such as social workers and a protective but challenging environment is necessary. In contrast to helplessness, powerlessness, and the feeling of no hope, a new supporting system can help signpost resources. Therefore, social work can help by networking to create a system of support (Herriger 2020, pp. 130–34). Empowerment is a process that takes many steps and much time. Built on the basic attitude, young people are the constructive director of their own life stories (Herriger 2020, p. 54). In the learning walks, youngsters can try, practise, and realize their new methods in coping with stressful new circumstances; they can think about ideas for their life, make new plans, and speak with the companion about further steps.

(7) Together with success and feeling the effects of the own behaviour next to Thorndike’s theory law of effect and Skinner’s principles of behaviour management, learning processes go along with benefits (Myers 2014, p. 300). Therefore, it is part of learning walks to reflect the daily results to realize the success and benefits of the coped difficulties. Anticipating this process, it was found important to have a “strong symbolic destination” (Boddez 2017, p. 12) for the walk. Though none of the three projects is developed in an ecclesiastical context, all three partners use the Camino in the direction of Santiago de Compostela. There are some practical advantages, such as a well signposted path with cheap hostels. On the

other hand, the aim gives the walking a direction, and every single day can be measured as a step towards reaching this aim. The walks not only aim at the destination Santiago de Compostela, but also target other places on the Camino, such as the city of Rome or places in northern Europe. There are also short versions that walk only part of the pilgrimage route, as is the case on the route near Dresden.

(8) The use of experiences with positive associations is also a very important aspect of the concept. While young offenders are often an object of a stigmatizing process, this can be turned around by using symbolic paths. The Labelling approach or labelling theory explains a stigmatizing process. “Many individuals are ‘marked’ for their past indiscretions, real or perceived, and carry with them the memories of their pasts, if for no other reason than others will not let them forget about who and what they once were (and may still be)” (Franzese 2015, p. 92). Labelling or stigmatization for individuals occurs when deviant behaviour is told to police or judges. On the other hand, if criminal actions are realized but not punished, labelling does not take place. Therefore, interaction with other individuals plays a significant role. Labelling leads to a reality for young people. Being assigned a deviant status, people often behave as they are told. This means being labelled as an offender may make the individual feel they have permission for deviant behaviour. Self-perception belongs to attribution by the environment (Boehnisch 2017, pp. 51–57).

(9) The learning walk is a “biographical break”, or a time out from the known life. This term also means “vacation from the familiar”. It offers the opportunity to try new behaviour without being remembered by others and the individual itself on the known frame. Therefore, according to the labelling approach, the “biographical break” offers the opportunity to forget the delict, and focus on present experiences and future plans without being burdened by old habits.

In summary, the theoretical foundations showed that the learning pathways have a close effect on the young people’s lifeworld, and that their actions and the resulting consequences follow a logical chain. What has not yet been answered is what advantages the learning walks have in terms of improving coping skills. Therefore, in the following chapter, we describe what young offenders can learn on the walk in terms of personal resources.

4.2. Learned Personal Resources on the Learning Walk

Beside the task to reach an “important destination”, the learning walk aims “to break the vicious circle and bring hope and new perspectives, to enhance resilience, problem solving capacities and a positive self- image . . . ” (Boddez 2017, p. 7). The importance of this concept is walking in a strange environment, the interaction with people on the way, and the reflection of the own situation. As Bandura points out: “In maneuvering through emotionally arousing situations, people have to take charge of their inner emotional life and regulate their expressive behaviour and strategically manage their modes of adaption” (Bandura et al. 2003, p. 780). Describing aggressive behaviour as a possible human reaction to unpleasant events (Krahé 2014), the focus can lead to training of alternative methods to react. Knowing special trainings support the development of personal resources such as self-efficacy, resilience, problem solving, self-management, and social support (Knospe 2019). This paper explains how personal resources are likely to be developed in the process of walking.

Based on the theory of resource conservation (Hobfoll 1998, 2002), it is important to understand that resources need to be conserved, preserved, gained, fostered, and protected, as a loss of resources will require more of them to compensate, or as Hobfoll points out, “loss will have much greater impact” (Hobfoll 1998, p. 62). One warning sign of loss of resources is stress. “Hence, stress occurs when (1) resources are threatened with loss, (2) resources are actually lost, or (3) there is a failure to adequately gain resources following significant resource investment.” (Hobfoll 1998, p. 55). Therefore, resources can be finite, and this can cause stress. This leads to the consequence that people “must invest resources in order to protect against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain resources” (Hobfoll

1998, p. 73). This is exactly what happens on the learning path. Young people experience how their resources grow and how these help them on their learning journey. In this respect, a successful completion of the learning pathway also leads to a build-up of resources from which the young people can also benefit in the future.

There is a broad consensus on important resources for coping with stress and achieving well-being. Personal resources related to stress resilience are, for example, self-efficacy, optimism, high self-esteem, sense of purpose, and social support (Hobfoll 2002, p. 309). Knospe emphasises the responsibility of individuals for their mental health and their performance in coping with stressful situations. In addition, their findings indicate that it is important to have many resources rather than just a few to work with. For example, she shows that if only one or two resources are missing from the six personal resources considered in her study, there is a ten to twenty-four times higher risk of perceiving stress symptoms (Knospe 2013, p. 130).

Following the previously named educational goals of the learning pathway, we will look at some personal resources and show that these are strengthened. This mainly includes resilience (Boddez 2017, p. 7), which is the focus of the following.

A definition describes: “Resilience means the psychological resistance of children to biological, psychological and psychosocial developmental risks” (Wustmann 2020, p. 18 translated by the authors) and can be understood as a bundle of resources consisting of 16 individual resources (Wustmann 2020, p. 115). The results of a study on resilience on the learning walk indicate that a variety of resilience resources are improved (Koenig and Knospe 2021). Therefore, learning walks are a solution to promote stress relief resources and thus for the young people to become the leaders of their lives again in the midst of society. Each additional resource makes life easier. However, gaining many resources in just a few weeks is a difficult approach. Nevertheless, the results confirmed that the learning walks work.

4.3. Successful Pedagogical Measures of the Learning Walk

After a look at the theoretical foundations and results on resilience, we next present some successful pedagogical measures of the learning path to show how (socio-pedagogical) facilitators can contribute to the success of the pilgrimage and the growth of resources. These recommendations are based on the nine theoretical concepts from Section 4.1. The recommendations were taken from experience reports and theoretical concepts from the literature. They do not claim to be exhaustive. In some cases, the theoretical analysis already described some requirements for the companions.

Based on the theories “seek for the ability to act” (Boehnisch 2017) and “pedagogy of recognition” (Hafeneger et al. 2013) the facilitators need to build a sustainable relationship with the young people. It does not matter whether the hike takes place in a group with a social pedagogue or in a 1:1 accompaniment, or whether the accompanist has a professional socio-educational background or is a volunteer. The attitude of the facilitator towards the client is important. With knowledge of communication, such as client-centred therapy (Rogers 2004) or nonviolent communication (Rosenberg 2015), it is possible to build up a relationship that is characterised by respect and avoids hierarchical differences. As deviant behaviour is usually a search for attention, the task for the companion is to give the young people recognition. For this, it is necessary that the facilitators understand the young person’s behaviour as coping behaviour and that, over time, it becomes clear that the offence is not condoned, but that there is a trusting relationship (Boehnisch 2017, pp. 221–22). In order to give recognition, the facilitator ideally has competences that promote the young people’s self-realisation in everyday life and in everyday activities. This requires, among other things, voluntary cooperation and autonomy (Honneth 2016, p. 58), or authenticity and transparency, acceptance of young people’s strengths and weaknesses, and “empathy as the ability to see the other person and their world through their eyes” (Henkenborg 2013, pp. 128–29). In addition, the client should not be given goals, as this can lead to resistance. It is helpful if the trainer prefers goals that the young person

himself names. Only in a second step should the use of network members, volunteers, or professional helpers be considered (Zobrist and Kaehler 2017, p. 92).

The advantage of the learning path, in the sense of experiential education, is that learning takes place outside of familiar school spaces. Learning is embedded by the facilitator in the everyday processes of walking and must nevertheless be planned in advance. This requires the trainer to know that experiences already have an effect in themselves and trigger learning processes. Reflection, i.e., discussions about the learning experiences, are encouraged by the facilitator; they support problem solving and the transfer to the young person's living environment. The trainer keeps a low profile and leaves the activities and co-determination to the young people (Senninger 2017, pp. 11–13). Further requirements from the experiential education approach for the trainer are the clarification of the understanding of the role and a role flexibility, as the companion of experiential education is project developer, arranger of educational processes, moderator, learning helper, and mentor (Paffrath 2017, p. 218).

When hiking in small groups, young people learn from each other. This is as people compare themselves in similar situations with similar people, i.e., peers in a similar life situation or with people with slightly higher abilities (Bandura 1986, p. 347). The facilitator is thus faced with the task of being a role model themselves and being aware of the similar situation to the young people during the walk. On the other hand, they should also recognise that the young people form a group of their own, who have more similarities to each other. Learning processes in groups prove problematic when relationship problems arise between group members. Then, it is almost impossible to work on factual issues. It is recommended that the trainer adopts an attitude of self-disclosure and gives priority to working through the relationship problems. The momentary relaxed mood of the group is a necessary condition for successful learning (Schmidt-Grunert 2009, pp. 211–12).

To use the method of reframing, it is possible to have a look behind personal weaknesses and deficits, and focus strengths (Boehnisch 2017, pp. 225–27). Clients may gain a new perspective on some aspect of themselves, the problem, or the situation (Cournoyer 2014, pp. 460–63). While walking, the young people often think about their behaviour without talking to the companion, and later they reflect on it together as the process of reframing is independent. The companion therefore needs patience and empathy in order to not disturb the process of reframing. Knowledge of systemic counselling is very helpful for the facilitator to support the reframing process.

One of the main tasks in a learning walk and the accompanying coercive context for the young people is to empower the clients for the necessary changes in their lives. This requires internal and external resources, which the young person must first access. The empowerment approach, which aims to achieve self-determination and life autonomy, provides methodological suggestions for this (Petzi 2019, p. 60; Zobrist and Kaehler 2017, p. 95). These include the recording of social network resources and resource interviews in the sense of biography work to record and reflect on personal, social, ecological, economic, and professional resources (Herriger 2020, p. 110).

In the spirit of Skinner and Thorndike, the facilitator takes on the task of reflecting on the actions, experiences, and results of the journey with the young people. In doing so, they should emphasise the positive aspects, i.e., the rewards or the difficult situations that were mastered. This helps to consolidate newly learned action strategies and new coping patterns. Due to the value-neutral statements of the companion, critical situations can also be discussed and ideas for changes can be openly discussed. The trainer also has to encourage the young people that many improvements or effects occur only after a delay. Waiting or enduring this gap until the reward has been achieved must first be learned, for which resources or action strategies must be tried out.

Concerning the learning walks, youngsters experience on their road that they are not labelled or realized as offender. A participant pointed out: "It was good to see that there are still people who do not condemn you because you have made mistakes in life and you do not treat as a serious criminal." (Enger et al. 2017, p. 13). This allows new perceptions of

their person, their life, and their self-esteem. This gives them the chance of integration and breaks a terrible, vicious circle. Feeling as a human, not as a criminal person, can offer new ideas and thoughts directly into a changing life story. Therefore, it is good if the facilitators see themselves as part of the group in order to express a similarity or affiliation to the young people to the outside world as well. This way, they can be perceived as a group of young walkers, which reduces the risk of critical or strange questions from passers-by.

A final aspect considered here is the so-called biographical pause. Here, the trainer accompanies the separation of the young people from their familiar environment. This may also be accompanied by emotional fluctuations, bad moods, helplessness, and dissatisfaction. The trainer should be prepared for this and initially be neutral towards this behaviour. Over the course of the trip, they can precisely reflect this unfavourable coping behaviour of new and uncontrollable situations with the young people. As already described, there is nevertheless no stigmatisation, so that the participants of the learning walk have a kind of holiday from their actual lives.

All in all, the walk requires a lot of professional socio-pedagogical action from the trainers. The facilitator must be aware that they are in what is called an order triangle. The actors involved in social work are (1) the contracting authorities, (2) the practitioner with their organisation in the background, and (3) the client and their social network (Zobrist and Kaehler 2017, p. 60).

By concentrating on the walk and the most basic human needs, the failures before the walk no longer play a role. In this way, the young person does not experience themselves as an offender, but finds themselves in a new role, which they can partly define for themselves. The companion, on the other hand, takes on different roles, such as leader, observer, expert, advisor, and helper. In order to achieve this, facilitators can use general principles of action as a guide when dealing with young offenders. These include lifeworld-oriented basic attitudes, lifeworld-oriented case understanding (detailed individual case understanding), everyday planning, social space orientation, integration, prevention, participation, and professional involvement in public and political discussions (Schneider 2016, pp. 295–99). In addition, these principles need to be complemented by knowledge in dealing with reactance, as the young people do not undertake the learning walk entirely voluntarily. The rejecting behaviours that occur serve the young offenders to maintain their own respect, to set limits to the values set by society and to search for their own solutions to problems (Conen 1999, p. 287). As working aids for dealing with resistance, Zobrist and Kaehler (2017, pp. 105–6) recommend, among other things, various reflection exercises, changes of focus, reformulations, approvals with simultaneous changes of perspective, freedom of choice, and control. They further point out that the companion must also accept resistance while valuing the person. The client's resistance does not lead to the facilitator solving the young person's problem, which requires friendly persistence on the part of the trainer.

Social pedagogical work also reaches its limits, as the approach of everyday orientation can only be implemented to a limited extent on a learning walk. Such a journey is too far removed from everyday life. However, plans for the future can be made and support mechanisms can be initiated. Although these findings promise success and help youngsters on their way of resocialisation, there are barriers, too. Therefore, peers can be both: resource and risk. Identity and group membership belong together and occur by compliance of group rules or authority (Boehnisch 2017, p. 247). Acceptance between the young people and the social worker, companion, or service is necessary to build a working relationship. Acceptance means respect in both ways regarding to Rogers basic attitudes (empathy, acceptance, and congruence) (Thorne and Sanders 2012, pp. 36–39). To maintain the professional attitude and distinguish the different life circumstances (dividing person and delict) professional social workers need a supporting system in the background (e.g., colleagues, supervision) (Boehnisch 2017, pp. 250, 255).

The aforementioned role conflicts, and ambivalent tasks entail various risks. For example, social workers in coercive contexts face an increased risk of burnout and a tendency to choose a different (social) field of work professionally (Zobrist and Kaehler

2017, p. 104). Therefore, in addition to a professional attitude, the acceptance of the three mandates of social work (state mandate, client mandate, and mandate of social work as a profession), self-advocacy is also enormously important, for only when the facilitators are mindful of themselves can meaningful social work succeed.

5. Conclusions

These methods have potential to alter educational policy. Young people in conflict with the law may successfully reintegrate into society, trading their deviant behavior for productive alternatives. Learning walks promote maturity and commitment to shared social values. Among possible benefits for a renewed pedagogy for delinquent youths, Borchert (2016, p. 276) lists scope for personal development and initiative, appreciation of others, self-actualization, and exposure to culture.

One risk is the great experience to have reached an aim which was far away. This is related to high feelings, a lot of motivation, and an emotional highlight in life. The question is if such a great experience can be achieved for a second time. Therefore, the youngsters must be accompanied after the walk as well, supported to avoid letdown. Thus, new concepts emphasise not only the way itself, but use this as an initial part of a longer project, which aims to develop and train a personal perspective for the young offenders (Cortella et al. 2018; Aoun 2019). Enger and Merbeth (2018) also refer to the community orientation of the sociopedagogical pilgrimage: "... through the involvement of sponsors, stakeholders and the charitable environment of the hostels (...) a social perception of young offenders can be achieved which clearly differs from the image drawn in the mass media." (Enger and Merbeth 2018, p. 285). The results underline that pilgrimage has many areas of application. Currently, it is appreciated that religious aspects overlap with secular trends. Already known new functions of pilgrimage are meaningful leisure time, fitness, and wellness experiences (Heid and Schnettler 2014, p. 221). Tourism and pilgrimage are also no longer mutually exclusive (Heid and Schnettler 2014, p. 226).

Learning walks are a method for coping with deviant adolescence behaviour due to developmental stumbles and transient biological changes. Such outings may reintegrate offenders without incarceration, save public funds, produce greater public safety, and invite young adults to a better future. Next steps will require incorporating training walks into the judicial system as a recognized form of alternative sentencing. Proof of success is made more difficult due to the need to protect participants' confidentiality and caution in interrogating minors and young adults about outcomes and recidivism. Integrating transitional processes and stages for young people in trouble can help document the success of the learning walks.

The findings of our article, which integrates pilgrimage into social work, shows the hope that the ancient pilgrimage path carries into our society, that it can be a path to (re)enable not only young people to live in our social centre. We also refer to competences that can increase the success of guided pilgrimages. In this respect, there is great potential in the pilgrimage path. In addition to the well-known religious orientation, it also offers a walking network, which can help people of all ages to take developmental steps.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, Y.K. and K.K.; methodology, Y.K. and K.K.; software, Y.K.; validation, Y.K. and K.K.; formal analysis, K.K.; investigation, K.K.; resources, Y.K. and K.K.; data curation, K.K.; writing—original draft preparation, Y.K. and K.K.; writing—review and editing, Y.K. and K.K.; visualization, Y.K. and K.K.; supervision, Y.K. and K.K.; project administration, K.K.; funding acquisition, K.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by Erasmus+ grant number 2015-2-DE04-KA205-012982.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The ethical guidelines of the Erasmus+ programs in force at the time of the project were implemented.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: <http://www.betweenages-project.eu/home.html> (accessed on 21 December 2021).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ NEET is an acronym for not in education, employment, or training. The term NEET is used to describe young people who are not engaged in any form of employment, education or training. The term has come into the policy debate in recent years due to disproportionate impact of the recession on young people (under 30 years old) (Eurofound 2021).
- ² A video-documentary is available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaAZrENqupM&feature=youtu.be> (accessed on 15 December 2021).

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Article

'A Most Select Gathering'. Mexican National Pilgrimages to Rome during the Papacy of Leo XIII

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Abstract: The objective of this article is to analyse Mexican national pilgrimages to Rome that took place during the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878–1903). These pilgrimages occurred in the context of a global Catholic mobilisation in support of the papacy, during the so-called Roman Question. This paper's analysis of these pilgrimages draws from historiography about national pilgrimages, as well as studies on Catholic mobilisation in support of the pope in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is fundamentally based on primary sources of an official nature, such as reports and other printed documents produced on the occasion of the pilgrimage. The study's primary conclusion is that national pilgrimages to Rome had a polysemic character since they brought together various religious and national identities. The pilgrimages contributed simultaneously to reinforcing the link between Catholicism and Mexican national identity and the global dimension of Catholicism and allegiance to the Holy See.

Keywords: catholic pilgrimages; Mexican Catholicism; papacy; Roman Question; ultramontanism; Latin America

Citation: Ramón Solans, Francisco Javier. 2021. 'A Most Select Gathering'. Mexican National Pilgrimages to Rome during the Papacy of Leo XIII. *Religions* 12: 475. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070475>

Academic Editor: Mariano P. Barbato

Received: 3 June 2021

Accepted: 22 June 2021

Published: 26 June 2021

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1. Introduction

In the nineteenth century, the practice of pilgrimage was profoundly and lastingly reshaped, so much that in many respects it still pertains in shrines around the world. This model was characterised by its large-scale nature, enabled by the incorporation of means of transport such as railways or steam ships, communication media such as newspapers, and mass-produced commodities such as small medals, prayer cards, and other types of souvenir (Cinquin 1980; Harris 1999; Kaufman 2005; Wharton 2006; Eade 2015). The need for an organisational structure capable of planning the journey and accommodating such a large number of pilgrims daily, as well as the new consumer and recreational relationships the pilgrims established with their destination, were present in the rise of the new figure of the pilgrim-tourist and of mass tourism itself (Dupront 1967; Kark 2001; Cohen-Hattab and Shoval 2003; Cohen-Hattab and Shoval 2015; Timothy and Olsen 2006; Raj and Morpeth 2007). These new devotional models spread rapidly across the globe (Kotulla 2006; Halemba 2008; Ramón Solans 2016) and later had an important impact on the development of secular pilgrimages, as well as in the reinvention of sacred places (Reader and Walter 1993; Margry 2008; Barbato 2013; Eade 2020).

This regeneration of devotional cultures involved not only the increase in individual pilgrimages but also the rise in new forms that were characterised by their collective nature, whether that was national or regional, and which played a central role in Catholic mobilisation from the middle of the nineteenth century until the Second Vatican Council. In the framework of the so-called 'culture wars' that questioned the role of religion in the public sphere (Clark and Kaiser 2003; Weir 2018), pilgrimages earned a new political meaning, as the incarnation of the true national community, as well as a means of protesting against the implementation of secularising measures.

Although we already have some overviews of these mobilisations (Pazos 2020; Di Stefano and Ramón Solans 2016; Chantre et al. 2014; Zimdars-Swartz 1991), analysis of

these pilgrimages has largely been subsumed into the more general study of a devotion (Boutry and Cinquin 1980; Blackburn 1993; Christian 1996; Cenarro Lagunas 1997; Serrano 1999; Harris 1999; Jonas 2000; de la Cueva 2001; Di Febo 2002; Hall 2004; Boyd 2007; Hynes 2009; Ramón Solans 2014) or has focussed on prominent pilgrimages such as those of the Trier Holy Tunic which attracted half a million people in 1844 (Schieder 1974; Lill 1978; Schneider 1995) or on periods of intense mobilisation such as the French pilgrimages launched in 1873 (Maës 2011). These works emphasise the mobilising aspect of Catholic devotions, their capacity for driving protests against secularist measures or governments, and their role in the construction of national and regional identities.

The disappearance of the Papal States with the capture of Rome in 1870 stirred a wave of protests in the Catholic world, which was channelled, among other elements, through the celebration of national pilgrimages to Rome in solidarity with the pope. From the mid-nineteenth century, the papacy's progressive loss of territories in the face of advancing Italian unification awoke a wave of empathy and solidarity with the papacy, which came to be expressed in forms of devotion to the pope as an alter christus (Horaist 1995; Zambarbieri 2005; Seiler 2007). The national pilgrimages had a strong political dimension, both in their defence of the papacy's temporal sovereignty as well as for their nature of protest against the participants' political regimes, such as the Royalist Catholics against the French Third Republic, the Legitimists against the Spanish Bourbon Restoration, or the German Catholics against the *Kulturkampf* (Brennan 2000; Dupont 2018; Heid 2020). As well as national pilgrimages, workers' pilgrimages were also organised which, financed by parishes and businesses, served to demonstrate the adhesion by the proletariat to Catholicism and thereby to fight socialism and anarchism. Researchers have particularly focussed on the French and Spanish pilgrimages (Brennan 2000; Faes Díaz 2009). In turn, the Holy See contributed to these types of national and worker pilgrimages with the celebration of ordinary and extraordinary jubilees which illustrated the global dimension of papal power (Ticchi 2005). Despite the works mentioned, however, there are no overall studies of the national pilgrimages that arrived in Rome during this period, nor have the Latin American pilgrimages that took place during the pontificates of Pius IX and Leo XIII even been analysed.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, mass pilgrimages diminished since many of those devotions depoliticised with the development of tourism in folklorised versions, diluted into forms of religiosity without culture, more fluid and individual (de Certeau and Domenach 1974; Roy 2008; Pack 2010). Social sciences have undergone a similar evolution when it comes to addressing the meaning of the pilgrimages. Early studies cemented the idea that they served to unite and reinforce identities and social hierarchies (Durkheim [1909] 2007; Wolf 1958). This seems logical given that in Émile Durkheim's time, pilgrimages were characterised as collective, rigid, and hierarchical, in the context of a struggle for public space and a fight against secularisation (Fournier 2007). In contrast to this model, and in a context of depoliticization of religious practices, other authors proposed the idea that pilgrimage was a liminal phenomenon, that far from reinforcing a social and ideological structure, it temporarily suppressed it, giving rise to an egalitarian and level *communitas* among those present (Turner and Turner [1978] 2011). To overcome this dichotomy, it has been suggested that pilgrimages may be understood as 'an arena for competing religious and secular discourses, for both the official co-optation and the non-official recovery of religious meanings' (Eade and Sallnow 1991, p. 2).

To address the multiple meanings that are observable in these devotional practices, the objective of this article is to study the three Mexican national pilgrimages to Rome during the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878–1903). Despite the prominence that they had at the time and the importance accorded to them by their participants, however, these pilgrimages have not been the subject of an historiographical study, either individually or collectively, but have instead been subsumed into the study of Porfirismo (Valadés 2015, pp. 603–6) or of Mexicans' travels in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Teixidor 1939). The working hypothesis is that these pilgrimages were characterised by being polysemic and

ambiguous since they combined various superimposed Catholic identities, almost like a Matryoshka doll: global, Latin American, national, and regional. In fact, a majority of the actors who organised the pilgrimage had a clear transnational profile, since despite being Mexican, they had trained at the Pontifical Latin American College in Rome and already had experience of global or supranational events in Europe. Finally, although it was through a dynamic of central and peripheral, these changes contributed to increasing the representation of the Latin American space in global Catholicism.

2. Results

2.1. Historical Context

To explore the multiple global identities that mixed during the pilgrimage, we will focus on the Mexican national pilgrimages organised in 1888, 1897, and 1900. The investigation is based on the reports that were written during and after the pilgrimage to tell the other side of the Atlantic about them, convey feelings and experiences, specify the multiple meanings of the events, and serve as a memento of the pilgrimage itself. From a methodological perspective, this investigation is based on the methods of cultural history, religious history, and global history. Before analysing the three pilgrimages, and in order to better understand the multiple identities at play, it is necessary to situate them within the triple religious context of Mexico, Latin America, and global Catholicism.

2.1.1. The Religious Reform of Mexico

From the middle of the nineteenth century, the Mexican church experienced a period of violent secularisation. After the overthrow of the dictator Santa Anna in 1855, Mexico remained mired in a state of political instability that culminated in the Reform War (1858–1861) between liberals and conservatives. In this context, the presidencies of Ignacio Comonfort (1855–1858) and Benito Juárez (1858–1872) drove important secularising measures known as the Reform Laws: the expulsion of the Jesuits (1856), Lerdo's confiscation (1856), the secularisation of marriage, the civil registry, and cemeteries (1859), or the freedom of worship (1860). These measures prompted several protests in the Catholic media, which resulted in the exile and the confinement to the capital of several Mexican bishops (Brading 2000). Paradoxically, this very hostile media favoured reform in the Mexican church by making impossible any Gallicanist solution that supported a 'national' church protected by the state. This encouraged the adoption of Ultramontane postulates that led to the Romanisation of the Mexican church. In fact, many of those exiled prelates fled to Rome and, from there, advanced the training of Mexican priests in the Pontifical Latin American College (Brading 2000; Bautista García 2005; Edwards 2011; Bautista García 2012; Connaughton 2010; Mijangos y González 2015).

The lingering embers of the Reform War (1858–1861) were still smouldering when President Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada (1872–1876) incorporated the Reform laws into the Magna Carta and succeeded in elevating the separation between church and state to a constitutional level. These measures produced discontent in the Catholic media and even fed a military uprising known as the Religionero Rebellion (1873–1876). The nature of the Religionero movement cannot simply be reduced to a question of church-state, however, since it did not include clergy, and the Mexican episcopate condemned all forms of violence against the government in 1875. Brian A. Stauffer (2020) has therefore pointed out that other factors should be taken into account, such as the popular discontent produced by changes in devotional cultures driven by Ultramontane sectors, especially by their attempt to control indigenous religious practices and the imposition of normative religious practices of European origin.

The general Porfirio Díaz—who had lost the previous elections against Juárez and Lerdo de Tejada—staged a coup d'état which gave him the presidency of Mexico, an office which he held almost without interruption from 1876 to 1911. Although he did not abolish any of the secularising measures during his tenure, he tempered their application or put them on hold. Porfirio Díaz also nurtured a good relationship with the ecclesiastical elite,

especially with the Archbishop of Oaxaca, Eulogio Gillow. In fact, this diocese represents a magnificent example of the progress of the Mexican church during the years of the Porfiriato: rising to the rank of archbishopric, hosting a Synod council in 1892, reorganising and expanding a better-trained local clergy, encouraging lay associations, etc. (Wright-Rios 2009).

During this period, the Mexican ecclesiastical hierarchy promoted a renewal of devotional cultures inspired by European models and especially by the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes. The clergyman José Antonio Plancarte y Labastida (1840–1898)—trained in Oscott and Rome and a pilgrim to Lourdes in 1877—founded the Congregación de Religiosas Hijas de María Inmaculada de Guadalupe in 1878 and fostered the coronation of the images of Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza in Jacona in 1885 and of Guadalupe in 1895 (Brading 2002). This devotional practice, highly developed in Italy and France, started to spread around the Catholic world and frequently entailed refurbishment of the church and a large regional or national pilgrimage (Langlois 2016).

As we have seen, the Mexican national pilgrimages to Rome which took place in the 1880s and 1890s occurred at an opportune time for this kind of huge demonstration of religious faith, since they had the approval if not the support of the civil authorities, as well as a renewed ecclesiastical and secular structure. These practices were likewise encouraged by a more disciplined and Romanised clergy, which had internalised the new devotional cultures promoted in Europe and had even gone to the Old World to train.

2.1.2. The Turn to Ultramontanism in Latin America

The 1840s and 1850s were marked by a huge advance in Ultramontane tenets at the heart of the different Latin American churches. Although this process of Romanisation of the Catholic Church was on a global scale, there are some specific features that allow us to explain its Latin American evolution, such as the tensions produced by excessive state intervention in religious matters, the impact of secular policies in Colombia and Mexico, and the promotion of an episcopal generation that was closer to Rome. These prelates played a fundamental role in the reform of their dioceses, promoting the foundation of new seminaries, the return of the Jesuits, the arrival of religious communities, the creation of spaces for lay participation (such as the Society of St Vincent de Paul), and the construction of a dense confessional publishing structure (Klaiber 1992; Brading 2000; Plata Quezada 2005; Serrano 2008; Martínez 2014; Santirocchi 2015).

This process of Romanisation was encouraged by the growing internationalisation of the Latin American ecclesiastical actors, who began increasingly to travel to the USA and Europe in search of new models to import into their countries. During the 1860s, the journeys of Latin American Catholics to Rome multiplied in the contexts of trips *ad limina*, exiles forced out by the political situation of their countries, and attendance at the great global Catholic events, such as the centenary of the martyrdom of St Peter and St Paul in 1867 and the First Vatican Council in 1870. These actors contributed to the spread of doctrines, congregations, new organisations, educational systems, publications, and campaigns in support of the pope in Latin America (Ramón Solans 2020a). They obviously contributed to the spread of new devotional cultures on the continent as well as to the renewal of centres of pilgrimage following, *mutatis mutandis*, the model of Lourdes sanctioned by Rome (Di Stefano and Mauro 2016; Hall 2016; Wright-Rios 2016; Monreal 2016).

The increased closeness of the various Latin American churches to Rome also contributed to increasing closeness to each other. The journeys the Latin American clergy made to the other side of the Atlantic often led them to cross other American countries and to meet clergy of other continental nationalities. Their growing internationalisation likewise meant that they encountered one another in other European spaces, especially in Rome. In their dialogues and epistolary exchanges, the Latin American ecclesiastical hierarchies soon understood that the challenges that they faced were similar and that it was useful to unite their efforts and strategies to overcome them. In the 1850s, the Archbishop

of Santiago, Chile, had already contacted some of his Latin American colleagues to try to organise a general council for the Central and South American countries. Although a council in Rome was not held until 1899, Valdivieso's correspondence shows the formation of a consciousness of collegiality and belonging to the same Latin American catholic space. This consciousness would be reinforced with the Plenary Council of Latin America (Ramón Solans 2020b, 2020c).

In turn, the Holy See thought out and enacted its strategies on the continent from a Latin American perspective (Cárdenas Ayala 2018). Especially important within this Latin American awakening was the creation in 1858 of the Pontifical Latin American College. Fostered by Pius IX and made reality through the efforts of the Chilean priest José Ignacio Víctor Eyzaguirre, who travelled the continent to find students and financing, this college sought to prepare the most brilliant youth of the Latin American dioceses in Rome so that upon their return they could modernise and Romanise their churches. Whether it was as bishops or teachers of diocesan seminaries, one of their main preoccupations was improving the education of the local priesthood, transmitting what they had learned in Rome about doctrine, discipline, spiritual practices, associations, devotions, and loyalty to the pope (Edwards 2011).

From the very beginning, and despite the Mexican episcopate finding itself in a very difficult situation as a consequence of the Reform War, it collaborated with the project. Among its early support, the Bishop of Puebla, Pelagio Antonio Labastida, stands out, promoting the college in his diocese from exile in Rome. He managed to achieve funding for two students, José Antonio Plancarte y Labastida, nephew of Archbishop Labastida and his right hand in the reform of the Mexican church, and Ignacio Montes de Oca, future Bishop of Tamaulipas (Brading 2002; Edwards 2011; Ramón Solans 2020c). Thanks to their Roman training and transnational experience, these priests trained in the Pontifical Latin American College played a very important role in the regeneration of devotional practices in Mexico and especially in the organisation of the first pilgrimages to Rome.

2.1.3. The Renewal of Pilgrimages to Rome

After the Napoleonic Wars, pilgrimages on foot to Rome almost disappeared. Between 1815 and 1865 the journey became the exclusive privilege of a small elite who could defray several months' stay abroad. It was the final swansong of the mythical Grand Tour that culminated in a visit to romantic Rome, that Rome immortalised by Goethe in his *Die italienische Reise* (1813–1817), destination of European Catholic nobles and writers who after the Revolution again turned their eyes to the capital of Christianity. It was a Rome restored not just politically but also artistically and archaeologically, with the expansion of the Vatican Library and Museums, the excavations in different parts of the Papal States, the restoration of ancient monuments such as the Colosseum, and the spectacular rediscovery of the Roman catacombs that reinforced the image of martyr Rome, the heart of Christianity (Boutry 1979; Viaene 2004).

The steady improvement of means of communication, with the foundation of rail networks in the north of Europe and steamship routes that connected Marseilles with the main Italian ports, made the journey rather more accessible, although it remained far beyond the means of the middle and lower classes. With the centralisation of Catholicism, Rome gradually became the destination for 'business trips' for priests, monks, nuns, and prelates as well as Catholic journalists, writers, and politicians who went to Rome in search of legitimisation, inspiration, and grants (Viaene 2001).

The revolution in Rome in 1848 and the Pope's exile in Gaeta prompted an unprecedented reaction in the Catholic world. In contrast to the bare echo produced by the imprisoning of Pius VI in 1799 and Pius VII in 1808 at the hands of French troops, the exile of Pius IX awoke a wave of solidarity across the globe. Among other factors, this reaction is explained by the improvement in communications, the crisis in the Gallican position, and the advancement of the Ultramontanist one. This outrage translated into innumerable letters, collections of money and signatures, and the issuing of a remarkable publicity in

support of the Pope. The first Latin American demonstrations of solidarity with the Pope arrived from Mexico, in particular with prime minister José Joaquín Herrera's invitation to Pius IX in 1849 to take refuge in Mexico, an invitation that was echoed by many of the country's city halls and prelates (Ramón Solans 2020a).

The loss of two thirds of Papal State territory as a consequence of the Italian war of 1859, and the rebellion of Romagna, Umbria, and the Marches drove the demonstrations of solidarity with the Pope. Five million signatures in support of Pius IX were amassed, 11,000 volunteers were recruited to defend the Pope, the collection of Peter's Pence was revived, and even devotion to the Pope was encouraged. These campaigns were encouraged by the Holy See and its diplomatic apparatus as well as by the Catholic press, episcopacy, lay associations, and so on (Horaist 1995; Guénel 1998; Viaene 2002; Pollard 2005). Despite the difficulties of the Mexican clergy during the Reform War, the episcopacy also demonstrated its loyalty to the Roman cause at that time and defended the temporal sovereignty of the Pontiff over his faithful (Poder Temporal 1861).

The Holy See promoted great ceremonies that enabled the expression of global support for the Pope. This was the case with the canonisation of the Martyrs of Japan in 1862 which drew 264 prelates from across the world, including the Mexican Bishops of San Luis de Potosí, Puebla, Michoacán, and Antequera, who found themselves exiled in Rome. The canonisation became a global protest against the unification of Italy and a demonstration of support for papal primacy. Something similar happened with the celebration of the XVIII centenary of the martyrdom of St Peter and St Paul in 1867, which drew 45 cardinals, 420 prelates, 18,000 clergy and 150,000 visitors to Rome from across the world (Viaene 2004; Riall 2010; Ramón Solans 2020a). Shortly before the fall of the Papal States, the first collective pilgrimage to Rome by German Catholics took place in 1869 (Heid 2020).

The conquest of Rome by Italian troops did not put an end to these demonstrations—in fact, quite the reverse. The pitiful image of a pope imprisoned and in chains was disseminated through various media in order to feed these demonstrations of affection, empathy, and solidarity with the pontiff even more. Festivals in 1871 and 1876 were organised for the 25th and 30th anniversaries of his elevation to the papacy, in 1877 for the 50th anniversary of his episcopal consecration, and in 1875 on the occasion of the jubilee. In the latter case, pilgrims were asked to arrive individually in Rome so as not to inflame sensitivities and cause a confrontation with Italian authorities. The pilgrimages organised during the final years of the papacy of Pius IX were characterised by the small number of participants, their elite composition, and their Legitimist stamp. This was the case for the first national French pilgrimage in 1873 and the Spanish one of 1876 (Brennan 2000; Kertzer 2004; Seiler 2007; Horaist 1995; Hibbs-Lissourgues 1995; Ramón Solans 2018; Heid 2020).

In the face of the Italian authorities' prohibition on making pilgrimages to the principal national sanctuaries in 1873, Catholics in Bologna inaugurated a new practice, spiritual pilgrimages, approved by Pius IX, which consisted of a mental journey that, through prayer and contemplation, would transport the pilgrim to the holy sites and most important national and international sanctuaries. In 1874 the Archbishop of Mexico, Pelagio Antonio Labastida y Dávalos, introduced this practice in his country to protest against the secularising measures rolled out by Lezo's government. This devotional practice also reinforced the Roman orientation of the Mexican church and encouraged the faithful to acquire an awareness of the global dimension of Catholicism and deepen their connection with the pope (Stauffer 2018).

During the papacy of Leo XIII, pilgrimages to Rome reached a new dimension in terms of both the numbers and the countries involved. As well as the ordinary jubilee of 1900, Leo XIII fostered various jubilees in 1879, 1882–1883, 1888, 1894, and 1902. The first great pilgrimage organised to Rome was the one celebrated in 1888 on the 50th sacerdotal anniversary of Leo XIII. The Bolognese publicist Giovanni Acquaderni played a central role in promoting these festivities, presiding over the organising committee of the jubilee and travelling throughout Europe to promote its celebration. The festivities were a success and between October 1887 and June 1888 some 44,194 pilgrims visited the city, the majority

(28,528) Italian (Ticchi 2005). The figures for the jubilee of 1900 are even more spectacular, with some 700,000 pilgrims from all over the world arriving during the festivities (Hilaire 2003).

The pilgrimages continued to be composed largely of the middle and upper classes, since both the journey and the accommodation was expensive and implied several weeks of travel. Within the context of the development of social Catholicism, however, some businessmen paternalistically financed the journeys of a large number of workers from the Catholic workers' circles. This was the case with the first pilgrimages of workers organised in 1885 and 1887 by the Archbishop of Reims Benoît Langénieux, as well as the Catholic entrepreneur Léon Harmel, and the French reformer Albert de Mun. The pilgrimage of 1887 was a great success and managed to bring 1400 workers, 110 factory owners, and 300 clergy to Rome. Two years later, in 1889, the pilgrimage reached 3000 workers and in 1891, three months after the publication of the *Rerum Novarum*, 20,000 French workers travelled to Rome in gratitude to Leo XIII for that document (Brennan 2000). In Spain, the Marquess of Comillas and Catholic industrialist, Claudio López Bru, promoted a workers' pilgrimage that brought 18,500 pilgrims to Rome in 1894 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the priestly ordination of Leo XIII (Faes Díaz 2009).

Despite technological advances, the enormous distance that exists between Latin America and Europe practically constituted an insurmountable barrier to organising a massive and therefore expensive pilgrimage to Rome. While not as numerous as their European counterparts, during the papacy of Leo XIII, Latin American Catholics nevertheless began to organise their own mass pilgrimages to the Vatican to demonstrate their loyalty to the Holy See. Argentinian and Mexican Catholics took the lead. The continent's first mass pilgrimage was led by the provisor and vicar general, Antonio Espinosa, in Argentina in 1881, and later followed the Mexican ones of 1888 and 1898, and the pilgrimages of the jubilee of 1900 organised by Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Mexico.

2.2. Mexican Pilgrimages to Rome during the Papacy of Leo XIII (1878–1903)

2.2.1. The First National Pilgrimage to Rome (1888)

In early 1887, news began to arrive in Mexico of the 'universal movement of the nations and of individuals to celebrate in a thousand ways the Sacerdotal Jubilee of Leo XIII which will take place on 1 January 1888' (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 3). The man promoting this initiative in Mexico was José María Mora y Daza, Bishop of Puebla de los Ángeles and an active priest who had reformed the *Seminario Palafoxiano* and driven a movement of monthly pilgrimages from the Mexican dioceses to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in February 1887. The idea was taken up by the Primate of Mexico, Pelagio Antonio Labastida, who issued a general call to Catholics across the whole country and ordered the formation of a propaganda committee in which lay people such as the pilgrimage reporter Diego Germán Vázquez would play a very important role. In order to let the Mexican people know about the pilgrimage, this committee wrote to the main towns in the country so they could publish an invitation to join the pilgrimage. To emphasise the Pope's authority, this text produced a play of contrasts that described 'an elderly man who, imprisoned in his house in one of the great cities of old Europe, is the object of the attention, the respect, the veneration of all peoples. A King without a state, he has, as subjects, millions of inhabitants around our world'. It likewise appealed to national pride for Mexicans to join 'this universal movement' by indicating that even the nations who 'are the greatest enemies of Catholicism, such as Turkey and China' were taking part in this jubilee (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, pp. 6–7).

The unexpected death of José María Mora on 26 December 1887 was a huge blow for the pilgrimage and cancelling it was even considered. This bleak outlook was quickly banished when the prelate was taken up by the young vicar capitular of Puebla, Ramón Ibarra. This Mexican priest is a paradigmatic example of the importance of the internationalisation of the Latin American clergy for the Romanisation and reform of the various national churches. After training in the *Seminario Palafoxiano*, Ramón Ibarra attended the

Pontifical Latin American College in Rome and received a doctorate from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Philosophy, Theology, and Canon Law. Ramón Ibarra had already demonstrated his organisational abilities and concern for devotional renewal when he organised the first diocesan pilgrimage to Guadalupe in 1887. He not only managed to ensure the success of the first Mexican pilgrimage to Rome but also, then as Bishop of Puebla, played a central role in the two following pilgrimages to Rome in 1897 and 1900.

Before departing, the pilgrims congregated in the capital to attend a religious event in honour of the Virgin of Guadalupe. They thereby symbolically connected Mexican national devotion with Rome through ‘the Mexican Virgin, Mexico’s special protector, [who] would be the pilgrims’ guide; beneath her shelter and protection they undertook the journey’ (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 30). On 15 April 1888, the pilgrimage departed by rail from the capital to New York. At stations all along their route through Mexico, the pilgrims were celebrated and received with the national anthem.

From New York, the pilgrims embarked for Naples, whence they travelled by train to Rome. The pilgrimage was presided over by the Bishop of Chilapa, Buenaventura Portillo y Tejada, and included representatives of the different Mexican dioceses, such as the canon of the Cathedral of Mexico City, Ambrosio Lara, and the canon and rector of the Seminary of Morelia, Agustín Abarca. In total, there were 150 pilgrims comprised of clergy, laymen, and three students who were being taken to the Pontifical Latin American College. Although we cannot construct an exact profile of the lay pilgrims, we can highlight that they belonged to the Mexican social elite, including lawyers, doctors, merchants, landowners, industrialists, engineers, representatives of lay organisations and Catholic press, etc. The pilgrimage included a small number of women—29 from Mexican high society—who largely travelled as wives, sisters, and daughters of the lay pilgrims. Although presented as a pilgrimage of all social classes, it lacked the presence of the masses as few could afford such a journey, and it was instead more of an occasion to identify oneself as elite and make a public demonstration of personal religious commitment.

Nor was the pilgrimage much more diverse in terms of race, since it included only one elderly indigenous woman from Chilapa, Rita Manuela, who was the sole person not dressed in a fully European style, wearing ‘the quaint costume of those of her race’ (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 312). In any event, whether because she was indigenous or elderly, the Pope gave her special treatment, leaving the rest of the pilgrims moved ‘to see him clasp the Indian woman from Chilapa in his arms and accept with marked complacency the gift she gave him of some Mexican coins with a value of 100 pesos’ (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 327).

In Rome, the pilgrims were received by the Bishop of San Luis de Potosí and alumnus of the Pontifical Latin American College, José María Ignacio Montes de Oca. In line with other Mexican and European pilgrimages (Seiler 2007), the report is dotted with descriptions in which feelings are amplified and even presented almost as episodes of ecstasy in which reason is suspended. Thus, for example, the reporter relating the arrival into Rome by rail described how:

A unanimous exclamation of admiration, joy, and religious exhilaration left the lips of all the Mexicans when they saw approaching the City of the Popes, the Metropolis of Christendom. –Rome! –Rome! cried a hundred voices. –Rome! –Rome! the echo answered back, making hearts beat violently. –Mexico is arriving in Rome! thought I: Mexico is coming to Rome for the first time: Mexico is coming to the centre of the Catholic union. (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 278)

The descriptions became even more intense when narrating the feelings engendered by the presence of the Pope himself and which demonstrate the great importance that devotion to the pope was acquiring in the world. For example, during mass in the Sistine Chapel, the Mexican pilgrims had the opportunity to see Leo XIII for the first time and receive communion from him. In this type of report, the presence of the pontiff was usually an excuse to reflect on the pope’s exceptional power as well as his global reach.

These considerations faded away, however, when they approached the Pope to commune, and the reporter changed register to describe how ‘my legs grew weak; painfully aware of my insignificance, I understood the greatness of the mercy that I was to receive and, awestruck and bewildered, I came to the feet of the Holy Father, most ardently praying the *Confiteor Deo*’ (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 284). In his letters to the newspaper *El Pueblo Católico*, the priest José María Velázquez emphasised the ‘anxiety’ to ‘meet personally the most famous man of our times; the most perfect sage, the Holy Father, before whom even the greatest potentates of the Earth today bend their knee’ (Velázquez 1890, p. 95). Velázquez’s report is very interesting as it focuses on the pontiff’s actual physical appearance, indicating that, while the portraits of him that they had in Mexico are older, ‘they are very alike’ (96). In this respect, it should be recalled that until Pius XI, the faithful did not have photographs of the pontiff and that it was specifically under him that the image of the pope was portrayed on a multitude of supports in a real *pionomania* (Veca 2018). The proliferation of these images enabled the faithful to make an emotional and symbolic connection with the pope and because of that, affirmations like those of Velázquez reinforced this collective imagination.

After the mass, Leo XIII invited them to a brief reception in the consistory room, where the Mexican pilgrims could enjoy more direct contact with the Pope. A recurring theme of warmth and paternal consolation appears in the descriptions of this encounter, when the reporter evokes the moment in which, kneeling at the feet of Leo XIII, ‘feeling his caresses, I felt like a child in the arms of my own father; I felt small in body and spirit; I found myself bewildered beneath the weight of that greatness that has no superior on Earth’ (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 291).

The private audience on 14 May provided the climax of the narrative, since the pilgrims could come even closer, receive his blessing, and enjoy a short time with the Pope in which they gave him the gifts, collections, and mementos they had brought him. The Mexican pilgrims prepared themselves beforehand in the Pontifical Latin American College so that they knew how to conduct themselves in the presence of the Pope. Reports are full of the usual ecstatic reactions of the pilgrims in the presence of the pontiff and the acts of kindness they received from him. After a private audience with the Bishops of Chilapa and San Luis de Potosí, the Pope entered with a cortege of bishops and six cardinals, among whom was an old acquaintance of the Latin American Church, the Polish cardinal Ledochowski. The Pope was received with shouts of ‘Long live the Holy Father! Long live Leo XIII! Long live the Pope King!’ (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 138).

Before the pontiff, the president of the pilgrimage, the Bishop of Chilapa, delivered a speech in which he reflected on the loyalty to the pope of the ‘more than nine million Catholics who form the majority of our beloved and Catholic nation, which suffers the tragic exclusion of many of our disgraced compatriots, snatched from the motherly bosom of our holy Church by modern errors’ (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 321). After his words, Leo XIII gave them a brief and considered address in which he praised the pilgrims for such a long journey and positioned them through their geographical and social co-ordinates as an American, Mexican, and interclass pilgrimage, ‘a most select gathering of American pilgrims who have come here to take part in the festivities of our Sacerdotal Jubilee, representing all the trades and classes of the Mexican Catholic nation’ (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, p. 324). The Pope transformed their long journey into the greatest testament to their faith, since only allegiance to the ‘Vicar of Christ could move you to traverse the seas and confront the hardships and dangers of such a long voyage’ (ibid.). In his speech, he also made mention of the critical situation that the Mexican Church had experienced, its recovery in recent years, and the attention with which he had always watched what was going on in the Mexican Church.

Finally, the Pope underlined the importance of the ‘Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, where the most august Virgin, venerated with special reverence by the Mexican people, seems to hold your nation in her gentle protection and lovingly to preserve you in the shelter of her mighty patronage’ (German y Vázquez 1889, vol. 1, pp. 324–25). Such

utterances won over an audience that had a strong devotional bond with the advocacy of Our Lady of Guadalupe. As the priest Velázquez said, 'it is necessary to be Mexican, and to have known the bitterness of hearing the authenticity of the marvellous image of our national Patron disavowed, to experience the sweet emotion that we felt' (Velázquez 1890, p. 100).

2.2.2. The Second National Pilgrimage to Rome (1898)

The second pilgrimage to Rome did not attract such attention and only drew 20 clergy and 17 pilgrims of both sexes. Among the possible reasons are the excessive cost of a pilgrimage that also went to the Holy Land and the fact that it was prompted by no particular celebration, such as the jubilee in the previous pilgrimage. The principal innovation was that it was organised by a lay organisation, the Apostleship of the Cross, along with the Primate of Mexico, Próspero María Alarcón. This Mexican association had been founded in 1895 by the prominent laywoman, Concepción Cabrera de Armida, with the support of the Bishop of Chilapa, Ramón Ibarra y González. In his pastoral in preparation for the pilgrimage, Ibarra himself connected the work of the Apostleship of the Cross, which had been blessed by Leo XIII himself, with the veneration of the pope as an *alter Christus*, who had suffered in their flesh the persecutions of the changing times (Ibarra 1897). In his pastoral preparing for the pilgrimage, the Prelate of Cuernavaca, Fortino Hipólito Vera, also dwelt on the centrality of the pope and Rome by celebrating how 'four decades spent decatholicising Mexico have not destroyed the sacred bond that unites us with the Holy See' (Vera 1897, p. 4).

Of critical importance in the organisation of the pilgrimage was the assistance of the clergy trained in the Pontifical Latin American College in Rome, who thus had broad transnational experience. From Mexico, the pilgrimage was led by the Bishop of Tamaulipas and former student of the Pontifical Latin American College, Filemón Fierro, and the Bishop of Tabasco, Perfecto Amézquita, while Ramón Ibarra had left two months previously to arrange the audience with Leo XIII. The route of the pilgrimage varied slightly as, rather than departing from New York, it did so from Havana in February 1898, just missing the sinking of the USS Maine that triggered the Spanish-American War. Likewise, before arriving in Rome, the ship stopped in Cadiz, Gibraltar, Barcelona, and Montserrat. From Rome they went to the Holy Land and on their return passed through Rome again, stopping along the route in other important Marian sanctuaries such as Loreto, Lourdes, and Zaragoza. Both on the way out and on the way back, the two bishops and some of the pilgrims stayed at the Pontifical Latin American College.

After attending Mass in the Sistine Chapel, Father Trinidad Basurto, parish priest of Calimaya and pilgrimage reporter, described the profound emotional impact caused by the audience with the Pope: 'it was not possible to withstand the feelings and emotions that we experienced, only to express them in some way' (Basurto 1898, vol. 1, p. 139). The pilgrims were accompanied at that point by the Mexicans resident in Rome, the consul, 28 Mexican students at the College, as well as some Argentinians and Bolivians. Abroad, in a country which spoke another language, national differences seemed to fade and a common identity among Latin Americans was reinforced. After the words from the Bishop of Chilapa, Ramón Ibarra, Leo XIII again underscored the importance of this type of demonstration of devotion from such remote regions, expressing 'his gladness at a pilgrimage that came from so far away and that proposes visiting the Holy Land' (*La Civiltà cattolica*, vol. II, 10–23 March 1898).

2.2.3. The Third National Pilgrimage to Rome (1900)

The final pilgrimage of the nineteenth century took place on the occasion of the ordinary jubilee of 1900. This celebration became one of the great festivals of Catholicism on a global scale, with 1,300,000 pilgrims in Rome, and it was presented as the triumph of Catholicism in the face of a fateful century which had impeded the celebrations of ordinary jubilees in 1800, 1850, and 1875. The echoes of the news of the opening of the Holy Door

at Christmas in 1899, an act that inaugurated the jubilee, ‘spread across the world with admirable speed’ and ‘was translated into different languages across the whole face of the Earth, awaking the peoples from the indifference in which they lay to proclaim Christ King and absolute ruler over all creation’ (Bianchi 1901, pp. 7, 8).

The driving force behind the third pilgrimage was the Catholic printer, Timoteo Macías, who wrote to the Mexican prelates to obtain their support, and once received, approached the Secretary of State, Cardinal Rampolla, to obtain Rome’s blessing. With the support of the journalist and playwright, Alberto G. Bianchi, Macías set up offices for the pilgrimage and from there undertook an intense propaganda campaign in the country’s main media: *El País*, *La Voz de México*, *El Tiempo*, *El Nacional*, etc.

The pilgrimage was led by the Bishop of Chilapa, Ramón Ibarra, who again acted as mediator between the two spaces of Mexico and Rome. Although they did not find the 500 pilgrims of Macías’ ambition, the pilgrimage drew greater numbers than the two previous ones, with 225 pilgrims. In terms of the demographics, it stands out that the great majority were laymen, with a significant presence of women (77 men, 75 women, 11 children), while the number of clergy was less than half, 62 pilgrims in total. As with the previous two, the pilgrims congregated in the capital where they took part in a triduum to the Virgin of Guadalupe in her sanctuary. The train was sent off to cheers and the chords of the Mexican national anthem.

On this occasion, the pilgrims went by train to Veracruz, where the steamboat *Alfonso XIII* awaited them, which had already taken the Argentinian and Uruguayan pilgrims to Rome. Both pilgrimages enjoyed varied hospitality from the Spanish Catholic businessman, the Marquess of Comillas, Claudio López Bru, and his Spanish transatlantic shipping line which connected the Mexican ports with Europe. The Marquess of Comillas had organised and financed a Spanish workers’ pilgrimage some years previously, in 1894.

Before going on to Rome, the pilgrimage stopped off at several ports in the north of Spain, going round the entire Iberian Peninsula from Santander to Barcelona. In Cadiz, they met the Argentinian and Uruguayan pilgrimage which was returning from Rome. The warm meeting between the Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires, Gregorio Ignacio Romero, and the Bishop of Chilapa, Ramón Ibarra, symbolised, according to the reporter, a ‘brotherly embrace’ that united ‘on the soil of Mother Spain two of the high dignitaries of the Catholic Church from the two countries which today are at the vanguard of Latin America: the Argentinian and Mexican Republics’ (Bianchi 1901, pp. 53, 54).

Upon arrival in Rome, the pilgrims were taken to the Pontifical Latin American College to celebrate a festival in honour of the patron of Mexico, the Virgin of Guadalupe. Visits to this centre increasingly became an almost obligatory stop, first for clergy and later for Latin American pilgrims and visitors. It was necessary for the future of the college that clergy and lay people understood the services it offered. In turn, the centre increasingly became a space to welcome Latin American pilgrims, where they could prepare their visit to the pope and organise all kinds of religious functions.

To gain the jubilee indulgence, the Mexican pilgrims attended the four major basilicas, with the Bishop of Chilapas, Ramón Ibarra, celebrating Mass in St Peter’s and the Te Deum in St John Lateran and St Mary Major. During their stay in Rome, the pilgrims visited a place rich with symbolism, the Roman catacombs. Nineteenth century apologetics had used this topos to connect the martyrdom of the early Church under the Roman Empire with other sufferings that Catholics had experienced since then. For the Mexicans there was no doubt: the catacombs were symbolically connected to the situation the Catholic Church in Mexico had recently experienced during the period of the Reform War (1858–1861) and the presidency of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada (1872–1876). The pilgrims therefore asked for pardon before the martyrs’ reliquaries for the sins of the Revolution: ‘we recognise, Lord, the sins that Mexico has committed during this century that is about to end, provoking Your righteous anger. We beseech You, Lord, to forgive them all, through the intercessions of Our most gentle Mother, the Virgin of Guadalupe’ (Bianchi 1901, p. 123).

The high point of the pilgrimage was the private audience with Leo XIII. The reporter once again emphasised the pope's demonstrations of tenderness and the special treatment that the pontiff had reserved for them. The narration is once again full of portraits of the emotions stirred by his presence, describing how the impression made by the visit would help to pass on devotion to the pope in future: 'the years will pass, and if God grants us life, we will tell our sons and daughters, in our evenings at home, of the blessed interview that the illustrious reigning Pope deigned to offer us, and we will teach them to venerate the Father of all the faithful' (Bianchi 1901, p. 128).

The Mexican pilgrims, with the seminarians from the Pontifical Latin American College, enjoyed a second audience alongside other pilgrimages from other parts of the world. Those present competed in their demonstrations of joy, and the Mexicans sang the Hymn to Our Lady of Guadalupe while the Pope left, borne on his *sedia gestatoria*, giving his blessing to the audience. The pilgrims again visited the Pontifical Latin American College, taking part in a religious ceremony with students, teachers, and the rector. The seminary was presented to the pilgrims, emphasising especially its contribution to the union of Latin American Catholics:

The close union of a race that pursues the most noble ideals. Here they look upon each other as true brothers, as members of a single great family, the Mexicans, Central Americans, Venezuelans, Ecuadorians, Colombians, Peruvians, Bolivians, Brazilians, Argentinians, Chileans, and Uruguayans. May all the people of the Latin race one day know the harmony that reigns between the students of this favoured establishment, called to offer inestimable service to the future! (Bianchi 1901, p. 139)

After the Holy Door was closed at the end of the Jubilee and Christmas celebrations, the pilgrims were even able to enjoy a third audience. The Bishop of Chilapa, Ramón Ibarra, spoke and thanked the Pope for his care of 'the distant regions of America', asking his blessing 'on all the faithful of the Mexican nation, especially the indigenous race so devoted to the Church and Our Lady of Guadalupe'. Finally, and as part of the evolution of a Catholic Hispanicism, Ibarra asked for his blessing also for Spain which 'gave us faith and Christian civilisation', so 'that she may continue offering the fruits of faith, holiness, and heroism that covered her in such glory in past centuries' (Bianchi 1901, p. 167). In his response, the Pope praised the virtue of the pilgrims who had come from so far away, and told them that, therefore, 'you have had a special audience with me, which has not been given to others' (Bianchi 1901, p. 172).

3. Discussion

The pilgrimages to Rome during the papacy of Leo XIII, and especially the Latin American ones, constitute an area that has been insufficiently explored by historiography. While the number of pilgrims may seem small, it is not so if we compare it with other collective pilgrimages such as the German pilgrimage of 1881 with 500 pilgrims, or with other transnational religious and political gatherings such as the 1215 delegates, who attended the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, or the 334 delegates who attended the International Socialist Labour Congress of Brussels in 1891. In fact, only the workers' pilgrimages organised from France and Spain achieved a truly mass character and they did so because they did not cost as much as a transatlantic pilgrimage and were financially supported by employers and Catholic circles. The numbers of the Mexican pilgrimages take on added value when one takes into account that they are the most important national pilgrimages organised from America in this period, as there were no collective pilgrimages to Rome from the USA, Canada, and other Latin American countries, with the exception of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Moreover, it should be noted that the impact of these manifestations lies in the fact that they take place alongside other collective and individual pilgrimages that underline the centrality of Rome in global Catholicism. Moreover, in the countries of origin, the impact of such events lies not so much in the number of pilgrims as in the media coverage and publications celebrating

them, and in the awakening of a sense of belonging to a larger entity, the global Catholic Church.

The Mexican pilgrimages contributed to the hierarchisation, centralisation, and globalisation of nineteenth century Catholicism. The reports, pastorals, speeches, and letters analysed reveal the interiorisation and evolution of Ultramontane positions, as well as the successful emotional connection of Mexican Catholics with the pope. In this respect, the Mexican pilgrimages are at the same time a consequence of the process of Romanisation of national churches, and the cause of an even deeper connection of the faithful with Rome. This study corroborates from a Latin American perspective the studies that point to the development of a global devotion to the papacy (Zambarbieri 1990; Horaist 1995; Viaene 2002; Pollard 2005; Rusconi 2010) and, in particular, the emotional and physical connection with the papacy (Seiler 2007). The historiographical contribution of the study of Latin America can therefore be fundamental to understanding the transnational and transatlantic dimension of Ultramontanism, which until then had had an essentially national and European dimension (Viaene 2008; Blaschke 2015), with some exceptions (D'Agostino 2004; Ramón Solans 2020c). This perspective would also make it possible to connect the fertile Latin American national historiographies with their European counterparts and to do so, not as an appendix, but as a fundamental and constitutive part of the development of the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century (Di Stefano and Ramón Solans 2021).

The Mexican pilgrimages, alongside others from countries in Europe and beyond, contributed to endowing the jubilees and other festivals celebrated in Rome with a global character. In summer 1900, *La Civiltà cattolica* celebrated the arrival of pilgrims from such distant places as Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and Venezuela. With the exception of the small Venezuelan pilgrimage led by the Bishop of Calabozo, Felipe Neri Sendra, the rest of the Latin American expeditions included over a hundred people (Serie XVII vol. XI, fasc. 1203, 27 July 1900).

Secondly, pilgrimages reinforced a Catholic reading of Latin America which was fostered on both sides of the Atlantic and that sought to find solutions to the challenges faced by the churches in the different Latin American nations (Ayala Mora 2013; Cárdenas Ayala 2018; Ramón Solans 2020b). This sort of collegiality among the Latin American clergy can be observed in the promotion of the Pontifical Latin American College in Rome during the pilgrimages, as well as the role this centre played in the preparation of audiences with the pope and the hosting of religious ceremonies organised by the pilgrimage. The friendly encounter between clergy from Mexico, Argentina, and Uruguay in Cadiz in the contexts of their respective national pilgrimages for the Jubilee of 1900 likewise illustrates the good will that existed between the Latin American episcopate after the Plenary Council of Latin America.

Finally, the pilgrimages reinforced the image of a Mexican national Catholicism that had not only survived the secularising policies of the 1860s and 1870s, but had also emerged stronger, reformed, and Romanised. The celebration of those national pilgrimages reveals the dynamism of a highly internationalised clergy, which had contributed to the reform of the Mexican dioceses, as well as the presence of a dynamic and active lay movement, which collaborate in the organisation and propaganda of these events. The experience of the pilgrimage, as well as the words and favours from the Holy See, strengthened their Catholic national pride. Finally, during the pilgrimages, the Mexican national symbol par excellence, the Virgin of Guadalupe, remained linked with Rome; the Virgin appeared as the pilgrims' protector on such a long journey—an endeavour recognised upon their arrival in Rome, to the pride of the participants, by Leo XIII himself.

4. Materials and Methods

The historical study of individual pilgrimages has traditionally been based on the study of pilgrims' registration and accommodation records, their individual narratives, official documents issued by the authorities, etc. The collective nature of the pilgrimages studied means that the sources are different, since they tended to generate more official

documentation in the form of reports and memorabilia. The character of the public demonstration of the pilgrims' faith and of the collectivity that they claimed to represent means that many of those sources were printed and used for propaganda.

This article has drawn on the official reports of the three national pilgrimages, as well as on pastorals, speeches, published correspondence, and echoes in the Roman press. In terms of authorship, laymen played a central role by writing the reports of the first and third national pilgrimage. Although unsigned, the first was the work of the law graduate and collaborator with Catholic conservative newspapers such as *La Voz de México*, Diego German y Vázquez who registered his authorship with the Mexican Secretary of State (Recopilación 1890, p. 859). The narrative of the third national pilgrimage was the work of the Catholic journalist and dramatist Alberto G. Biancchi. The rest of the documents used were produced by clergy of varying ranks, from the pastoral signed by the prelates Ramón Ibarra and Fortino Hipólito Vera to the letters by the cathedral canon, León José María Velázquez, and the account of the second Mexican pilgrimage by the presbyter, José Trinidad Basurto.

Analysis of these documents has taken into account their official character and the wish to magnify the nature of these events. The focus is not, however, so much on the reliability of these narratives as on the sense they give of these events and their desire to emphasise the figure of the pope and the religiosity of the pilgrims and the Mexican nation. In this respect, the descriptions fit with those studied by other researchers (Zambarbieri 1990; Horaist 1995; Seiler 2007; Rusconi 2010) since the Mexican narratives were inspired by the news that arrived of other pilgrimages and the documents and announcements made by the Vatican, as well as the many testimonies of devotion to the pope. All this reinforces the idea of the globalisation and homogenisation of Catholic discourses in the nineteenth century.

5. Conclusions

At the start of the turbulent nineteenth century, the distance between a believer and the Holy See was enormous, both physically and symbolically. It was not only the enormous cost of time and money that caused a displacement of these features. The pope was a distant figure, whose role within the Catholic Church was unknown by the majority of the faithful who could not even imagine how he looked. His global authority was hampered by a network of royal privileges, and local traditions mediated devotional practices. At the end of the century, all this had changed, with new modes of transport and communication as well as political and ecclesiastical changes bringing the pope closer to the faithful. The Roman question and the Culture wars favoured the appearance and development of mass global demonstrations in support of the papacy, among which stand out the national pilgrimages to Rome. The presence of pilgrimages that had come from such distant places as Mexico contributed to reinforcing the global authority of the papacy. Closeness to the pope was not only physical but also emotional; the pope became the visible head of the Catholic Church, the leader of global Catholic opinion.

The Mexican national pilgrimages were the result of the reform of the national church towards Rome, the implementation of new devotional cultures, and the internationalisation of Mexican clergy. These changes were not the result of an imposition or mere passive import but were the product of the specific political and religious situation in Mexico, as well as the initiative of some local religious actors who sought inspiration beyond their borders to confront the problems they were facing. To make a pilgrimage from Guadalupe to Rome thus represented an assertion of the nation's Catholicity, while also demonstrating the strength and global nature of papal power.

Funding: This research was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities under the Ramón y Cajal research program, grant number RYC2019-026405-I. Research support from the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science through research projects HAR2015-65991-P and PID2019-108299GB-C21 is gratefully acknowledged.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Article

Tamed Mobilization. Marian Messages, Pilgrim Masses and Papal Moderateness in Fatima since Paul VI

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Abstract: Marian apparitions attract modern masses since the 19th century. The radical message of the apparition asking for penitence and the return of public and politics to God resonated well within major parts of Catholicism. While popes kept promoting Marian pilgrimages in order to secure their public and political standing throughout the 20th and 21st century, they tried to control the masses and to attenuate the messages. Particularly since the Second Vatican Council, the popes tamed mobilization. Instead of stirring up the masses, popes kept modest at Marian apparitions sites. A quantitative analysis of the papal documents issued during papal journeys to Fatima, the most political apparition of the 20th century, shows that a modest religious discourse about God and world had been presented instead of promoting the critical messages of the apparition. Following the methodological ideal of parsimony, the analysis concentrates on the most uttered words during the journeys and compares the four pontificates since Paul VI. Instead of stressing the radical message of Fatima, which is introduced in the discussion of the findings, the pontificates share a modest Catholic discourse.

Keywords: Virgin Mary; Marian apparition; Marian pilgrimage; mobilization; papacy; Fatima; Pope Paul VI; Pope John Paul II; Pope Benedict XVI; Pope Francis

Citation: Barbato, Mariano P. 2021. Tamed Mobilization. Marian Messages, Pilgrim Masses and Papal Moderateness in Fatima since Paul VI. *Religions* 12: 671. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12090671>

Academic Editor: Daniel H. Levine

Received: 30 June 2021

Accepted: 19 August 2021

Published: 24 August 2021

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1. Introduction

Modern Marian apparitions have a long history of mobilizing the masses. The mass production of devotional objects, such as the Medaille miraculeuse of Rue due Bac in Paris, spread Marian devotions associated with these apparitions across the Catholic world. When Lourdes was connected to the railway system, it became the paradigmatic shrine for modern Marian pilgrimage and devotion (Harris 1999; Kaufman 2005; Körner 2018). As Diarmaid MacCulloch pointed out, “Protestants went on trains to the seaside, Catholics to light a candle in a holy place” (MacCulloch 2010, p. 820). However, Marian pilgrims did not only light candles and buy souvenirs, or hoped for healing of their health or a betterment of their private situation. Marian apparition came with a strong political message. In the context of an ongoing secularization process, the Virgin Mary appeared in order to warn public and politics to return to God, flee sin, pray the rosary and do penitence in order to avoid the threatening chastisement of God for the sacrileges of the times (Di Stefano and Solans 2018; Hermkens et al. 2009a; Margry 2020; Maunder 2018; Zimdars-Swartz 2014).

Within the Catholic universe, the authenticity and thus the legitimacy of an apparition depends on the final acceptance of the seers' claims by the local bishop and the pope. If the pope accepts that the seers have indeed encountered the Virgin Mary, the apparition is taken as given. This papal power to review and judge, to accept and reject apparitions binds Marian apparitions and popes closely together. The papacy of the late 19th and the first half of 20th century increasingly mobilized these masses for the struggle first against liberalism, then against nazism and, primarily, communism. The event of the apparitions and its critical messages against an increasingly secular public and state (Margry 2020) were used as a force against the modern errors, as Pope Pius IX condemned liberalism, nationalism and socialism in his famous syllabus of 1864. Masses were understood as

partners against anti-papal, liberal, laicist and nationalist elites. Under the pressure of national and liberal, later also fascist and socialist, movements, the popes were often ready to side with the masses as soon they embraced Catholicism, whatever ideologies they found attractive in addition. Marian devotion was an important vehicle for this agenda. Leo XVI's seminal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) marked the beginning of a Catholic socialism that resisted atheist Marxism but argued for labor rights against capitalist exploitation. The popes were also ready to side with nationalist projects if they allied with Catholicism. Pius XI agreed to the Lateran Treaties with Italy under fascist rule in 1929, which established the State of the Vatican City and compensated the loss of the Papal State financially and, maybe most importantly, secured a dominant position of the Catholic Church within the Italian education system. The secular radical and totalitarian ideologies competed for the masses and the popes were ready to engage in this contestation. They made deals and compromises with various elites and states but were keen on having a direct contact with the Catholic masses. Marian apparitions helped them to engage with the faithful masses in order to strengthen their piety but also in order to project the power of mass mobilization externally (Barbato and Heid 2020; Duffy 2014; Pollard 2014).

In 1917, during World War I and the pontificate of Benedict XV, the most important Marian apparition of the 20th century happened in Fatima, Portugal (Bennett 2012; Bertone and Carli 2008; Walsh 1990). The seers' claim was accepted as authentic by the local bishop and the pope in 1930. The message of Fatima echoes the strong call for conversion and penitence of the previous apparitions, after the revelation of the first of two secrets. In 1942, on October 31, Pope Pius XII broadcasted via Radio Vatican his consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary, accompanied by his substitute Montini, the later Paul VI. Via radio he was connected with the Portuguese episcopacy gathering in Fatima for the 25th anniversary of the apparition. Since that event, the public ties of popes and Fatima never ceased to exist. Popes visited the place since Paul VI started papal travelling. John Paul II repeated the consecration of the world in 1982 after he associated the failure of the attempt on his life on the 13th of May 1981 to the protection of Our Lady of Fatima. In 2000, the much debated third secret, in which the execution of a pope took place in a destroyed city, was published by the Congregation of the Faith and interpreted by the then prefect Joseph Ratzinger and later Pope Benedict XVI; the first two secrets about hell, war and Russia were already published in 1942, which established an anti-communist discourse that dominated the Fatima perspective during the initial years of the Cold War. At the centennial of the apparition, Pope Francis canonized the seer children Jacinta and Francisco. They had died at a young age from the Spanish flue soon after the apparitions and had been beatified by John Paul II in 2000.

While the papal relation to Fatima might have been closer than to any other Marian site and the messages of Fatima were as demanding as those of previous apparitions, papal calls to follow the demands of messages were much more moderate than the close relations and interactions could indicate. While the popes obviously continued to back the apparition site, they did not urge the faithful flock which gathered there to act according to the revealed messages. This claim is based on the analysis of the addresses the popes gave during their visits in Fatima and Portugal. During a period of 50 years, from the 50th to the 100th anniversary, four papal visitors came to Fatima. Paul VI was there in 1967 in order to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the apparition. John Paul II came three times: in 1982 to thank for the survival of the assassination attempt; in 1991 for the anniversary of his survival and then in the Holy Year 2000 for the beatification of Jacinta and Francisco. Pope Benedict XVI visited Fatima in 2010 for the anniversary of the beatification. Pope Francis came in 2017 to celebrate the 100th anniversary and to canonize Jacinta and Francisco.

The analysis in this article is based on a broader sociological understanding of politics. A narrower understanding of politics focuses on states, governments and public policies, and its binding and enforceable decisions. It tends often to exclude religion, religious actors or religious masses, particularly under the condition of a secular framework of governance as it has been established in Europe since the 19th century. Within this secular

framework of politics, political power is measured and legitimized within the matrix of the state and its institutions. Religious actors, such as the pope, are integrated in such a narrow framework of politics as provider of ethics and values. There is an extensive debate going on how to find a normative and empirically fitting place for religious actors in politics and political analysis. Certainly, both sides have their merits, however this broad debate on religion and politics cannot be tackled here. Charles Taylor's work might be mentioned as an outstanding example of this debate (Taylor 2007).

The papal case is particularly interesting in this respect as the popes are without doubt both religious and political actors. The pope is not only the ruler of the Church who is able to make binding decisions, which are embedded in the legal system of Canon law, he is also the monarch of a state (Vatican City). While his micro state has only a limited reach, the institution of the Holy See, which is a legal subject of international law, turns the pope into a diplomat among states and an eminent political global player. A growing debate in political sciences and related interdisciplinary fields takes this political aspect of the papal agency into account (Barbato 2021, 2020; Barbato et al. 2019; Bátor and Hynek 2014, pp. 87–111; Rooney 2013).

The popes are certainly pastors, but they are also politicians. One could argue that the popes are, due to their role as leaders of the Church, foremost politicians or that their pastoral duty is indeed a political one, as the shepherd has the duty to provide goods for and protection to the flock. On the other hand, one could argue that there is a tension between this-worldly political service to mankind, including the well-being of the Catholic community and the Church institutions, and a more spiritual concern for the salvation of the souls, Catholic and others, or to be witness for God's will. The analysis here does not dare and does not need to delve into the lacuna of these tricky, controversial and fundamental issues. The limited argument here points just at the tension between the radical Marian message of Fatima and the moderate wording of papal addresses. As the tension is overall stable during various pontificates, it cannot be explained by the particular and personal attitude of the popes alone. The analysis has to take the institutional, public and political settings of the papacy into account. Due to the eminent political implications of the message which have been used from the beginning of the apparitions to criticize and legitimize political power (Bennett 2012), the integration of the phenomenon into the political and public spheres seems adequate. However, that does not reduce the phenomenon to an issue of power politics. The political and diplomatic aspect, which is analyzed here, is just one part of the puzzle.

The study is based on a quantitative analysis of all documents related to the Fatima visits of each pontificate as presented by the homepage of the Holy See (www.vatican.va, accessed on 13 May 2021). Voyant tools is used to indicate and present the most uttered relevant terms of each pontificate's Fatima visit file. As will be presented in the next section, the result indicates that the papal discourse does not echo urgently the critical, radical and demanding messages of Fatima, or more precise: while all popes spoke about God and the world, the terms of sin, penitence and conversion do not appear among the most uttered terms. While the journeys show the willingness of the popes to keep the mass mobilization going, their moderate addresses indicate that they are satisfied with a tamed mobilization. To tame a mobilization means here to curb and calm down a movement not with the aim of stopping it but with the aim of mastering and controlling it. The Marian masses should be mobilized not in an all-out attempt to call for the conversion of the world, but as a public mass manifestation of Marian devotion controlled by the popes. The popes were able to channel the power of a tamed mobilization to invite those open to a Marian piety but not to offend those who are not. It seems that the popes after the Second Vatican Council, even those such as John Paul II with a strong personal Marian devotion, were not ready to embark again on an intransigent course against the modern world but preferred a diplomatic way to engage with public and politics. The Virgin of Fatima, instead, urged in dramatical gesture to a return to God.

2. Results: The Modesty of Papal Addresses during the Journeys to Fatima

The analysis of all documents related to the papal trips to Fatima between 1967 and 2017 (Paul VI in 1967, John Paul II in 1982, 1991 and 2000, Benedict XVI in 2010, Francis in 2017) shows, as Figure 1 indicates, that foremost “God” (deus 333) and then on rank two “Church” (igreja 225) are the dominant terms, while “Mother” (mãe 194), “Christ” (cristo 176), “World” (mundo 158), “Heart” (coração 145), “Life” (vida 142), “Fatima” (fátima 134), “Love” (amor 128), “Mary” (maria 127), “Jesus” (jesus 120), “Lord” (senhor 117) and “brothers” (irmãos 106) were also significant. What the graphics does not display clearly is the importance of the terms related to “human/humanity” (homens, homem, humanidade 245). Together they are more often uttered than “Church”, only “God” is mentioned more frequently.



Figure 1. Most relevant terms of all papal addresses on trips to Fatima (Voyant tools).

Following the results shown in Figure 1, it is fair to say that the popes stress in their discourses the relation of “God” and “World/Humanity” which is embodied in the “Church”. In line with the basic teaching of Catholicism, the popes preach that the Lord Jesus Christ, Mother Mary and the love of the heart are instrumental for this relationship that should dominate the life of the brothers and sisters in Christ gathered in Fatima. Often uttered world such as “Faith” and “Hope”, “Prayer”, “Peace” and “Light” fit in the general picture of a basic Catholic catechism, including additional terms for God or Mary. Apart from the term “Fatima”, at a first glance, nothing specific about Fatima seems to dominate the papal discourse. However, adding some qualitative insights to the quantitative analysis, the term “Heart” is linked in more than half of the cases to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which plays a prominent role in the Fatima messages. That does, however, not change the overall picture: The popes come to Fatima and they speak about Fatima and the messages of Our Lady of Fatima, but they do not put the Fatima messages in the center of their addresses in and around Fatima. The popes do not press the urgent messages of Fatima in order to move the masses. The popes do not promote a special Fatima discourse that concentrates on specific terms such as “penitence”, “souls”, “sacrifices”, “sin”, “conversion”, “rosary”, but stick to the basic Catholic discourse that the popes promote in general. As such, through their moderate addresses, the popes tame the mobilization. This overall result is confirmed by taking a closer look at the four pontificates. While each pope, as we will see below, has his special vocabulary and preferences, the papal discourses do not differ much. Any specific Fatima related urgency or radical wording does not appear and is not part of the moderate papal discourse. In short, the popes tell only half of the story and attenuate the controversial, urgent and radical part of Fatima, thereby taming mobilization.

2.1. The Addresses of Paul VI

Paul VI visited Fatima in 1967. Portugal saw the last period of the authoritarian rule of António de Oliveira Salazar, a devout Catholic who integrated Fatima in the legitimization of his *Stato Novo* (Bennett 2012). After the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the pope was not interested in coming too close to Salazar's anti-communist ideology and his colonial wars. Peace was thus the most political issue that dominated the papal addresses during his Fatima and Portugal visit (Simpson 2008).

The most frequently uttered words of his addresses were the following: "Church" (igreja 28), "World" (mundo 22), "Peace" (paz 19), "God" (deus 18), "Men" (homens 17), "Fatima" (Fátima 15), "Lord" (senhor 14).

As Figure 2 indicates, "Church" and "World" were the key terms that had to be brought into a relationship in order to foster "Peace". Fatima was also mentioned and the Virgin Mary was addressed in so many different terms that none of them made it into the seven most often uttered words. Nevertheless, the Fatima message was only implicitly present in the prominent term "Peace". A story of God and Christ, the Lord, with men had to be told. The key terms of the apparition, however, such as "sin", "penitence", "rosary", not to speak of "Russia", had not become a mantra of the pope. The force of the apparition and its message had to be checked and tamed in order to work for the papacy and its peace agenda. Paul VI thereby established the diplomatic approach to a tamed mobilization of the Marian masses.



Figure 2. Most relevant terms of the addresses of Paul VI on trips to Fatima (Voyant tools).

The corpus analyzed by Voyant tools includes all speeches and sermons delivered by the pope during his visit in Fatima and Portugal as provided by the homepage of the Holy See. Two speeches delivered in French were translated into Portuguese by Deep L.

Paul VI was the pope who initiated a new Ostpolitik towards Moscow after his predecessor John XXIII paved the way for such a realignment during the Cuban missile crisis. Portugal's staunch anticommunist support was no longer as welcome as it had been before. Right-wing regimes in Catholic majority states, in contrast, came increasingly under the pressure of what has later been dubbed the third or Catholic wave of democratization (Huntington 1991; Troy 2009). Both circumstances made a radical mobilization in accordance with the message of the apparition unlikely. Nevertheless, Paul VI, who reestablished international papal travelling and turned it into a major tool for papal appearance and global visibility, did not spare himself the Marian site. Obviously, his idea of a global papal pilgrimage could not work without a visit to a Marian shrine. Instead of Lourdes, he chose the much more politicized shrine of Fatima. Fatima was his fourth journey and it took place two years after his speech at the UN assembly in New York. In the year of his Fatima trip, Paul VI visited also Turkey, where he made also a pilgrimage to Ephesus, which is associated with the earthly life of Mary. During his visit in Fatima, Sr. Lucia, the surviving seer child, now 60 years old, met him in public. The pope was, however, eager not to establish a too close contact to her. The impression that she revealed any messages to him

beatification of the seer children Jacinta and Francisco. The content of this visit's four rather brief addresses differs from the other ones. "Jacinta" (12), "Francisco" (12) and "Fatima" (16) were the most uttered words, only surpassed by "God" (deus 17).

The exemption of 2000 shows that a concentration on the Fatima story was possible but not chosen. Instead, John Paul II opted for the more general message of bringing the religious terms "God", "Church", "Christ" and "Mother", which refers to Mary, Mother of God, in relation to the world of human life represented by "Life", "World" and "Men". As in the case of Paul VI, the terms "Sin", "Penitence" or "Repentance", "Hell", "Rosary", "Russia" did not play a quantitative role.

This is particularly telling for the thesis that the popes opted for a tamed mobilization and a diplomatic approach as the visits of 1982 and 1991 had a very dramatic background. Pope John Paul II came to Fatima to give thanks to the Virgin Mary who had, according to his faithful statements, protected him from an assassination attempt on his life. On 13 May 1981, the feast day of Fatima, the hired killer Ali Agca shot the pope from close range during a papal audience at St. Peter's Square. The pope survived seriously injured. While men and motives behind the attack could not be identified, the so-called Bulgarian connection hinted at the KGB and the Soviet Union. It is likely that the Polish pope, whose visit to his fatherland in 1979 sent shock waves through the communist orbit and who continued to support Solidarity, the free and anti-communist and labor movement in Poland, should be eliminated. John Paul II never gave any indication of who he believed was behind the attack. However, he made clear who he thought had protected him by bringing one of the bullets to Fatima, where it was integrated in the crown of the statue of the Virgin Mary. In addition, John Paul II was a dedicated Marian pope who followed the spiritual advice of Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (Grignion de Montfort 1988) concerning the total consecration to Jesus in Mary to such an extent that he integrated an M for Mary into his papal coat of arms and made Grignion's motto "Totus Tuus" (totally yours) his own. This pope was also so determined to consecrate Russia precisely in the way the apparition asked for that he did it twice. The surviving seer Sr. Lucia was pleased. However, as the German theologian Manfred Hauke showed in a detailed study, John Paul II was likewise determined to do this in the most diplomatic way possible as to not offend Russia publicly. He never uttered the word "Russia" during the consecration ritual in public (Hauke 2017). Even a pope so dedicated to Marian piety in general and the message of Fatima in particular was not willing to radicalize the masses. A tamed mobilization was understood much more in line with the diplomatic interests of the Vatican than an all-out-campaign of mobilizing the masses in line with the controversial message of the Fatima apparition.

2.3. *The Addresses of Benedict XVI*

As the prefect of the Congregation of the Faith, Joseph Ratzinger was involved in the publication of the third secret in 2000 (Ratzinger 2000). He provided the interpretation that accompanied the publication. Known for his rational approach to faith, he supported the authenticity of the experience of the seers but stressed also the symbolic nature of their visions. His sober approach meant that, despite his reputation as a conservative critic of what he called the "dictatorship of relativism" and his personal Bavarian Marian piety, he was also as Pope Benedict XVI not likely to return to an anti-modernist interpretation of the Fatima message. Nevertheless, in 2010, on the occasion of the anniversary of the beatification of the Shepherd Children of Fatima, he visited the shrine and stressed that Fatima is not a remnant of the past but still a sign for the future. His addresses, however, stayed within the established moderate papal discourse. "God" was the most important term by far (deus 91), "Church" (igreja 55) followed. "Love" (amor 44), "Christ" (Cristo 42), "Jesus" (Jesus 39), "Life" (Vida 36), "Heart" (coração 33), "Fatima" (Fátima 32), "Brothers" (irmãos 30), "Hope" (esperança 29) and "World" (Mundo 29) were also important.

As Figure 4 shows, there were some changes in comparison to the previous popes. "God" became even more prominent. "Love" became the most important buzzword before

“Life”, “Heart” and “Hope”. As the term “World” ranked lower, one could argue that the discourse became a bit more pious and church-oriented. On the other hand, the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, became less prominent. Overall, however, the papal discourse showed no major innovations and the key words of the Fatima message do also in the addresses of Benedict XVI not appear on the radar.



Figure 4. Most relevant terms of the addresses of Benedict XVI on his trip to Fatima (Voyant tools).

The pope, who has been dubbed by the yellow press as “God’s Rottweiler” for his arguably uncompromising conservative views, did not use the opportunity in Fatima to express an intransigent position towards the sins of a steadily secularizing modern world. Already as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Ratzinger preferred to act as a public intellectual who discusses his faith with agnostics. An example for this is his debate with Jürgen Habermas shortly before he became Pope Benedict XVI (Habermas et al. 2006). As pope, he chose the title “Caritas in veritate” (Benedict XVI 2009) for his first encyclical, but in Fatima he spoke more often about love than truth. In addition, for Benedict XVI, Fatima was not the place to make an effort to persuade public and politics to act in the urgent way of conversion and penitence as the message of Fatima demands it. His Regensburg Speech (Benedict XVI 2006), which included a quote of a Byzantine emperor arguably insulting the Prophet Muhammed, provoked public unrest and murder in some places of the world. This provocation was obviously an inadvertence. Benedict XVI was, as much as his predecessors, very careful not to be too provocative. His Fatima visit could have offered the opportunity to stress the coming chastisement if people do not convert to God. Instead of preaching about hell, he talked about “Love”, “Heart” and “Hope”. The urgency of the Fatima messages was not replicated and as such, not supported nor enforced. Again, a pope preferred to tame the mobilization of the Marian pilgrims that gathered in Fatima instead of leading them into a crusade against the modern world. In short, the popes use the masses to support the papal status in public, but not to form a rosary army fighting a spiritual holy war of penitence against the errors and sins of the world.

2.4. The Addresses of Francis

Pope Francis is seen by many as a global pope who distances himself from the traditional legacy of European Catholicism (Faggioli 2020; Franco 2013). From the very beginning of his pontificate, he positioned himself as a staunch critic of capitalism. Thus, it is certainly not a surprise that he did not push forward the anticommunist interpretation of Fatima. However, early on, in October 2013, he repeated the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary and put his pontificate under the protection of the Virgin Mary. A Fatima Madonna was brought to the St. Peter’s Square where the act of consecration took place. The sermon the pope delivered is the best example of how the popes mobilize masses with their relations to Fatima while presenting an alternative story

of Marian piety at this occasion. Instead of preaching anything about Fatima, Pope Francis used the gathering to promote mercy and the trust in God (Francis 2013).

His visit to Fatima in 2017 was short. It celebrated the centenary of the apparitions and Pope Francis canonized the seer children Jacinta and Francisco. In contrast to John Paul II's short visit in 2000 in order to beatify the two children, no special focus on them could have been detected. The usual papal discourse prevailed. "God" (deus 44) is again the most important term by far. "Jesus" (Jesus 30), "Mary" (Maria 23), "Mother" (mãe 23), "Heart" (coração 22), "Virgin" 19 (virgem), "Lord" (senhor 18), "Hope" (esperança 17), "Peace" (paz 15), Church (igreja 14) followed.

As Figure 5 shows, again we can see a slight change in the list of priorities. The Marian terms became again a slightly more prominent. "God" and the "Lord Jesu" still dominate. "Church" but also the "World" became less important. "Heart", "Hope" and, returning to the initial top rank, "Peace" are the buzzwords to deliver the papal message. New among the second ranking buzzwords such as "Light" (luz), "Life" (vida) and "Love" (amor) is "Mercy" (misericórdia) which was a prominent term of the pontificate particularly in the extraordinary Holy Year which Pope Francis celebrated in 2015/2016 as a Jubilee of Mercy. This is the only term that Francis introduced to the papal Fatima discourse as his specific contribution. Apart from that, Francis, too, kept to the established papal discourse. The canonization and the centenary mobilized huge masses but again the pope preferred to tame the mobilization instead of hammering home the Fatima message's urgency of penitence and conversion. Pope Francis stayed in line with his predecessors. Rumors that the XXXVII. World Youth Day would take place in Fatima did not materialize as Lisbon was chosen as the site of the feast that had to be postponed due to the corona crisis to 2023. The pope announced, however, that he will return to Fatima when he visits Portugal for that occasion. Thus, the papal mobilization of the masses of Fatima is most likely to be continued. Simultaneously, the message of Fatima might again be attenuated in order to support the moderate papal, instead of Fatima's radical message.



Figure 5. Most relevant terms of the addresses of Francis on his trip to Fatima (Voyant tools).

3. Discussion: "Penitence, Penitence, Penitence" or Why So Moderate?

The findings of the quantitative analysis of the papal documents issued during the trips of the popes to Fatima indicated a modest Catholic discourse. This papal modesty is striking as the message of Fatima is anything but modest. Sister Lucia remembered as part of the third secret, revealed during the apparition in July, an angel repeating three times the word "penitence" to avoid the persecution of the Church (Ratzinger 2000). As it has been briefly sketched in the introduction, the message of Fatima is one of penitence and conversion. The message of the Fatima is not a call to find some new gems in old religious

semantics which can be translated into secular discourses to foster human flourishing, such as for instance the debate about a post-secular society (Habermas et al. 2006). The message warns of war, hell, the errors of Russia and a coming divine chastisement if the people do not stop offending God. The message is a strong call to accept God as the ultimate ruler, also for publics and politics. It calls for nothing else than the end of secular modernity and the public return to Catholicism.

The popes are still interested in mobilizing masses for the Catholic creed and the public and political status of the papacy in general and the Holy See in particular. That is why they come to Fatima. However, they tend to attenuate the messages and tame mobilization as they seem to prefer to avoid a return to the intransigent position of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century and opt for a diplomatic approach to secular public and politics instead.

3.1. The Message of Fatima

In 1917 the most important Marian apparition of the 20th century happened in Fatima, Portugal. In a sequence of monthly occasions, three shepherd children of a small village, Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco, encountered the Virgin Mary who entrusted several messages to them. While the children experienced resistance from their parents, and in particular from the state authority, who even had them imprisoned for a short period, masses were soon be fascinated by the claim. At October 13, a particularly vast crowd gathered on the open field of the apparition sites as the children had announced that the Virgin Mary would perform a miracle visible to all. The so-called Miracle of the Sun impressed the crowd, including those who gathered in order to observe the end of this swindle. Fatima soon became famous. However, it became also a hotly contested political issue as Portugal was reigned by a laicist government that tried to reduce the influence of the Church on public and politics. The initial Fatima shrine was destroyed by freemasons twice during this conflict. Fatima played a significant part in the end of these controversies and the establishment of an authoritarian rule leaning on Catholicism (Bennett 2012). After a decade-long review process, during which two of the three children died, while the oldest one, Lucia, became a nun, the bishop, backed by the pope, acknowledged the apparition in 1930 as authentic. During this time, the messages of Fatima were known for their call to return to God, penitence and rosary prayer, very much in line with the call from Lourdes, the major site of a Marian apparition in the 19th century, which set the course for how to interpret the apparitions and perform the pilgrimage. In the context of Beauraing, a Belgian site of Marian apparition, a bishop summarized those messages with “conversion and penitence, prayer and Jesus-Eucharist” and Pius XII declared in 1942: “to do penance, to change one’s life and flee sin, the principal cause of the great chastisements with which eternal justice pains the world (both quoted in Van Osselaer 2020, p. 144). Similar to as in Lourdes, the primary opponents in Fatima were firstly the liberal, laicist and secular state and its struggle against God and church. However, not all messages from 1917 were revealed, three secrets were kept private by Lucia who became a Carmelite nun and continued to have revelations. Backed by Pope Pius XII, two of these secrets were published during World War II in 1941. The first secret was about a vision of hell and the many souls who go there because of their sins and because there is not enough penitence and prayers for them; the second secret was about the threat of a major war, if people do not convert and the call to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary as a remedy. Pius XII consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1942. While some attribute to this consecration the turning points of the Second World War, El Alamein and Stalingrad (Höcht 1957), the lack of an explicit mention of Russia, Pius XII mentioned it indirectly but clearly (Pius XII 1942), raised questions about the fulfillment. Around the proper performance of that consecration expanded a controversy that led to several but still contested papal consecrations of the world, the latest by Pope Francis in 2013, while John Paul II’s consecration of 1984 is known as accepted by the seer Lucia as valid. Since the revelation of the secrets, anti-communism and for the time of the World

War II also the resistance against National Socialism, became the primary context in which Fatima was integrated. The third secret that had not been published by Paul John XXIII after he read it in 1960 as asked by Lucia, caused many rumors about an apocalyptic event, including a nuclear war which was anticipated as the major threat during the Cold War (Margry 2020). In 2000, during the pontificate of John Paul II, the secret was published by the Vatican, accompanied by an interpretation of the then head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and later Pope Benedict XVI, which had been mentioned above already (Ratzinger 2000). The vision shows a man in white, obviously the pope, murdered at a hill in midst of a destroyed city and a group of other martyrs. John Paul II survived in 1981 an attempt on his life on May 13, which is the Fatima Day in the Liturgical Calendar of the Catholic Church. He ordered the Fatima files already when he was recovering in the hospital, sent the bullet to Fatima and visited Fatima in 1982, in order to thank the Virgin Mary for her protection. While the vision is seen by the interpretation as an image of the whole martyrdom of Christians during the 20th century, John Paul II is understood by some as the man in white, saved by his devotion to the Virgin Mary and the rosary prayers and penitence provided by the faithful. John Paul II insisted in 1984 in an interview that the visions of the secrets are not images of a determined future but warnings of what will come if people do not convert. The avoidance of a nuclear war and the sudden decline of Communism in Europe after 1989 lead to a controversy if the return of Russia, as promised in Fatima by the Virgin Mary, had been happened. When Benedict XVI visited Fatima in 2010, he stated the view that Fatima has not been fulfilled yet.

Given the prominence of the discourse around the apocalyptic visions of the three secrets, the importance given to Russia and communism, the urgency of conversion, penitence, sin, rosary, hell, war and martyrdom, a much more radical discourse could have been developed by the popes. Indeed, the 19th century and early 20th century papal discourse on secular modernity was much more radical and not shy of using strong words and condemnations. That changed with the *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council, the modernization of the Church. The moderate speeches of the papal pilgrims in Fatima reflected the new diplomatic approach that was already evolving since Benedict XV's pontificate during which the Fatima apparition occurred. Pius XII's pontificate marked a watershed insofar as he performed the consecration in a diplomatic mode that sought not to offend the Anti-Hitler-Alliance in which Soviet Russia played a major part alongside the Western powers, with which he already cooperated during the war in order to bring an end of fascist rule in Italy and Europe. After the war, Pius XII sided openly with the liberal West and promoted Christian democrats in Italy and Europe, including the European integration project spearheaded by Catholics such as Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer, also in order to prevent communists from gaining power in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. Thus, the anti-liberal, anti-secular part of the Fatima message was an obstacle for papal diplomacy. Particularly after the peace notes of John XXIII during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the *Pacem in Terra* encyclical and the new *Ostpolitik* of Paul VI towards the Soviet Union and its Central and Eastern European orbit, an apocalyptic campaign against communism lost its place within in the papal discourse. Even John Paul II changed the strategy not entirely. As mentioned above, Manfred Hauke shows in his detailed study how the devote Marian pope was eager to perform the consecration as demanded by the Virgin Mary but without uttering the word "Russia" in public (Hauke 2017). After all, popes are also diplomats and politicians whose role determines them to put their pious belief second to the risk of eroding the status of the Holy See in international relations and the reputation of the Church within public opinion. Given the acknowledged impact of John Paul II in the decline and end of communist rule in Europe, the diplomatic strategy of a tamed mobilization seemed to be successful. In their specific ways, his successors, Benedict XVI and Francis did not change the overall diplomatic approach of a tamed mobilization.

The diplomatic explanation presented here is certainly not the only possible way to understand the tension between the radical discourse of the message of Fatima and the

moderate papal discourse at the shrine in Fatima. The personal attitude of the popes towards Marian piety in general and Marian apparitions and Fatima in particular varied. A deeper analysis of the different personal approaches and backgrounds of the popes would be a very rich and fruitful field for research. Another important perspective could be a more qualitative analysis of the papal speeches in Fatima on their specific discourse of values and ethics and how the pope tried to influence public and political attitudes of pilgrims.

The limited aim here is to focus on the tension between the message of Fatima and the papal addresses at Fatima. Instead of supporting and enforcing the messages of Fatima, the popes seem to have opted for a tamed mobilization understood as an attempt to control but not to stop mobilization due to diplomatic concerns and in order to avoid a return to the previous papal intransigent stance towards secular modernity.

3.2. *The Marian Pilgrims*

An explanation of the modest papal addresses as an exercise in taming mobilization due to diplomatic concerns has to take not only the messages but also the pilgrim masses into account. Would these pilgrims be open to a papal discourse more in tune with the radicalness of the Fatima message? In short, we do not know, but we know that the popes did not even try, although there is evidence that the Marian pilgrims come to Fatima because they find its message attractive.

Petr Kratochvil (Kratochvil 2021) showed recently that Marian pilgrims still constitute a significant part of the modern world of pilgrimage and that their conservative Catholicism stands in contrast to the other dominant ideal type of spiritual pilgrimage that is often found on the Way of St. James to Santiago de Compostela. In the parlance of Danièle Hervieu-Léger (Hervieu-Léger 2004), the majority of Marian pilgrims can hardly be framed as seekers, while pilgrims on the Way of St. James can. Kratochvil used Turners classical approach for the purpose of his argument. Marian pilgrims gather as masses in order to reinforce their established community of Marian devotees. He claims that they do not seek for a liminal experience in order to transcend boundaries and create new communities as spiritual pilgrims do (Kratochvil 2021). Or, in other words, most of them know the messages and might be ready to listen to a pope who preaches them. They do, as Kratochvil argues, not aim at a new experience beyond that creed. As Patrick Heiser showed, also the spiritual pilgrims on their way to Santiago use religious templates for their individual ways of seeking God and community: "Even pilgrims without any strong ties to religious institutions or traditions depend on these religious structures to acquire their agency as pilgrims. They still, and even increasingly, turn to traditional pilgrim routes rather than just going for random hikes in specific biographical situations. In addition, they do usually not invent new religious practices and interpretations along these routes but rather rely on old traditions for their individualistic journeys" (Heiser 2021, p. 11). If even those pilgrims who have no strong ties to the institution depend on the "traditional plots" (Heiser 2021, p. 11), the Marian pilgrims can safely be understood as converts in Danièle Hervieu-Léger's parlance (Hervieu-Léger 2004). Most of them have at least an idea where they are going to. That does of course not mean that Marian pilgrims in Fatima or elsewhere are a homogenous group. Quite the contrary is the case. Diverse studies on Marian pilgrimages show that very different motivations bring pilgrims to Marian shrines (Hermkens et al. 2009a). Indeed, it is not likely that all of the Marian pilgrims are ready to act in accordance with how the message of Fatima urged them to do. More qualitative but also quantitative research on Marian pilgrims' motivation and experiences is an important field for future studies as we do not have much empirical data on Marian pilgrims' views. This lack can be explained by a certain consensus among scholars about Marian pilgrims. Hermken, Jansen and Notermans (Hermkens et al. 2009b, p. 1) note that Marian pilgrimage does not score particularly high in pilgrim studies as those pilgrimages "seem antimodern or resisting modernity" (Hermkens et al. 2009b, p. 2). Of course, these prejudices of researches cannot be taken as a proof for the attitude of all Marian pilgrims. However, scholars such as Charlene

Spretnak (2004) or Robert A. Orsi (2009) and also several more recent studies (Di Stefano and Solans 2018; Margry 2020; Maunder 2018; Zimdars-Swartz 2014) who show a certain spectrum of piety and creed among Marian pilgrims cannot deny that a rift emerged within the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council concerning the Virgin Mary. Or in the words of Charlene Spretnak: “Most ‘progressive’ intellectuals in the Church, in fact, tend to consider any glorification of the Nazarene village woman as ‘Queen of Heaven’ to be theologically regressive and even dangerously reactionary—or, at least, in poor taste” (Spretnak 2004, p. 1). As stated above, that does not mean that Marian pilgrims are a homogenic group of conservatives in a political or religious sense—for instance being nostalgic about the Salazar regime and a more traditional Church. However, it is more likely, that Marian pilgrims were indeed influenced by a Marian discourse that takes the radical message of Fatima seriously. At least, during the decades of papal visits to Fatima, a bulk of literature emerged that was ready to present the radical message of Fatima and its public and political implications, including the role of the popes (Tindal-Robertson 1992; Petrisko 2002).

Thus, the pilgrims are arguably not the reason for the popes to speak so gently. At least, the popes seem to shy back from the opportunity to create a liminality in the sense of Turner between them and the pilgrims that could break with a secular public. They do not use the opportunity of the Fatima message to create a liminal experience based on the radical call of urgent conversion and penitence. Of course, such an attempt could fail, such as others papal calls for action—from welcoming foreigners to fighting abortion. However, that does not explain why the popes did not try. One reason that could explain the puzzle is the diplomatic consideration of the popes concerning the reaction of publics and politics elsewhere to such a radical attempt to challenge the secular frame of modern public and politics.

4. Materials and Methods

To analyze the papal parlance, all the documents of the six papal journeys to Fatima were selected: Paul VI in 1967, John Paul II 1982, 1991 and 2000, Benedict XVI in 2010, and Francis in 2017. The resource for the texts was the homepage of the Vatican where all official documents are provided. While newer documents are usually provided also in an English translation, older documents are often only available in the language, they have been issued or delivered by the pope. For the first visit of Paul VI in 1967 the documents are not available in English. While for this journey and all the others papal trips almost all documents are available in the national language, Portuguese was selected as the language of the quantitative analysis. Some few words uttered in other language by John Paul II and Benedict XVI to greet international pilgrims and two addresses of Paul VI in front of a diplomatic audience, delivered in French, were translated with DeepL. The documents of each pontificate were formatted as a single text corpus in order to compare them. Apart from John Paul II who visited Fatima three times, all popes came so far only once. John Paul II made a short trip to beatify the two seer children Jacinta and Francisco in 2000. This short trip data containing only a few documents mentioned the name of the seer children more often than usual. This is significant, particularly in contrast to Francis who canonized the two children at the centennial of the apparition in 2017 but did not change the overall picture. For that reason, the three journeys of the pontificate of John Paul II formed together one text corpus for the final analysis and comparison with the other pontificates. In the section of the results, the most important words have already been provided for each pontificate together with the visualization of Voyant tools, which was also used to select the most frequently mentioned relevant terms.

As indicated already, the message of Fatima has been discussed at length in the literature. The expected keywords such as conversion, repentance, consecration, hell, war, sin and rosary are well documented in the literature. A specific body of documents and literature that could have been compared directly to the papal documents was not available. Nevertheless, such a quantitative comparison would have been particularly suitable to

test the thesis. Further research could reflect on the biographical notes of Lucia or take a selection of the pilgrim's guide to Fatima. For this study, basically a literature review provided the key words of the Fatima message. To provide at least a limited quantitative sample, the texts of the published secrets (Ratzinger 2000) had been brought together as a contrasting corpus.

To test the validity of the qualitative research about key words with a small quantitative test, the three published secrets were analyzed also with Voyant tools. The published texts of the three secrets are certainly too short to make valid quantitative claims. Nevertheless, they help to highlight the issue and underline the discussion of the literature with some quantitative material.

As seen on Figure 6, the result is telling. The most important terms are "God" (6), "Holy" (6), "Father" (5), "Souls" (5), "World" (5), "Hand" (4), [less visible as in singular and plural but together also prominent bishops/bishop 4], "Big" (3), "Cross" (3), "Died" (3), "Great" (3), "Heart" (3), "Immaculate" (3), "Lady" (3), "Peace" (3), "Penance" (3), "People" (3), "Russia" (3), "Way" (3) and among the terms mentioned twice are: "Angel", "Church", "Converted", "Demons", "End", "Fear", "Flames". Again, as in the papal addresses "God" ranked high, the pope is an issue himself—"Holy Father" -, and the Virgin Mary appears as "Lady". We read also again the familiar terms "World", "Heart", "Peace" and "Church". However, among these well-known buzzwords suddenly the other discourse emerges: "Penance", "Russia", "Died", "End", "Fear" and "Flames" rank also high. The popes told only half of the story. The contested issues of the message of Fatima were omitted.



Figure 6. Most relevant terms of the Secrets of Fatima (Voyant tools).

5. Conclusions

The question is: how do the popes deal with the strong and critical message in relation to the pilgrim masses of Fatima and a wider public and political audience? Do they continue the mobilization efforts of their predecessors in order to convert the world as the Virgin Mary asked? Obviously, the papal visitors are still interested in the mobilization of the masses. However, as a quantitative analysis of the addresses reveals, the popes show a certain moderateness in their words. Instead of insisting on penitence and rosary prayers, they speak more in general terms about God and the world. The return of the world to God is certainly in line with the message of Fatima. However, the popes do not repeat the terms that constitute the radicalness and urgency of the Marian messages to convert. They seem to prefer a tamed mobilization in line with the attenuated role the Virgin Mary has after the Second Vatican Council, as Charlene Spretnak (2004) argued. The analysis, supported by Voyant tools, is focused only on the papal addresses and shows the result of papal modesty, visualized by Voyant tools and following the ideal of parsimony. The discussion section takes these results in the context of the history of Fatima and sets in a qualitative interpretation the papal modesty in Fatima and Portugal since Paul VI in contrast to the messages and their history, including papal involvement. The claim is that

since the Second Vatican Council, but already starting with Pius XII, the popes are more interested in a diplomatic approach to public and politics than in a radical confrontation. For that reason, the popes tamed the Marian mobilization. While the discourse of the Fatima messages suggested a strong wording of repentance, sin, conversion, rosary prayer, hell, Russia, war and apocalyptic punishments, the popes kept a modest tone in their addresses.

Funding: This research was funded by German Research Foundation (DFG), grant number 426657443 and 288978882.

Acknowledgments: I am very grateful to the anonymous reviewers and the academic editor.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Article

Pastoral Support for Married Couples and Families during the Pilgrimages of John Paul II to Poland

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Abstract: Pilgrimages are one of the forms of popular piety carried out for centuries and in various ways. A special type of pilgrimage are papal pilgrimages to individual countries, which is the implementation of Christ's mission: 'Go and make disciples of all nations (. . .) and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you' (Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu w przekładzie z języków oryginalnych. 1980. Mt 28: 19–20). Pilgrimages give the Pope the opportunity to come closer with the faithful and confirm them in their faith. They also make possible common prayer on different continents and teaching, the personal perception of which can bring people a profound change and improvement of life. John Paul II was the first after 455 years non-Italian pope to visit his country of origin, Poland, eight times. He spent 64 days in his homeland and delivered 264 speeches. He taught freedom and continued his catechesis on marriage and the family, which was a topic to which he attached great importance. The subject of marriage and family is an important matter for the whole world. Therefore, it is worth introducing the papal teaching delivered during all pilgrimages to Poland to people from other countries, especially since some of the speeches are not translated into English. The article is a selection of pro-family content contained in the speeches of John Paul II in Poland, useful in the formation of spouses and parents. It may prove useful in their marriages and families, as well as in the professional help provided to students undertaking education in family life, students in the field of familyology preparing for marriage, spouses, parents and grandparents who educate their children and grandchildren.

Keywords: pilgrimages; marriage; family; John Paul II; Poland

Citation: Dudziak, Urszula. 2022. Pastoral Support for Married Couples and Families during the Pilgrimages of John Paul II to Poland. *Religions* 13: 37. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13010037>

Academic Editor: Mariano P. Barbato

Received: 24 October 2021

Accepted: 30 November 2021

Published: 31 December 2021

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1. Introduction

The presentation of the topic implied in the title of the article encourages us to present some preliminary questions. The first is to explain how pilgrimages are understood in the Catholic Church. The second—showing the person of Karol Wojtyła and the social context that might influence the shaping of the attitudes of the future Pope John Paul II. The third—to signal the previous publications on papal pilgrimages and, on this basis, to place the forerunner of this article.

Except for introducing the subject of the pilgrimages, showing their importance and social usefulness, the main goal of the entire text is to present the teachings of John Paul II contained in the speeches given during his eight pilgrimages to Poland, indicating the personal and native context in which they were delivered. It is also important to emphasize the content useful for marital and family formation as well as evaluation the acceptance of papal teaching by pilgrims and conceptuality of pastoral guidelines.

1.1. Pilgrimages

In the Catholic Church, the whole the life of a believer in God is perceived as a journey aimed at reaching the Father's House and living eternal life with Him (Jan Paweł II 1990, RM 23). The 'pilgrim Church', as defined by the Second Vatican Council Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Lumen Gentium* (Sobór Watykański II. Konstytucja

dogmatyczna 1968), as well as the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994), tend towards the complete fulfilment of the Kingdom of Christ, the creation of new heavens and a new earth 'in which justice dwells' (LG 48, Catechismo Della Chiesa Cattolica 1994, no. 671). Until the time, evil powers, the mystery of godlessness will hit him (2 Thess 2: 7). It must be resisted by the grace of faith and by prayer (2 Thess 3: 1–2). As the biblical texts explain: the expected Messianic Kingdom is the kingdom of the final order of justice, love and peace (Is 11: 1–9; Acts 1: 8) after the victorious struggle of the last days (1 John 2: 18; 4: 3; 1 Tim 4, 1). In the Gospels of Luke (Lk 18: 8) and Matthew (Mt 24: 12), before Jesus' final coming, the final test is foretold for the pilgrim Church, who will go through the earthly life, making a choice: either for himself or for God and the Messiah; either the deceptive religion of the Antichrist, giving apparent solutions to human problems, or adhering to God's truth despite persecution (1 Cor 7: 26). The sacrament of penance and reconciliation in the Catholic Church supports the spiritual development that unites the pilgrim with God himself and his brothers. In turn, the Blessed Sacrament, i.e., the Eucharist, which is the reception of the Risen Christ in Communion, according to the teaching contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is the Bread of our pilgrimage in life. The aim of the mission of the pilgrim Church is to make people sharers in the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit (RM 23). The sacrament of penance and reconciliation in the Catholic Church supports the spiritual development that unites the pilgrim with God, himself and his brothers. In turn, the Blessed Sacrament, i.e., the Eucharist, which is the reception of the Risen Christ in Communion, according to the teaching contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is the Bread of our pilgrimage in life. This Bread enlivens, 'sustains, deepens and renews the life of grace', so that do not stop on the way. 'Holy Communion miraculously accomplishes in the spiritual life what is done by material food in the body' (CCC 1392).

Catechism of the Catholic Church based on the Gospel of St. John (2: 13–14; 5: 1.14; 7: 1.10.14; 8, 2; 10: 22–23) points out that the public mission of Jesus 'set the rhythm of pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the great Jewish holidays' (CCC 583). The Evangelist Luke writes that Jesus, like Joseph and Mary, went to the Temple of Jerusalem every year for the Passover (Lk 2: 14). As a 12-year-old child, he explained: 'I must be in my Father's house' (Lk 2: 49b). The temple to which the pilgrims were heading 'was to be a place of education for the People of God to pray. Pilgrimages, holidays, sacrifices, evening offerings, incense, showbread—all these signs of holiness and glory of the Most High God and very close, were calls and ways of prayer. Ritualism, however, often led people to worship too much. It was necessary to educate the faith and convert the heart. This was the task of the prophets both before and after the exile' (CCC 2581). Nowadays, during earthly life, pilgrimages to places of worship are carried out as part of the devotional practices of people who believe in God's Revelation. They differ from tourist trips in terms of their religious motives. Listening to the statements of pilgrims and the prayer intentions they formulate, one can distinguish among the motives of going on a pilgrim path: worshiping God, being closer to Him, detaching from everyday matters and focusing on spiritual matters, thanksgiving, silence, focusing on one's inner self and faith in God, compensation for sin, considering important matters, solving problems, presenting a request to God, e.g., for: His blessing, passing an exam, good job, successful surgery, safe childbirth, consent in the family, healing yourself or someone, getting out of the addiction, stopping the epidemic, avoiding war, converting the Nation, converting a loved one or a group of people. Making a sacrifice, compensation for wrongdoing (one's own or others), e.g., harming loved ones by one's addiction or marital infidelity, penance and internal transformation, strengthening on the right path, recognizing one's life calling, experiencing apparitions, meeting believers and drawing on their testimony religious education, deepening one's own religious formation through listening to catechesis, homilies and sermons, as well as devoting more time to prayer and feeding on the Word of God may also be relevant. Participation in pilgrimages, like Christmas time, for many Catholics is a special occasion to participate in the holy sacraments: in penance, reconciliation and the Eucharist. It also gives the opportunity to

experience many devotions, contemplation, meditation, adoration, joy expressed by singing and shared deep prayer with other pilgrims during holy masses. It creates a feeling of unity with others, being a great family of God's children, remaining together with brothers and sisters in Christ. Similar to those mentioned above for pilgrimages, Patrick Heiser presented in the article *Pilgrimage and Religion: Pilgrim Religiosity on the Ways of St. James*. Both lists of motives confirm and complement each other (Heiser 2021).

There are walking pilgrimages connected with offering God the effort of one's own journey, but also by coach, bicycle and other means of transport, especially when you need to depart from one's own country. Both clergy and lay people take different positions on these issues. Papal references to Marian messages and pilgrimage masses were presented in his article by prof. Barbato (2021). Numerous papal pilgrimages to individual countries, as well as pilgrimages of people of various nationalities, on their way to places visited by the Holy Father, have acquired a special character. Perhaps for some pilgrims the main attraction they strive for is to see the Pope up close. Others, however, want to feel more of their belonging to the Community of the Church, experience being a part of the People of God, listen to the teachings addressed directly to them and experience the meeting more deeply as: the visible head of the Church, the successor of Saint Peter and the vicar of Jesus here on earth. The Pope, in the framework of his pilgrimage prayers and speeches, carries out the mission entrusted to him by Christ: 'Feed my lambs!' (Jn 21: 15c), 'Feed my sheep!' (Jn 21: 16c).

The information posted on the website *John Paul II's family home* says that: John Paul II 'was the greatest pilgrim Pope in history. During his pontificate, he made 104 international pilgrimages visiting 129 countries on all continents. Moreover, he made over 140 apostolic journeys in Italy. Preaching the teachings of Christ, he traveled a total of over 1.5 million km all over the world. He spoke to millions of people, visited places where no Pope had ever visited before. He was famous for his knowledge of many languages, thanks to which he made even better contact with people of different nationalities. Meetings with him were for the faithful a great event of an almost mystical nature, often changing them internally for the rest of their lives'. (<https://domjp2.pl/jan-pawel-ii/pielgrzymki-jana-pawla-ii/> (accessed on 23 November 2021)).

Papal pilgrimages to Poland had a significant theological, pastoral and social significance. It was a great national catechesis, recalling the fundamental truths of faith, pointing to higher values and basic norms, confirming human dignity, strengthening religious identity, social mobilization, awakening hope, a sense of unity and solidarity. In his teaching, John Paul II devoted a lot of space to marriage and family issues.

1.2. Karol Wojtyła

The future pope's concern for a man, marriage, and family was revealed many years before he took up tasks in the See of Peter. This is evidenced by, for example, the recognition of Karol Wojtyła for the concept of Max Scheler, disclosed in publications, pointing to various groups of values adopted by specific people (Wojtyła 1953–1954). In the chapter entitled Propaedeutics of the Sacrament of Marriage (Wojtyła 1958) included in the collective work, Wojtyła presents marriage as a way of personal development and a place of cooperation with God in the transmission of life. It also indicates the relationship of the spouses with society. He postulates specific forms of pastoral assistance in educating young people and reaching their maturity for marriage, in carrying out the pastoral care of young couples and families, and supporting families in solving economic and housing difficulties. The topic of the lectures on ethics delivered to students of the Catholic University of Lublin, Fr. Professor Wojtyła deals with the issue of love and responsibility. The presented content was published in 1960 in the book entitled: *Miłość i Odpowiedzialność (Love and Responsibility)* (Wojtyła 1960). Ethical Study considered to be his most popular work. In 1965, Fr. Professor Karol Wojtyła publishes an article in *Roczniki Filozoficzne KUL (the Annals of Philosophy of the Catholic University of Lublin)*, which presents Catholic sexual ethics in the perspective of personalism, and also presents practical educational guidelines (Wojtyła 1965).

An important achievement pointing to the future pope's pastoral concern was also the establishment of the Family Institute in Krakow. According to the history of pastoral ministry presented on the website of the Department of Pastoral Care of the Families of the Archdiocese of Krakow, in 1967, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła organized a series of lectures for married couples on the Catholic teaching about marriage at the Krakow Curia, mainly for the health service and teachers who would later become involved in the pastoral care of families (<https://wdr.diecezja.pl/historia/> (HDRAK n.d., [History of the Pastoral Care of Families in the Archdiocese of Krakow], accessed on 23 November 2021). In the academic year 1967/68, the Metropolitan of Krakow established the Family Institute, which was closely associated with the Department of Family Pastoral Care and the Faculty of Theology in Krakow. The Institute's task was to prepare lay people for work with young people and to develop materials for family counselling. The School of Theology of the Family was responsible for the training of priests. The fact how much importance Karol Wojtyła attached to the role of lay people in the Church, as well as to moral principles in the field of transmitting human life, is evidenced by his involvement in the creation of the document of the Second Vatican Council, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (1964) and the work of the consultative team that was established by order of Pope Paul VI before the publication of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (Pawel VI 1968).

As a priest and then a bishop, Wojtyła blessed the newly married couples. So he knew the Rites of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Adapted to the customs of Polish dioceses (*Obrzędy sakramentu małżeństwa* 2006), in which persons joining the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church confirm that they want to:—get married voluntarily and without any compulsion, persevere in this relationship in health and illness, in good and bad fortune, for the rest of their lives, accept with love and bring up the offspring in a Catholic manner whom God will bestow on them, and then they vow: love, fidelity and marital honesty, and that they will not abandon each other until death (Riches 1984, 2004). With his pastoral, publishing and didactic work, Fr. Professor Karol Wojtyła/the later Pope John Paul II tried to support spouses and parents in fulfilling their vocation and undertaken obligations.

1.3. Publications about the Pope's Pilgrimages

The familiological context distinguishes this article from other publications devoted to papal pilgrimages. For example: in his groundbreaking book, James Ramon Felak carefully examines the Pope's first four visits to his homeland in June of 1979, 1983, 1987, and 1991 in the late Communist and immediate post-Communist period (Felak 2020) My text, although it does not ignore the issues of society as a whole, it draws attention to important aspects for personal maturity and family life. It also includes speeches from pilgrimages made in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2002. Similarly, *The Pope, the Public and International Relations. Postsecular Transformation*, edited by Mariano Barbato (2020), with three important parts in its content: Media Formats, Geopolitical Stages and Global Transformation is different in terms of scope (2020). This interdisciplinary volume, written, among others, by a philosopher, art historian, religious scholar and literary scholar, as one of the reviewers Jocelyne Cesari writes, shows the importance of religion for the entire international system.

Linguists also analyzed John Paul II's speeches delivered in Poland. Examples of their articles are: *Polskie homilie Jana Pawła II—rekonesans badawczy* [homilies of John Paul II: a research reconnaissance] (Zagórska 2011) and *Język Jana Pawła II wobec dziedzictwa polskiego stylu biblijnego* [The Language of John Paul II towards the heritage of the Polish biblical style] (on the material of homilies and speeches to compatriots (Koziara 2021). The authors of these publications focused on the way of formulating statements by John Paul II. They recognized that the specificity of his style is expressed not only in references to the Holy Scriptures, but also to literature, songs, prayers and services. It is true that the style of the papal teaching gave a lot to the audience not only in terms of content, but also form. Before taking up studies in Theology and Philosophy, Karol Wojtyła studied Polish Studies

and was active in Rapsodyczny Teatr [Rhapsodic Theatre] (<https://www.centrumjp2.pl/biografia-jana-pawla-ii/>) (accessed on 23 November 2021). For this reason, the depth of the words spoken by John Paul II is special. The priceless value of content better reaches the minds and hearts of listeners through the ability of communication, intonation, dictation and interpretation. This contributed to my decision to write this article, based on the speeches of John Paul II in Poland, not only to use the printed version contained in the 1256-page book of homilies and speeches by the great Polish pilgrim (Jan Paweł II 2005), but also to refer to recordings of individual speeches by listening to and analyzing their content.

Each of the works reflecting a different fragment of reality is useful, both through theoretical exploration and presentation of a selected issue, as well as its practical social and individual utility. The decision to write this article was preceded and justified by the recognition that reminder: Reminder, compilation and commentary on papal speeches may also constitute a theoretical and practical value useful for the life of the family as the basic unit of society responsible for the upbringing and self-education of its members. Also, it was noted that the speeches: The speeches from the papal pilgrimages of 1983 and 1987 are not available to people who do not know the Polish language, and those from 1991 and 1995 are partially available. However, the rest, which can be read in English, should be collected, analyzed in terms of familiology, and presented in an article that summarizes important matters for people preparing for marriage and for those who are starting a family.

The vocation to life in marriage and family is the calling of a husband and wife to:

1. expressing and deepening conjugal love,
2. transmitting life, both in terms of conceiving children and bringing them up,
3. mutual improvement and growth in holiness.

So the questions arise:

1. whether and how participation in pilgrimages can motivate and mobilize spouses to better fulfil their conjugal and parental vocation?
2. whether the teaching given by John Paul II during his pilgrimages to Poland contain useful content for spouses in the fulfilment of their marriage and parental vocation?

The answers to them will arise thanks to the analysis of the content of the papal speeches and the context of delivering them, as well as the possible experiences of pilgrims.

In addition to the abstract, keywords and introduction, the article will contain four more parts. The next section will list the components of the collected material and the methods used to develop it. The part, containing the results, will be arranged chronologically, taking into account the dates of John Paul II's pilgrimages and speeches in Poland. The increased transparency of the extensive material, as well as comments facilitating the complicity of the content with the situational context of the periods of their transmission, will help the reader to explore the essence of the presented issues. Discussion after a short résumé of the teaching delivered by John Paul will allow you to pose questions and try to answer them. The final conclusions can be used in practical applications, such as personal spiritual formation, improvement of marital and family relations and support in the interiorization of norms and values by the wider circles of society. People interested in additional reading can choose from the Bibliography items available in their language or use a translator. Or, they can take advantage of the many Bible abbreviations provided in the article by conducting their own study.

2. Materials and Methods

The material for a given article consists of: excerpts from the Holy Scriptures, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, recordings of papal speeches delivered during John Paul II's pilgrimages of to Poland, publications devoted to pilgrimages and those that present marriage and the family as the subject of scientific and pastoral interest of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, as well as their own experiences of pilgrimage, especially those aimed at meeting John Paul II, conversations with pilgrims, the intentions of the Universal Prayer formulated by them.

The methods used are the analysis and synthesis of: published texts, remembered statements of pilgrims, recordings of papal speeches from pilgrimages to Poland in the years: 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2002, as well as introspection, induction and deduction. Definitions of these terms can be found in many dictionaries, e.g., Oxford English Dictionary (2010), Longman. Dictionary of Contemporary English (2001) and others.

The term *analysis* is translated as: examining a problem, a phenomenon from different perspectives in order to understand or explain it; also: explanation or description resulting from such consideration “and” research method consisting in isolating its elements from a given whole and examining each one separately <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/7046?redirectedFrom=analysis#eid> (Analysis n.d., accessed on 23 November 2021). The usefulness of this method in this article is related to listening to specific statements and/or reading texts relevant to the topic, selecting fragments of particular importance, comparing them, interpreting them, and providing a commentary. A special type of analysis, which is contextual analysis, contributed to the addition of several practical explanations next to some texts of papal speeches. It was considered that they could contribute to a better understanding of the content of the speeches. This applies especially to foreign recipients of the text who may be less familiar with the history of Poland than the compatriots of John Paul II to whom this teaching was addressed.

Synthesis, on the other hand, is combining many different elements into a single whole or comprehensive cognition of a phenomenon based on the previous examination of its elements.

Synthesis (n.d.) can also be defined as a comprehensive approach to a problem <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/196574?redirectedFrom=synthesis#eid> (accessed on 23 November 2021). The usefulness of this method is related to the creation of a new structure from selected elements.

For the purposes of this article, a selection has been made from a great deal of information. They were put together into a new whole. The multifaceted nature and usefulness of the content to indicate the pastoral support of the spouses included in the title were taken into account.

The term Observation (n.d.), derived from Latin, means *paying attention to something*. In science, it is a method of research in which systematic and planned perception is the basic way of obtaining scientific materials <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/129883?redirectedFrom=observation#eid> (accessed on 23 November 2021).

Within the framework of observation, the research method includes: activities of perception, formulation of the issue, preparation of situations in which perception can be carried out, obtaining information that may facilitate or replace them, noting and registering factors, their interpretation and hypotheses. *Introspection* known and used in psychology, is observing and examining one’s own mental states <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/98747?redirectedFrom=introspection#eid> (Introspection n.d., accessed on 23 November 2021). In literature, however, it is a detailed description of the hero’s internal states, made from his perspective (*ibid.*).

In the scientific-research process undertaken for the purposes of this article, introspection made it possible to evaluate one’s own experiences under the influence of pilgrimage teaching. The observation made it possible to record and interpret the emotional reactions of the Pope as a speaker and gathered pilgrims—listeners. Induction (n.d.) is logical reasoning characterized by the progression of components and generalization of the conclusion, it allows the transition from observed cases to general statements: <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/94779?redirectedFrom=induction#eid> (accessed on 23 November 2021). In scientific research, the observed pilgrimage events and the changes that follow them are used to draw conclusions, e.g., regarding the mobilization of societies. The authors of the “Religions” journal write about it in Special Issue Pilgrimage and Religious Mobilization in Europe (for example Barbato 2021; Heiser 2021) I also take this method into account in the article, relating the context of Karol Wojtyła’s experiences to his empathy and teaching, as well as the content of papal speeches and the reactions of pilgrims to the following social events. The real premises adopted in the deduction lead to the true conclusions (Deduction n.d.):

<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/48586?redirectedFrom=deduction#eid> (accessed on 23 November 2021).

This part of the article presents selected content of John Paul II's speeches during the pilgrimages to his homeland in the following years. It will be particularly useful at the end of the article the theoretical reflection on the pastoral support of marriages and families to lead into applications in the practice of further life.

3. Results

This part of the article will be presented selected content of the speeches of John Paul II during pilgrimages to his homeland in the following years.

1979¹

A marriage as a community of persons requires, from the very beginning, an understanding of who the person who enters into the marriage is. During the 1st Pilgrimage to Poland in the speech delivered at Victory Square in Warsaw on 2 June 1979, the Pope pointed out that Jesus Christ is the key to understanding this great and fundamental value of human being. Only thanks to God, it is possible to understand who a person is, what is his or her dignity, vocation and destiny. Both societies and the people who make up them experience a variety of problems. The Pope includes all human suffering in this most holy sacrifice that Jesus Christ made out of love for man. During this memorable speech, awakening the aspirations for freedom leading to the creation of Solidarity, the overthrow of socialism in Poland, perestroika in the USSR and the demolition of the wall in Berlin, John Paul II urged the Holy Spirit to 'renew the face of the earth, this earth'. (Jan Paweł II 1979b). *Chrystus a dzieje Polski. Christ and the history of Poland*). A day later in Gniezno, the Pope unveiled the spiritual unity of Christian Europe. (Jan Paweł II 1979c) *Duchowa jedność chrześcijańskiej Europy. Spiritual Unity of Christian Europe*).

In Krakow, on 10 June 1979, the Pope called upon his countrymen "You must be strong, dear brothers and sisters, with the strength that faith gives. You must be strong with the power of faith. You must be faithful (. . .) You must be strong with the power of hope that brings full joy to life and does not allow you to grieve the Holy Spirit. You must be strong, dear brothers and sisters, by the strength of this faith, hope and conscious, mature, responsible love that helps us to enter into this dialogue with man and the world at our stage of history, so that you will never doubt, get tired and discourage, and never let yourself be discouraged. Never undercut the roots from which we grow". (Jan Paweł II 1979a. *Bierzmowanie Polski. Confirmation of Poland*). The Pope appealed to cultivate a bond with Christ. He asked believers in Christ to trust against their weakness, to seek spiritual strength from Him, never to depart from Him, to 'never lose that freedom of spirit to which He liberates man', so that they 'never despise this love. which is the greatest, which is expressed through the cross, and without which human life has no root or meaning' (Jan Paweł II 1979a).

1983²

During the Second Pilgrimage in 1983, in Warsaw at the 10th Anniversary Stadium, John Paul II reminded that 'Man is called to triumph in Jesus Christ'. It is about victory over sin, over what constrains free will and makes it susceptible to evil. The fruit of these victories is 'living in truth, integrity of conscience, love of neighbor, the ability to forgive, spiritual development of humanity' (Jan Paweł II 1983a. *Moralne zwycięstwo narodu. The moral victory of the Nation*).

Quoting the Primate of the Millennium, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, John Paul II spoke of victory in the context of love and forgiveness. This applies not only to the affairs of the entire nation, but it is important for everyone personally. Also in the marital relationship, vowed love and the accompanying ability to forgive should prevail.

John Paul II explained Christ's calling, in Częstochowa (18 June 1983), as preserving the sensitivity of conscience, not distorting it, not disturbing it, distinguishing between

good and evil, working out good in yourself and overcoming evil. The first and foremost thing is not to tolerate what is bad, even if others do; strongly oppose the loss-making and costly demoralization; make demands on yourself, even if others do not. 'I watch', it also means 'I am attentive to another person, I do not close in myself', the love of my neighbor, husband, wife, child and responsibility for others is 'basic interpersonal solidarity' (Jan Paweł II 1983c. Znaczenie słowa 'Czuwam' *The meaning of the word 'I Keep Vigil'*).

In his speech in Katowice (20 June 1983), the Pope stated that man is the first and fundamental social dimension, the family is the second one. Man as a person cannot be addressed except through love. Man should love and be loved, and the first school of love takes place in the family. The Pope appealed to "do everything so that this school could remain itself. At the same time, the family must be strong enough with God, that is, the mutual love of all those who make it, that it can remain a refuge for man amidst all destructive and painful experiences. (Jan Paweł II 1983b. Sprawiedliwość i miłość społeczna. *Justice and social love*).

1987³

The third pilgrimage, as turned out later, the last one to the People's Republic of Poland, became, among other things, an opportunity to explain what human solidarity is and what it should be. On 11 June 1987 in Gdynia, John Paul II taught: 'We cannot live according to the principle all against all', but only according to the principle 'all with all, all for all'. (Jan Paweł II 1987b. O solidarności. *About Solidarity*). Solidarity has been defined as a way of living in human multiplicity in a unity worthy of man, with respect for differences, and thus "unity in multiplicity". Such solidarity also triggers a fight, but not against another human being, but for a human being. It is a fight for a more mature form of human life, a fight for truth, freedom, justice, love that make human life more human.

Teaching provided for the wider society should also be applied to the basic social unit, which is the family. The upbringing of a person is the shaping of his attitudes and is based on internalized values. For this reason, the hierarchy of values adopted is so important. The view on the relationship of the hierarchy of values with human attitudes, presented in scientific works presenting the axiological and ethical concept of Max Scheler (Wojtyła 1991, pp. 142–45). is also justified in contemporary research (Dudziak 2009). This knowledge should find its application in the influence of parents and educators responsible for the formation of the young generation, as well as for every person undertaking self-improvement in the process of self-education.

In the realization of yourself, you should consider 'in what relation is 'to be more' to 'to have more'. This was pointed out by John Paul II in his speech at Westerplatte on 12 June 1987. He then put a particular emphasis that "I can never win again by myself. Because, then, a person can lose the most valuable thing: their humanity, their conscience and their dignity. This is all that is also a perspective of eternal life' (Jan Paweł II 1987c. Westerplatte duchowe. *Spiritual Westerplatte*). People living outside Poland should be informed that Westerplatte is a wooded peninsula between the Bay of Gdańsk and the bend of the Dead Vistula. The defense of this area in the first days of World War II (1–7 September 1939) became a symbol of persistent and heroic struggle for freedom. In the difficult and unequal struggle of the beginning of the war, Poles all over the country consoled themselves with the words: 'Westerplatte has not fallen', 'Westerplatte is still being defended'. The courage of brave soldiers uplifted, strengthened them and motivated them to endure, because all was not lost. It was an exemplar not to give up, not to lose hope, to fulfill the entrusted mission, to serve to the end. It was a measure of responsibility and patriotism, a love that 'will endure everything' (1 Cor 13: 7d). John Paul II used the comparison to this self-sacrificing attitude of soldiers opposing the greater force of the enemy, firing at this place from the battleship Schleswig-Holstein, introducing the pilgrims to the concept of the spiritual Westerplatte.

'We know that here, in this place, on Westerplatte, in September 1939, a group of young Poles, soldiers, under the command of Major Henryk Sucharski, continued with

noble determination undertaking an unequal fight against the invaders, a heroic fight. They have remained as a meaningful symbol in the memory of the Nation’.

‘It is necessary for this symbol to speak again and again, in order to present a challenge for more and more new people and generations of Poles’. ‘Each of you, young friends, also finds some Westerplatte in your life, some dimension of tasks that must be undertaken and fulfilled, some just must be fought for, some duties which cannot be avoided, cannot be deserted. Finally, some order of rights and values that must be maintained and defended, like Westerplatte, maintained and defended in and around oneself, defended for oneself and for others’ (ibid.).

The Pope added that ‘Bishop Kozal, the martyr of Dachau, said: <<‘What is more terrifying than losing an armed man is the fall of the spirit in people. The doubter becomes the enemy’s ally involuntarily’>> (Frątczak 1984, s. 9–92). In this situation, it is necessary to pay attention to the papal admonition that: ‘The situation is never hopeless for Christians. A Christian is a man of hope’ and reference to the words of Cardinal John Henry Newman proclaiming the need for “ people who know their religion and who study it; who know exactly what their position is; who are aware of what they believe and what they don’t; who know their Creed so well that they can give an account of it; who know history to such an extent that they know how to defend it’. (Newman 1851, pp. 372–73).

Each of those who came to meet the Pope could then ask himself the question: ‘What about me?’; ‘What is my spiritual Westerplatte?’; ‘Whom will I serve?’; ‘What will I defend for the rest of my life until blood is shed?’ It is important that even today every person, especially the husband and father who is to set an example for his children, should ask himself this question and try to answer it through his actions.

Many social issues can be related to marital and family relationships. Such are also the words of the Pope in 1987 in Gdańsk, Zaspą, “Man is not alone. He lives with others, through others and for others’. (Jan Paweł II 1987a. Jeden drugiego brzemia noście. *Bear one another’s burdens*) Related to this statement is the reference to St. Paul to the Galatians: ‘Carry each other’s burdens’ (Gal 6: 2a). Living according to these words is the basis not only of community coexistence in society, but also of marital and family understanding, consent, help and support. Human work ensuring, in addition to the acquired material goods, also personal development in the marital relationship, like every effort and effort, is to be carried together. When it comes to husband and wife, it is about being a ‘helper’ for each other (Gen. 2: 20). Of course, you should avoid workaholicism, but also isolate yourself from the external environment and quit your job. This would have negative, both material and psychological consequences for the family, but also limiting the personal development of a person, his being creative and necessary in relations with others.

1991⁴

During the fourth pilgrimage to Poland in 1991, John Paul II reminded the Decalogue, which could constitute a valuable program not only for the life of an individual, but also for wider community activities. He said that the future of man, state and society, Europe and the world depends on these ten words (Jan Paweł II 1991a. Dekalog programem dla państwa i społeczeństwa. *The Decalogue as a Program for the State and Society*).

In Lubaczów, the Pope referred to the so-called ideological neutrality under the banner of which the planned atheization is sometimes smuggled in. You should defend yourself against it. Nobody can replace a man in a meeting with God who wants to embrace everyone with His holiness. The Pope warns that an attempt to throw God out of the state structures hurts the well-being of Catholics who have the right to live in their own country in accordance with their conscience and religion. Since the persecution of Christians continues to this day, families need even more to stand on the foundation of faith (Jan Paweł II 1991b. O neutralności światopoglądowej państwa. *On the ideological neutrality of the state*).

In Kielce, the Pope raises the topic of threats to the family. He claims that the crisis of the modern family is an offense against God, the cause of many misfortunes and evil that

harms people. The situation of families is the subject of particular concern of the Church, because behind the statistical descriptions of problems 'there is always a living man, the tragedy of his heart, the tragedy of his life, the tragedy of his vocation' (Jan Paweł II 1991c. *O zagrożeniach rodziny. On threats to the family*).

The Pope mentions: numerous divorces, permanent quarrels and conflicts, long break-ups due to economic trips abroad, family closing in the circle of their own affairs, lack of openness to others, disappearance of intra-family ties, lack of love, alcohol abuse, inappropriate attitude towards a conceived child.

The Pope spoke out on 4 June 1991 in Radom against usurping God's power over life. He stated that 'in the place of God's 'do not kill' human allowed 'to kill', and even 'must kill' was put, and here huge stretches of our continent became the grave of innocent victims of crimes. The root of crime lies in man's usurpation of God's power over life and death. There is a distant, and at the same persistent echo of those words that man has accepted from the beginning, against his Creator and Father. The words were: 'As God will know good and evil, that is, you will decide what is good and what is bad. Man, like God, against God' (Jan Paweł II 1991f. *Przeciw uzurpacji Bożej władzy nad życiem. Against the usurpation of God's power over life*). The Pope reminds that 'every child is a gift of God' and has the right to be loved by their parents 'even if it requires a special sacrifice from them'. In a touching way, squeezing tears from the eyes of many listeners, John Paul II warns that 'The world would turn into a nightmare if spouses in material difficulties saw in their conceived child only a burden and a threat to their stability, if the well-off spouses, in turn, saw unnecessary and expensive life allowance in a child. It would mean that love no longer matters in human life. This would mean that man's great dignity, their true vocation and ultimate destiny have been completely forgotten. The basis of true love for a child is genuine love between spouses, and the basis of love, both marital and parental, is based on God, precisely, this divine fatherhood' (ibid).

The conduct of people contrary to God's commandments prompts John Paul II to make the following statement in Radom: 'I want to ask those who are responsible for family morality, is it allowed to recklessly expose Polish families to further destruction? We cannot speak of human freedom here. Because this is a captivating freedom. Yes, you have to educate for freedom, you need mature freedom. This is the only way society, nation, and all its spheres of life can rely on. but one cannot create a fiction of freedom that allegedly liberates man, or rather enslaves and corrupts him. From this you have to make an examination of conscience!' (ibid).

John Paul II treats his homeland and the whole earth as a Mother, and in people he sees his sisters and brothers, therefore he grieves over reckless approach to matters of marriage and family, to sexual and procreative irresponsibility, to indifference to demoralization. The Pope speaks of the defenseless unborn, whom even their mother did not recognize, accepting or succumbing to pressure to take their lives. He even recalled the film documenting 'the desperate defense of the unborn child in the womb against aggression' and stated that 'It is difficult to imagine a drama more terrible in its moral, human meaning' (ibid.). Apart from various reasons for the murder of an unborn child, John Paul draws attention to the legalization of this practice and sadly asks a dramatic question: 'Is there such a human authority, or is there a parliament that has the right to legalize the murder of another defenseless human being? Who has the right to say it's allowed to kill or even you have to kill where you need to protect and help life the most?'. Let us also note that the commandment not to kill contains not only a prohibition. It calls us to be positive. 'Do not kill, but rather protect life, protect health, respect the human dignity of every human being, (. . .) accept another person as a gift from God, especially if it is your own child. Do not kill, but rather try to help your neighbors so that they gladly accept the child who, humanly speaking, did not appear in time'. The Pope suggests taking up social care, not only for the child, but also for his mother and both parents if their situation is difficult (ibid.).

Karol Wojtyła's life experiences shaped the special sensitivity and empathy of John Paul II enabling him to point out the essential difference between the civilization of love

and life, and hatred and death. John Paul II, as a young man (19–25 years old), survived the Second World War, which was full of many difficult experiences. After he studied Polish studies in Kraków, ‘as a result of Sonderaktion Krakau, the Jagiellonian University was closed on 6 November 1939, and the professors were deported to the Sachsenhausen camp. Karol Wojtyła found a job in Zakłady Chemiczne “Solvay” in Borek Fałęcki. Hard work in the quarries provided relative safety, as the Germans considered the plant necessary. (. . .) At the beginning of 1941, Wojtyła’s father fell ill. When Charles, who was looking after him, returned home on 18 February, he found his father dead. He felt this death very painfully. Karol Wojtyła Sr. was buried at the Rakowicki Cemetery in Krakow. And young Karol moved to the Kydryński family, who offered him their help and support” (Biografia Jana Pawła II n.d. [John Paul II’s Biography]. Available online: <https://www.centrumjp2.pl/biografia-jana-pawla-ii/> (accessed on 20 October 2021)).

In 1942, Wojtyła entered a secret seminary. Preparation for the priesthood in those times and conditions was not only dangerous, risky, but also tedious. “In the morning he assisted Prince Metropolitan Adam Sapieha at mass, and then he worked in <<Solvay>>. He devoted the nights to science. The situation changed at the beginning of August 1944. The Germans carried out mass round-ups to avoid an outbreak of the Krakow population uprising. They took all the captured young men away—Sunday, 6 August 1944, was called “Black Sunday”. Wojtyła avoided a round-up, because thanks to Archbishop Sapieha, the clerics found shelter in the bishop’s palace. On 18 January 1945, the Soviet army entered Krakow. “ (ibid). The disaster experienced by Poles, both under German occupation, suffering, tortured and murdered in the streets in prisons and concentration camps, as well as communized by the ideologues of Marxism and Leninism, who were fighting against religion and faith, sank deep into the heart of the future Pope.

John Paul II had a special respect for the former prisoners of the camps. It is characteristic that many of them, who witnessed the degradation of man and the disregard for human life, took the diametrically opposite side: appreciating the dignity of the human person, protecting life, brotherhood and forgiveness. The attitude of love, to the point of sacrificing his life in exchange for Franciszek Gajowniczek, sentenced to death in the starvation bunker, was revealed in the Nazi death camp in Auschwitz by Father Maksymilian Kolbe (1894–1941). On 17 October 1971, Pope Paul VI proclaimed him Blessed, and on 10 October 1982 John Paul II included him among the holy martyrs of the Catholic Church and called him “the martyr of love” Życiorys (2021) <https://niepokalanow.pl/maksymilian-kolbe/zyciorys/> (accessed on 20 October 2021).

John Paul II knew personally and cooperated with the doctors dedicated to the protection of life and family: the aforementioned Dr. Wanda Póltawska, a former prisoner of the Ravensbrück camp, Professor Włodzimierz Fijałkowski, a former prisoner of Auschwitz, and Archbishop Kazimierz Majdański, the founder of the Institute for Family Studies in Dachau. As a bishop, together with Primate Cardinal Wyszyński, he repeatedly stood by side of the faithful of the Catholic Church who were tormented by the communist authorities imposed on Poland. These authorities, following the example of the Soviet Union in favor of abortion, led to the enactment of the Act, contrary to the fifth commandment of the Decalogue, allowing termination of pregnancy for medical, legal and social reasons (Ustawa z dnia 27 kwietnia 1956 r. o warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży 1956, Act 27 April 1956). As pope, he strongly opposed this, especially since, despite the regained freedom in 1989, the former anti-natalist law existed unchanged for the following years up to the Act of 7 January 1993 (Ustawa z dnia 7 stycznia 1993 r. o planowaniu rodziny, ochronie płodu ludzkiego i warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży 1993).

The next values introduced by John Paul II, during pilgrimage in 1991, are truth and freedom, which are the subject of his speeches in Olsztyn and Warsaw. The Pope distinguishes between the good use of the word that serves the truth and the bad use of the word that does not proclaim the truth, but serves to overcome others. ‘Wrong use of the word disturbs God’s image of the world’, leads to contamination of man with deception and amorality, spreads lies (Jan Paweł II 1991e. Prawda w życiu publicznym i osobistym.

The truth in public and personal life). Freedom of speech does not justify falsifying reality and hurting people. 'We must restore the proper place of truthfulness also in families' (Jan Paweł II 1991e). The truth is essential both in public and personal life. In the capital city of Poland, the Pope reminded that 'Christ has set us free for freedom' (Gal 5: 1). This gift must not be wasted, but must be shared. We mustn't agree to replace freedom with arbitrariness with the rejection of the Giver of genuine freedom, or to live in accordance with the slogan proclaimed in postmodern Europe: 'let's live as if God does not exist'. Christ shows the divine origin of man who is created by God, redeemed and sanctified through the accompanying Wisdom—the Holy Spirit. 'We cannot betray this truth about man'. (Jan Paweł II 1991d. *Polska a europejskość. Poland and Europeanness*).

1995⁵

The fifth pilgrimage of John Paul II to Poland in May 1995 made it possible for pilgrims to hear the teaching about people of conscience and moral order, which is the human and social foundation. The Pope calls us to be people of conscience who do not silence the conscience, but listen to it, even when his voice is difficult and demanding. A man of conscience is committed to good; is not overcome by evil; demands from himself; converts; lifts from falls; engages in building the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of truth, life, justice, love and peace: in the family, society and the entire homeland; cares for the common good; takes responsibility for public affairs; notices the needs of others. The Pope reminds that the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century violated people's consciences, enslaved them, and despised people. The Church, on the other hand, was a defender of the rights of conscience, showing a signpost that gave man the direction and sense of conduct. The signpost that God has placed for man is the cross of Jesus Christ. One of its bars (vertical) shows the relationship between man and God, while the other (horizontal) shows the proper interpersonal relations that are to express love and respect for one's neighbor. 'To choose the cross of Christ wisely and maturely is to take responsibility for the presence of the cross in the life of every person, family and homeland' (Jan Paweł II 1995. *O ludziach sumienia. On people of conscience*). The cross is proof of God's love for man whom He loved to the point of the cross.

In Skoczów, the Pope reminded the moving and always up-to-date reflection expressed in 1979 in Błonia Krakowskie. He then asked: 'Is it possible to reject Christ and all that he has brought into human history? Of course you can. Man is free. But the fundamental question: is it allowed? And for what is <<allowed>>? What argument of reason, what value of will and heart, can be put before oneself and one's neighbors, and fellow citizens and the nation, to reject, in order to say <<no>> to what we have all lived for a thousand years? To what formed the basis of our identity and has always been it?' (Jan Paweł II 2005, p. 846). The profound truth of these words, indicating the need for human closeness to God, is also not indifferent in building marital and family ties. Closeness to the One Who Is Love (Jn 4: 7) favors expressing the love vowed to the spouse and surrounding them with children for whom love is an indispensable condition for development.

1997⁶

John Paul II presented the purpose of his sixth pilgrimage to Poland as devotion to the service of faith, in accordance with the words of Christ: 'I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail. For your part, strengthen your brothers' (Lk 22: 32). This is the mission of Peter, this is the mission of the Church' (Jan Paweł II 2005, p. 862). During the ecumenical service in Wrocław, John Paul II spoke of the desire to 'seek ways to unity of Christians', in accordance with the will of Christ, 'That all may be one' (Jn 17, 21 a). He compared the relationships between churches with those between brothers in which tolerance alone was not enough. Likewise, in relations between family members there is a need for acceptance, patience, forgiveness, reconciliation, mutual love, conversion of hearts, prayer, renewal of mind, cooperation with the grace of the Holy Spirit, humility, hope for full unity, striving for its reconstruction and common witnesses (Jan Paweł II

1997a. Ekumenizm w perspektywie Jubileuszu roku 2000. *Ecumenism in the perspective of the Jubilee of 2000*). In: *Pielgrzymki Jana Pawła II do Ojczyzny. Papież nadziei. Budujcie dom na skale 1991–1997*. Red. Krzysztof Dorosz, Jan Pniewski, Marcin Witan. Płyta CD 2. Polskie Radio).

The Eucharistic Congress taking place on June 1 was an occasion to recall the words of Jesus: 'I am the living bread' (Jn 6: 51) and the responses of God's people: 'The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time' (Ps 145 [144], 15). The Eucharistic Congress taking place on June 1 was an occasion to recall the words of Jesus: 'I am the living bread' (Jn 6: 51) and the responses of God's people: 'The eyes of all look to you, and you feed them at the right time' (Ps 145 [144], 15). Indeed, without Christ, and even more against him, man cannot build the freedom that is the desire of the human interior. Eucharistic communion with God should lead to service to man, to building a civilization of love, a civilization of truth and a civilization of freedom to which Christ has set us free (Gal 5: 1). The fact that on June 1 the Children's Day is celebrated in Poland prompted the Pope to wish: 'that all children in the world should enjoy the joy and love that are due to them, and so much desired by God Himself' (Jan Paweł II 2005, p. 882).

The content of the meeting on June 2nd in Legnica concerned the fact that the external dimension of faith is manifested in social life. The believer's task is to bring Christ's light into the life of society, and whoever loves God should also love his brother. John Paul II argued that civilization must be imbued with the spirit of love and justice, 'so that culture opens up to holiness, fosters human dignity, teaches communing with beauty', thanking God every day and praising His Name (Jan Paweł II 1997d, *Odpowiedzialność za życie społeczne. Responsibility for social life*). It should be recognized that the truths presented by the Pope may be useful for parents and teachers in bringing up children, but also in shaping the attitudes of adults.

During his speech in Gniezno, John Paul II drew attention to the invisible wall dividing Europe, which runs through people's hearts. It is built out of fear, aggression, lack of understanding for other people, economic and political egoism, and a weakening of sensitivity to the value of life and the dignity of every human being. He warned that 'there will be no unity in Europe until it is a community of the spirit'. He reminded that Europe's identity is built on Christianity. He argued that the wall dividing Europe would not come down without returning to the Gospel. You mustn't cut yourself off from your Christian roots. There is a need to build a common house out of bricks of human conscience. (Jan Paweł II 1997c. *Niewidzialny mur dzielący nadal Europę. The Invisible Wall that Still Separates Europe*).

The words spoken by the Pope, although they concern the continent, can be applied not only to individual parties and European countries, but also to spouses and family members. The object of every person's concern should be to ensure that there are no walls that divide, or defects that no one is working to remove. It is also worth pointing to the words spoken in the Jasna Góra sanctuary. The Pope spoke of the Church as a community of salvation and Christ living in it, showing the way. The path on which the Lord leads us leads to good, truth and eternal life.

In the highlander town of Zakopane, dominated by the cross erected on Giewont, John Paul II appealed: 'Do not be ashamed of the cross. Try to take up the cross every day, defend the cross, do not let God's Name be offended in your hearts, in your social or family life' (Jan Paweł II 1997b. *Krzyż na Giewoncie i w życiu. Cross on Mt Giewont and in Life*). God's love for man, expressed in the cross, brings people comfort, hope and strength expressed in the words *sursum corda*—'lift up the heart'.

1999⁷

The 7th pilgrimage of John Paul II began on 5 June 1999 in Gdańsk, the city where, the nationwide Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity" was established on 31 August 1980. Reminding this event during his homily in Sopot, the Pope states that it was groundbreaking 'in the history of our nation, and also in the history of Europe. <<Solidarity>> opened the gates of freedom in countries enslaved by the totalitarian system,

broke down the Berlin Wall and contributed to the unification of Europe, divided into two blocks since the Second World War'. (Jan Paweł II 1999g. *Nie ma solidarności bez miłości. There is no solidarity without love*). At that time, people chanted in the streets: "There is no freedom without solidarity." During this pilgrimage, the Pope argues that: "there is no solidarity without love," one that forgives but does not forget, is sensitive to the misfortune of others, does not seek its own, but desires good for others, the love that serves, it forgets herself and is ready to act generously "(ibid.). John Paul II points to the need to build the future on the commandment of love for God and neighbour, he encourages us to build a civilization of love. This teaching applies to all, but especially, to spouses who vow love, faithfulness and honesty in marriage and that they will not abandon each other until death. On their solemn wedding day, the bride and groom often choose the reading for the Mass, taken from the Letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul's Hymn on love (1 Cor 13: 1–8). It is important that they often return to the list of features that characterize true love contained in it and that they implement these features in their own lives. The testimony of their love inscribed in the marriage vocation is to have a positive and motivating effect on other couples and the whole society. Its task is also to create the right atmosphere of family life and friendly conditions for the development of children. The future cannot be built without God who is Love, hence the unequivocal papal exhortation 'Keep with God, always!' and the words addressed to young people: 'Defend your values in yourself and around'. (Jan Paweł II 2005, p. 1021).

The papal call to pilgrims in Pelplin can be considered a continuation of the teaching on love. The Pope encouraged them to build a home of their personal and social life on the rock, which is Jesus Christ. He asked that every house should have the book of the Gospel to read and meditate on, for "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk 11:28). He reminded the words of Saint Jerome, who proclaimed that 'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ'. The Pope expressed his joy that the Church "effectively supports the faithful in getting to know the content of Revelation" during the Holy Mass, catechesis, meetings of biblical circles in parishes, in communities and church movements. He also stated that 'the Church is Christ living in all of us'. He is the vine and the foundation, and we are the branches and the living stones (Jan Paweł II 1999b). *Budujcie dom na skale. Build a house on a rock*). The presented content can be considered the basis of religious education in a Catholic family. They are complemented by a reminder that keeping God's Law leads to eternal life that never ends. Jesus replies to the rich young man 'If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments' (Mt 19: 17b). The temptation to make one's life without God, or even against God, without His commandments and Gospel, still threatens, and life and the world without God turn against man. Therefore, during the June service in Elbląg, John Paul II together with the faithful repeated the commandments recorded in the Book of Exodus, saying: 'Here is the framework of morality given to man by the Creator' (Jan Paweł II 2005, p. 1032).

In a homily delivered on 7 June 1999 in Bydgoszcz, John Paul II spoke about those suffering persecution. He emphasized that the martyrdom testimony is the greatest test of humanity. As an example, he gave heroic mothers who make a decision to make a sacrifice of themselves to save a child's life. It is an expression of 'love that does not shy away from sacrifice' (Jan Paweł II 1999l). *Świadectwo męczeństwa. Testimony of Martyrdom*). The believer who defends the right to freedom of religion and conscience also faces such a test. Fidelity to God in times of persecution of the Church, martyrdom of faith demanding confession in front of people is a great test of human consciences. This very painful experience gives rise to the obligation of our contemporaries to remember and collect 'all the testimonies of those who gave their lives for Christ' (ibid.).

A meeting with the rectors of universities gathered at the Nicolaus Copernicus University took place in Toruń. It became an opportunity to present the great challenges facing science: defining the boundaries of the experiment and interference in the natural environment, indicating the sense and purpose of technical development. One should perceive the world as a gift from God the Creator and accept that 'Man is to be the prudent

host of the natural world, and not its mindless destroyer' (Jan Paweł II 1999j). O zadaniach nauki. *On the Goals of Science*). John Paul II recalls the words of St. Thomas Aquinas about the fact that human reason is a gift from God and a sign of likeness to God. It must be remembered that genuine freedom of scientific research must rest on the criterion of truth and goodness. Concern for moral conscience and the responsibility of science are the basic imperatives faced by people of science. There is also a need for "gratitude for the gift of another human being", together with which and for whom the truth is sought (ibid.)

In his homily during the Holy Mass in Ełk, the Pope urges us not to harden our hearts when we hear "the cry of the poor". People defined as "poor" are: unemployed, homeless, hungry, but also wronged, despised, lonely, forgotten, humiliated, mortified, suffering in hospitals, orphaned or abandoned children, single mothers, victims of war, refugees, disabled, addiction victims, adolescents experiencing the problems of their age. We are to be imitators of God and to walk in the way of love (Eph 5: 1–2). From selfish 'being for oneself' one should turn to others and 'be for others'. The help that should be provided is to be both material and spiritual. 'Material goods are there to serve others, especially those in need' (Jan Paweł II 2005, pp. 1060–62). Lack of wealth does not exempt from providing help, own presence, the gift of time, empathy and understanding. True love is also a spiritual service. Referring to the healing of a man born lame from birth who was unable to walk (Acts 3: 6), described in the Acts of the Apostles, the Pope emphasizes that "people who are poor in spirit, not possessing silver or gold themselves, have more power thanks to Christ than the one that can be given by all the riches of the world" (ibid., p. 1063).

Love should also stimulate dialogue and reconciliation of Christians. During the ecumenical service in Drohiczyn, the Pope says that divisions hurt the Mystical Body of Christ. According to a comparison made by the Orthodox theologian Paul Evdokimov, they are like the Way of the Cross that lasts for centuries. Fulfilling the commandment of love should lead to mutual forgiveness and prayer that transforms hearts. The Pope asks for fervent prayer and cooperation of the Churches. 'Progress on the road to unity requires our effort, mutual kindness, openness and genuine living of brotherhood in Christ' (Jan Paweł II 2005, pp. 1075–77).

Speaking to parliamentarians in Warsaw, the Pope emphasized that all changes are to help create a human and just world. You should take care of the family, human life, education of the young generation and the right to work. Action is needed for the integral unity of Europe and building on spiritual values to result in 'a great European community of spirit', hence the repeated call: 'Europe, open the door to Christ' (Jan Paweł II 1999m). *Z przemówienia do parlamentarzystów. From an Address to Parliamentarian*).

In an age of hedonism, relativism and permissiveness, the virtue of chastity seems to be the most attacked of all virtues. People who take it into account in their teaching and upbringing of the young generation are deprecated, ridiculed, discredited, considered backward, out-of-date, old-fashioned, unreal, out-of-touch, promoting content that is impossible to apply, untrue and even harmful by permissivists. (Dudziak 2009, pp. 383–99). The postulated rejection of the virtue of chastity would, however, destroy the fundamental parts of human pedagogy. It would also contribute to serious personal distortions of interpersonal relations, constituting a breakthrough in the civilization of love based on respect for others and personal, rather than instrumental and objective treatment of a human being. The virtue of chastity was included in the list of eight blessings presented by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount described in the Gospel of St. Matthew (Mt 5: 1–12). Living the Eight Blessings is not easy, but it is right and just. Jesus presenting them concludes, 'Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you, and when they say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be glad, for great your reward is in heaven. For in this way they persecuted the prophets who were before you' (Mt 5: 11–12). The invariability of this teaching is expressed in the words: 'Until heaven and earth pass away, not a single iota or a dash will change in the law' (Mt 5:18). It is worth noting, also today, in the context of changing fashions and trends in social functioning.

Christ's disciples are to proclaim the testimony of God's truth, being like the salt of the earth, the light of the world and the city on a mountain visible to all (Mt 5: 13–15). Their righteousness is to be greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt 5: 20), so that others may see their good works and glorify God the Father who is in heaven (Mt 5: 16).

It can be noticed that the papal homilies delivered during the pilgrimage to the Homeland in 1999 are based on the canvas of eight blessings. What the Pope said on June 12 in Sandomierz concerns purity of heart. Chastity, on the other hand, is of particular importance in preparing for marriage, in the life of spouses and families, and in educating the young generation. John Paul II encourages you to proclaim the good news of the purity of heart to the world and to show the civilization of love with your example. It teaches that you have to live against popular opinions that are contrary to the law of Christ. The courage to stand up for the Truth costs a lot, but you must not "lose love". The Pope addresses young people with an appeal: 'Do not be enslaved, do not be seduced by delusions of happiness, for which you would have to pay too much, for the price of often incurable injuries, or even your own and someone else's broken life!' (Jan Paweł II 1999a). *Błogosławieni czystego serca. Blessed are the pure in heart.*) He goes on to say: "Only a pure heart can fully love God. Only a pure heart can do the great work of love which is marriage! Only a pure heart can fully serve others! Don't let your future be destroyed! Do not allow yourself to be taken from the riches of love. Protect your faithfulness, the faithfulness of your future families that you will establish in the love of Christ" (Ibid. See also Jan Paweł II 2005. *Pielgrzymki do Ojczyzny, Pilgrimages to the Homeland*, pp. 1112–13). Families, fathers and mothers are reminded that 'The family must stand firmly in defense of the purity of its home thresholds, in defense of the purity of each person. Guard your families against pornography, which today invades people's consciousness in various guises, especially young people and children. Defend the purity of morals in your homes and in your social life. Education in chastity is one of the great tasks of evangelization that lies ahead of us. The cleaner the family is, the healthier the nation will be' (ibid.). John Paul II sensitizes hearts, encourages us to take specific actions and says all this precisely 'so that we may remain worthy of our Christian vocation' (ibid.).

In Warsaw, on Piłsudski Square, the Pope from Poland presents his gratitude to God for the power of the Holy Spirit poured into the hearts of people, which sanctifies and renews people, and for the changes that take place thanks to this, enabling them to rediscover their human dignity. Among the regained rights, suppressed by several decades of socialism, the Pope mentions: 'the multitude of churches recently built in our country!'; 'That believers can receive the sacraments without hindrance and listen to the word of God, and then openly bear witness to their faith!'; and 'that children and young people can come to know Christ with ease in a school where the presence of a priest, religious sister, catechist or catechist is seen as a valuable help in the work of educating the young generation!' (Jan Paweł II 2005, pp. 1123–24). Truth and justice become 'a challenge for all who appreciate the gift of their freedom' (Jan Paweł II 1999f). *Jakże dziś nie dziękować Bogu? How could we not thank God today?*). Remembering 108 Polish martyrs who were murdered during the Second World War while serving God and neighbor, the Pope asks the pilgrims to believe that God is love, to awaken in themselves hope and that this hope will bear fruit of faithfulness in every trial they experience.

Apart from the family and the Church, as well as people recognized as authority figures, the institution that has an educational influence on children and young people is the school. At a meeting in Łowicz on 14 June 1999, the Pope said that 'Special sensitivity is needed on the part of those who work at school in order to create a climate of dialogue, sensitized to the common good of the nation and teach young people to be responsible for the future'. (Jan Paweł II 1999c). *Do wychowawców i wychowanków. To educators and pupils.* Addressing the youth, he said that the Pope loves young people and cares about their future. He wants them to be well prepared for the tasks that await them. He admitted that the future of the Church, the world and Poland depends on them to a large extent. They will shape it.

The work undertaken by man is also responsible for themselves, their family and society as a whole. John Paul II devoted his meeting to this topic in Sosnowiec on the same day. Human work, as he taught, is co-creation with God. Not only is the material value obtained thanks to it important, but also the man—the creator. Exclusive concentration on material goods can make a man only an executive tool. The need to care for the employee, his family and the right to rest. It is important to notice the proportion between hardship and remuneration. You need the right approach to work, not to treat it only as an object, as a source of enrichment. For work ‘can dominate human life to such an extent that he ceases to pay attention to his health, relationship to his loved ones and God’ (Jan Paweł II 1999i). *O trudzie i godności pracy. About the hardship and dignity of work*). The Pope emphasized that “The dignity of work depends on the right judgment of conscience. In it, a reference is made to the Creator, which allows us to discover what is the real good for man and the world” (ibid.). For the gathered pilgrims, among whom there are both employees and employers, a valuable life guideline is the warning: “Whoever has lost the righteous judgment of conscience may make the blessing of work a curse” (ibid).

In his homily at Krakowskie Błonia, John Paul II said that history shows more than once how human weakness had been based on the eternal power of faith, hope and love. Today too, it is necessary to assess whether the contemporary people of God live the tradition of the apostles, the mission of the prophets, and the memory of the testimony of the blood shed by martyrs. We need such care for the future that the treasure of faith, hope and love ‘which our fathers have preserved in their struggles’ will not be lost by this generation as a result of being lulled by a misunderstanding of freedom. (Jan Paweł II 1999d). *Dobrego depozytu strzeżcie. Guard a Good Deposit*). We are responsible for the salvation of man and for the fate of the Church in the third millennium.

These words were continued in the teaching on holiness delivered in Stary Sącz. The Pope pointed out that care for holiness requires the creation of environments that strive for and develop this holiness. It requires efforts to ensure that the family home, school, place of work, villages and cities, the whole country ‘become the dwelling place of holy people who work with goodness, faithfulness to the teachings of Christ, everyday life testimony, bringing about the spiritual growth of every human being’ (Jan Paweł II 1999e). *Dzisiejszy świat potrzebuje świętości. The world today needs holiness*). The modern world still needs the testimony of believers. And they need the courage not to put the light of their faith under a bushel. There is a need for “a thirst for holiness” to enter into the hearts of believers, which brings back life and shapes entire communities. Today’s world needs the holiness of Christians who take up their duties in everyday life, who want to fulfill the will of the Creator and, in their daily service to people, respond to his eternal love” (ibid). The sanctity of people should manifest itself in all areas of life: in politics, economy, law, and social activity. There is a need everywhere: a spirit of service, honesty, truth and concern for the common good undertaken even at the expense of generous resignation from what serves only one’s own good. It is also necessary in marital and family relationships, to give glory to God, to be mutual support for each other in the pursuit of holiness, to set a useful example in raising children, to share their holiness with society, motivate them and mobilize them to constant improving and growing in holiness.

At the end of the pilgrimage in 1999, a particularly touching visit took place in Wadowice—the childhood city of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. It contained many important moments, such as: presence in the parish church, where he was baptized as a child, greeting the gathered people with words praising the Lord: “Praised be Jesus Christ” and the loud response of the pilgrims: “For ever and ever. Amen”. The reminiscence of the clock on the church wall with the inscription: ‘Time is running out, eternity is waiting’, teaching responsibility for every moment of life. Emphasizing the value of bonds with family and close people, a testimony of religiosity that is important in human life (ibid). It was evident that the Pope felt at home in this place. He remembered and named particular streets and shops very well, with the famous confectionery selling cream cakes. You could also see the joy of pilgrims invited to his city, home, a group of friends and acquaintances from the old

days, pilgrims feeling all that he was telling about and chanting the sentences: “You are at your place”, “Welcome home” (ibid). A lively bond with the people reacting positively to papal memories and with the Pope who is the Head of the Church, and at the same time a Man as close as Father and Brother, were expressed by the shouted words: “We love you”, “Stay with us” and a solemn singing expressing wishes flowing from the hearts; “One hundred years, one hundred years, long live for us” (ibid). The joy experienced together, sharing a good word and a heart full of affection also revealed the value of this type of pilgrimage, in which there was thanksgiving for mutual enrichment.

That joy was continued in Gliwice (Jan Paweł II 1999k). *Ślązaki mi przebaczyły. The Silesians Have Forgiven Me*), and on 17 June 1999, another farewell took place in Krakow. John Paul II asked for prayer to support him in the Petrine ministry, and the people chanted the answer: ‘We promise’ (Jan Paweł II 1999h. *Nie opuszczam mego kraju. I am not leaving my country*).

2002⁸

In a welcome speech at the airport in Krakow on 16 August 2002 John Paul II thanked the young people for the testimony of faith they gave in Canada during the World Youth Day (https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/2002/travels/documents/trav_poland-2002.html (accessed on 22 October 2021)). These days, initiated by Jan Paweł II (1986) gather young people from all over the world who make pilgrimages to the place designated for a given year to meet the Pope, listen to his words and pray together. So far, there have been 37 such meetings. The most numerous took place in 1995 in Manila, Philippines, where the group of participants consisted of 5 million people. The next World Youth Day is planned for 2023 in Lisbon.

The slogan of the last pilgrimage to Poland announced by John Paul II was taken from the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* and the verse quoted in it from the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians, the words: ‘God rich in mercy’ (Jan Paweł II 1980 DM I, 1; Eph 2: 4). Referring to the changes in Poland that have taken place since the first pilgrimage in 1979, the Pope draws attention to the social teaching of the Church ‘on building a native house on the foundation of justice, love and peace’ (Jan Paweł II 2005, p. 1201) The Pope understands the difficult situation of large families and elderly people who bear the costs of socio-economic changes. He brings to all the words of Jesus Christ which are the message of God’s mercy: ‘Don’t be afraid’ (Rev 1: 17), because ‘Christ the unfailing Giver of hope is with you’ (Jan Paweł II 2005). Concluding his speech, which was the introduction to this pilgrimage, John Paul II expressed the wish that these days would awaken in everyone a deep faith in the power of God’s mercy, unite in love, inspire responsibility for the life and everyday life of every human being, and encourage goodness and mutual understanding, so that they all become even more intimate in the spirit of love and mercy, so that their hearts would be filled with the grace of hope. Then the Pope blessed everyone for a common pilgrimage.

In the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy, Krakow—Łagiewniki, 17 August 2002, the Pope stated that the loss of man and multiple manifestations of evil reveal the need to refer to God’s omnipotent love, to formulate a request for consolation and to look into the eyes of merciful Jesus. Consecrating the newly built temple, John Paul II said that although each time and the whole world can be considered God’s temple ‘there are times and places that God chooses so that people may experience His presence and His grace in a special way in them’ (ibid. p. 1205). The Pope prayed that ‘the Church would always be a place of proclaiming the message of God’s mercy; a place of conversion and penance; a place where the Eucharistic sacrifice is celebrated—the source of mercy; a place of prayer—persistent plea for mercy for us and for the whole world’ (ibid). In addition to the truth about human sin, God’s Justice and Judgment (Jn 16.8), the Holy Spirit reveals the truth about the fullness of salvation in Christ and the merciful, forgiving love of God (*Dominum et vivificantem* 32) John Paul II notices that ‘Where there is hatred and the desire to retaliate, where war brings pain and death to the innocent, there is a need for the grace of mercy that soothes human

minds and hearts and generates peace' (ibid. p. 1207). Such peace without 'civil wars' is also needed by couples and families, whose main task is to express love and give birth to life, improve themselves, raise children and grow together in holiness. John Paul II claims that 'In God's mercy the world will find peace and man will find happiness!' (ibid). That is why he calls on believers, including pilgrims staying in this temple, to be witnesses of mercy. The Pope concludes his statement in Krakow's Łagiewniki with a prayer: 'May the Merciful God bless all pilgrims who come here and will come here' (ibid. p. 1208).

A short stop at the construction site of the new Library of the Pontifical Academy of Theology gave John Paul II the opportunity to address rectors, professors, students and university staff. The Pope assured me of his prayer and gratitude for what he had received while studying and working in Krakow and at the Catholic University of Lublin in Lublin, he greeted all universities and, in line with the words of the student hymn song *Gaudeamus igitur*, wished the universities to flourish "semper sint in flore" (p. 1207).

The custom of papal pilgrimages to Poland was that when the Pope stayed overnight in Krakow, in front of the window of the archbishop's seat at ul. Floriańska 3, young people gathered for short talks with the Pope. This form of additional, informal meetings began in 1979 and lasted until the last stay in 2002. That is why John Paul II stated that he and some of them are already 23 years older. He recalled that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and gave advice to keep 'youth in God' despite the passing of the years and imminent death (p. 1210). He wished all the youth of Krakow, Poland and the world, and concluded it with words, 'let God bless everyone today and tomorrow.

In the homily during the Mass on 18 August in Krakow, he reminded the sentence of St. Paul from the Letter to the Ephesians: 'God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us. Even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ' (Eph 2: 4–5). From this arises the duty of love given to us by Jesus, about which we read in the Gospel of St. John: 'This is my commandment: love each other as I have loved you' (Jn 15: 12). We are to show mercy to our brothers and sisters and be witnesses of God's mercy in today's world. 20th century chosen by God to spread mercy (Kowalska 1995), was an age of special iniquity.

In addition to world wars and the reigning totalitarian regimes, new threats emerge. 'Man often lives as if God did not exist. He usurps the Creator's right to interfere with the mystery of human life. He tries to decide about its occurrence, determine its shape through genetic manipulations, and finally define the limits of death. By rejecting God's laws and morals, he opens up against the family. In many ways, there are attempts to drown out the voice of God in people's hearts, and to make Him the Great Absent in the social culture and consciousness of nations'. (Jan Paweł II 2005, p. 1213). The result of the 'mystery of iniquity' is man's fears of the future, emptiness, suffering and nothingness. They imply a need for relief and hope. Their source is God's eternal mercy. The Pope states that it is necessary that "the message of merciful love resound with new strength. The world needs this love! The time has come for Christ's message to reach everyone, especially those whose humanity and dignity seem to be lost in the mystery of iniquitatis. The time has come for the message of God's mercy to fill people's hearts with hope and become the source of a new civilization—a civilization of love" (ibid. p. 1213). In his speech, John Paul II pointed to the triad of behaviors: one must ask for God's mercy, testify to it and show mercy. They should be done both to those in need of bread or shelter, and to those who experience helplessness, abandonment and confusion. as the Pope said, you need the "imagination of mercy", 'to come and help a spiritually and materially neglected child, not to turn away from a boy or girl who is lost in a world of various addictions or crime; to bring advice, consolation, spiritual and moral support to those who take up an internal struggle with evil' (ibid. p. 1215).

On the same day, in reflection before the prayer, the Angel of the Lord addressed the boys and girls of the Light-Life Movement (Ruch Światło-Życie 2021), which 'is a vibrant environment for the spiritual development of young people and families' (ibid. p. 1216). The Pope assured those gathered about his prayers and wished that the love of

the Eucharist and the Bible would always shed God's light on their paths of life. He also greeted the members of the Catholic Youth Association and scouts whom he entrusted to the protection of the Blessed Mother. Then, in 12 languages, he greeted pilgrims from: Lithuania, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Uzbekistan, Hungary, France, England, Canada, USA <Germany>, Austria and Italy. A song about vocation, sung by young people, encourages reflection on the paths of vocation: priestly, religious, married or single. In each of these paths, it is essential to relate man to Jesus. In Christian education for family life, it is very important whether the future spouses will follow Jesus or go through life rejecting His teachings

On 19 August at the Marian Sanctuary in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, John Paul II said: 'Today I am coming to this sanctuary as a pilgrim, just as I used to come here as a child and as a teenager. I am standing before the Madonna of Kalwaria, as when I came here as a bishop from Krakow to entrust to her the matters of the archdiocese and those whom God entrusted to my pastoral care' (p. 1222). In this way, the Pope expressed the fact that the sanctuary is a place of special prayer. He pointed out that this is the experience of generations of pilgrims who have been coming here for 400 years. Contemplating the Passion of the Lord from the Upper Room to the Tomb of Christ and the compassion of the Mother with the Son walking on the Way of the Cross, pilgrims find themselves 'in the centre of this love', their life, their weakness and the strength of faith and hope, as well as the conviction that "Mother does not abandon her child in misfortunes, but leads them to the Son and entrusts them to His mercy' (ibid). In this important and frequently visited place by pilgrims, the Pope undertook many prayer intentions. To Mary the Advocate, he entrusted the poor and the suffering, the wealthy, the unemployed and the homeless, bishops, priests and religious communities, himself, the Church, and the Nation. He also prayed for families, young people and children, asking: "Give families a love that will enable them to endure all hardships. Show young people the way and prospects for the future. Cover the children with the mantle of your protection so that they will not be stumbled "(p. 1225).

The topic of the family appeared in the farewell speech at the Balice airport on the last day of the Pope's pilgrimage to Poland on 19 August 2002. John Paul II wished families: 'in prayer to find light and strength to fulfil their tasks, spreading the message of merciful love in their communities'. He also told the families: 'May God, who is the source of life, bless you every day' (p. 1227). The topic of the family appeared in the farewell speech at the Balice airport on the last day of the Pope's pilgrimage to Poland on 19 August 2002. John Paul II wished families 'in prayer to find light and strength to fulfill their tasks, spreading the message of merciful love in their communities'. He also told those families: 'May God, who is the source of life, bless you every day' (p. 1227). Then, he listed five essential values: the spirit of mercy, brotherly solidarity, consent, cooperation, and concern for the homeland. He also expressed the hope that by cultivating these values, Polish society—which has belonged to Europe for centuries—will find its proper place in the structures of the European Community and not only will not lose its own identity, but will enrich this continent and the whole world with its tradition (pp. 1227–28). At the end of this pilgrimage, the Pope, together with the entire community of the Church in Poland, addressed Merciful Jesus with the words: 'Jesus, I trust in You!' and added: 'May this sincere confession bring relief to future generations in the new millennium' (p. 1228).

From 1979 to 2002, during 64 pilgrimage days in Poland, John Paul II delivered 264 speeches (Jan Paweł II 2005). This time of national retreats provided the Pope's countrymen with a lot of content. They can form the basis of personal, marital, family and general formation in Poland and in the world.

4. Discussion

The next part of the article will begin with a brief presentation of the contents of the papal speeches presented above. It will open a space for reflections related to John Paul II's speeches.

4.1. Pro-Family Content of Papal Speeches

Marriage and the family occupy a significant place in the teaching of the Catholic Church. The family community, which is initiated by a God-blessed personal, assumed unbreakable and lifelong relationship between a woman and a man takes up many tasks. The following are worth mentioning among them: the expression of love, the transmission of life, mutual improvement and the pursuit of holiness.

In the speeches made by John Paul II during his pilgrimages to Poland in 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1997, 1999 and 2002, the Pope repeatedly raised topics important for marriage and family life. He emphasized the need to be strong with the power of faith, hope and love, and the importance of faithfulness (Krakow 1979). He addressed young people because a successful adult life in a marriage depends on an earlier personal formation undertaken in the pre-marriage period. He called for raising a barrier to demoralization, not tolerating evil, being people of conscience demanding of themselves even if others did not do so (Częstochowa 1983). He emphasized the importance of the bond of love in the family and the fact that it is the family that 'is the first school of love' (Katowice 1983). He talked about values 'that must be maintained and defended in and around oneself, defended for oneself and for others' (Gdańsk—Westerplatte 1987).

He pointed out that human existence has a community and social dimension. He pointed to personal development, also through work. For the spouses to make every effort together and the need for mutual help provided by husband and wife (Gdańsk—Zaspa 1987). He reminded the Decalogue containing fundamental life signposts important both for an individual and their relations with others in all, both smaller and larger social groups (Koszalin 1991). He pointed to the need to pursue holiness and meet man with God who wants to embrace every human being with his holiness. He said that today's world needs holiness and witnesses to faith (Stary Sącz 1999). He called for the defence of the purity of morals and the rejection of pornography (Warsaw 1999). He convinced young people that 'Only a pure heart can fully love God. Only a pure heart can do the work of marriage. Only a pure heart can fully serve the others' (Sandomierz 1999). The Pope deplored the crisis of the family, which had multiple negative consequences. He undertook responsibility for family morality and vigorously opposed the further destruction of families by spreading a false freedom that enslaves (Kielce 1991).

John Paul II taught that the authentic love of a woman and a man should extend to a child who is a gift of God. It is unacceptable that a child should be treated as an intruder and that instead of paternal and maternal love, the child would be in danger of losing his or her life through abortion. No human instance has the right to legalize the murder of an innocent and defenceless man. The Pope explained that the fifth commandment should be understood not only as a ban on taking life, but also as an obligation to care for and protect life and health, and to respect human dignity (Radom 1991).

Caring for a child is also a concern for upbringing children confirmed by their parents with the example of their parents' own lives. Christians should be people of conscience listening to the voice of God, striving for holiness, introducing a moral order, bearing in mind the common good (Skoczów 1995). Marital and parental love, which is the basis for the proper functioning of the family, does not limit the tasks of a woman and a man. All Christians should bring light to social life (Legnica 1997). It is an important issue for their children as well. The family is the first place of socialization, teaching proper relations with others, preparing for life in a wider society. The task of future generations will also be creating a civilization of love and social justice in the world. Christ helps a person to understand another person (Gniezno 1997). He teaches good, truth, and leads to eternal life (Jasna Góra 1997). Christ's love, revealed to people through His cross, is for them a power that helps them to solve problems and bear their own difficulties in life. True love 'does not shy away from sacrifice' (Bydgoszcz 1999).

Jan Paweł II (1998), who on 14 September 1998 announced in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* that 'Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to contemplate the truth'. Also during his pilgrimage to Poland while visiting the Nicolaus Copernicus

University, he drew attention to the limits of the experiment and the need for prudent management of the natural world, not its destruction. He recommended concern for moral conscience and gratitude for the other person with whom the truth is sought (Toruń 1999).

Recalling the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Eph 5), the pope emphasized that spouses are especially called to follow the path of love, follow Christ, avoid all divisions, forgive one another, and the relationship of husband and wife is to illustrate the bond between Christ and the Church (Ełk 1999). The responsibility of families and society is mutual. The value of man and family obliges the whole society to care for the family, for human life, for the upbringing of the young generation, and for the right to work (Warsaw 1999).

In the spiritual testament that John Paul II passed on during his last pilgrimage to Poland, he spoke about God's mercy. He called not to be afraid since 'Christ the unfailing Giver of hope' is with us. He encouraged us to awaken faith and responsibility for the life of every human being, to mutual understanding, to do good, to love and hope (Krakow 2002). He spoke about the duty to love (Jn 15: 12). He advised that everyone, despite the passing years, should keep 'youth in God'. He was against such a life as if God did not exist and man's usurpation of the rights of God-the Creator, who is the only Lord of life and death. He called to ask for God's Mercy, to testify about it and to do it for the needy. He prayed for love in families, prospects for young people and protection of children from scandal (Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 2002). Just before his departure to the Vatican, the Pope asked God's blessing for families to spread merciful love in their environment, trust in Jesus, put their hope in him and draw solace from him.

John Paul II's deep and mutual bond with pilgrims all over the world is evidenced by the fact that, when he was fatally ill, crowds of people of various nationalities filled St. Peter's Square. Upon learning of the crowds of young people who had come to pray for him, John Paul II, lying on his deathbed, whispered: 'I was looking for you, and now you have come to me and I thank you for that' (www.opoka.news/jan-pawel-ii-odchodzenie-pasterza-fakty-i-opinie_20385 [*John Paul II - The Departure of the Shepherd (Facts and Opinions)*] (accessed on 27 October 2021)) (Jan Paweł II 2019). Although the Pope, beloved by so many, departed for the Father's House on 2 April 2005, his words remained. The written papal speeches can still serve young people, spouses and families in forming themselves and their own attitudes.

4.2. Reflections on the Content of Papal Speeches

Expressing conjugal love requires understanding what love is and what personality traits are conducive to authentic love for another human being. John Paul II spoke about it both before accession to the St Peter's Throne during his pastoral work in Krakow and academic activity in Lublin and in his speeches during his pilgrimage to Poland. The Pope emphasized the virtue of love and chastity, stressed the need to protect human life and respect human dignity, spoke about the proper use of freedom and responsibility, presence and diligence. All these qualities are useful not only for collective activities, but also for marital references and family upbringing. Love, loyalty, honesty and active support of the husband or wife and accompanying a loved one until death are not only the words spoken during the marriage vow, but also the basic tasks and obligations of the spouses carried out every day. The value of marriage and family, accepted and protected by moral norms, is an important mission in life. It should not be neglected or abandoned or deserted. In addition to the usefulness of the content heard, the value of participating in pilgrimages is being together in marriage and family, participating in the same events, listening to the same words, experiencing liturgy together, benefiting from the witness of other spouses' zeal and piety, and praying together. All this, together with the received blessing, comforts both spouses, gives them new hope, new enthusiasm, new mobilization and motivation to make efforts for the good of others. A pilgrimage may or may not be a reason for a spectacular conversion. It may also be a kind of gaining new energy to carry out the effort of transforming and perfecting oneself and the service to the husband or wife undertaken

day by day. This is in line with the words of the poet Jerzy Liebert, who said: ‘Having made a choice forever, I must make a choice at every moment’.

The results of retreat experiences also depend on the attitudes of the participants. Focusing solely on the perception of what is external, superficial, without reaching the essence of the matter, without interiorizing the content heard, will not bring the expected changes. The evangelical seed produces different crops depending on the soil onto which it falls (cf. Matthew 13: 3–9).

The content of the eight pilgrimages to Poland prompts us to ask questions and try to answer them. The essential question is whether the pilgrims have accepted and applied the teachings addressed to them in their personal and social lives? The time that has passed since those pilgrimages, and the events that follow them are the verifiers of the changes and their durability that have taken place. The establishment of the Solidarity Trade Union and the Nation’s freedom spurt leading to political changes in Poland, testifying to interpersonal solidarity, prove that speaking about human dignity and freedom made people aware of the personal power and strength of social unity. However, has the same transformation taken place in the sphere of morality and the acceptance of moral norms that protect marriage and family life? Has there been a change and is it permanent? Will representatives of different nationalities obtain similar results? An authoritative answer to this question is connected with the necessity to continue the questionnaire research and compare the results to the previous ones, e.g., those described in the book *Postawy wobec wychowania seksualnego a hierarchia wartości nauczycieli [Attitudes Towards Sexual Education and the Hierarchy of Teachers’ Values]* (Dudziak 2009). It may also be useful to consider the systemic context and compare the changes initially made in *Seksualność a polityka od socjalizmu do liberalizmu [Sexuality and Politics from Socialism to Liberalism]* (Dudziak 1999).

John Paul II encouraged pilgrims to make their own axiological comparisons. The question of “spiritual Westerplatte” is a question of values that a person is ready to defend. Examples of answers given by people from different eras can be found in the Holy Scriptures and in the history of the world. God, honor, Fatherland, Church, religion, commandments, man, husband, wife, child, marriage, family, love, life—these are values that have been defended until shedding of blood. An example of defending religious values is Daniel in the lions’ den, ready to give his life rather than defy God (Dan 6: 2–29). Likewise, the Sons of Maccabees (2 Mch 7: 1–42), Eleazar (2 Mch 6: 18–31), Jesus dying on the cross for the salvation of the world (Jn 19: 1–37) and the first Christians killed at the Colosseum.

The history of Poland also helps in understanding the profound meaning of John Paul II’s pilgrimage speeches and their reception by Christians. Defense of the faith during the Swedish invasions of Poland (1655–1660), defense of the country and the world against the Muslim onslaught of the Tatars and Turks (1620–1621; 1666–1671; 1683–1699), the partitions of Polish lands by Russia, Prussia and Austria, and the erasure of Poland from the world map over a period of 123 years (1795–1918), attempts at Germanization (in 1740–1919) and Russification (from 1831) of the Polish nation, national liberation uprisings, victory at Vienna of troops under the command of King Jan III Sobieski over the army of the Ottoman Empire under the leadership of the vizier Kara Mustafa, the fight against the Nazi occupier and the totalitarianism imposed by the Soviet Union, the opposition of the supporters of Catholic-normative sex education to the demoralization of the young generation by secular-permissive sexual education and a change in the core curriculum of education for family life at school, clashes of free ideology pro-choice death in defence of pro-life. It is easier to understand the zeal and authenticity of the Pope, but also of some Polish Catholics, when the words: ‘Christ, we will not abandon your temples, we will not bury our faith, the vain attempts of evil spirits and their vain intentions’ (Nie rzucim Chryste świątyń Twych [Christ, We Will Not Abandon Your Temples] n.d.); https://dziedzictwo.ekai.pl/@nie_rzucim_chryste_swiatyn_twych (accessed on 16 November 2021) Christ, We Will Not Abandon Your Temples.

Spouses and parents play an important role in religious, moral and family-oriented upbringing. That is why pastoral care for this social group is so important. The expres-

sion of love and the transmission of life are inscribed in the conjugal vocation. For this reason, love and life are two special values that require the protection of spouses by their spouses and parents. According to the exhortation of John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, the “trivialization of human sexuality” (FC 37) must not be allowed. According to the fifth Commandment of the Decalogue, “Do not kill”, one must not allow killing a man, also in the prenatal phase of his development. Both body and spirit cannot be killed, thus the need to protect children from demoralization. It is worth considering today the statement of St. Paul from the Letter to the Hebrews: “In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood” (Heb 12: 4).

Belonging to the Polish nation gave the Pope a special sensitivity and the ability to understand other people’s problems, the ability to direct and make helpful contacts, genuine commitment and readiness to serve. It helped him in understanding experiences, reaching people’s hearts with the right message, skilfully chosen words, with refreshment, but also with the requirement to stand up for true values.

John Paul II spoke not only as a professor but also as a witness. He was genuine and direct. He not only talked about the need for love, but he loved. This was evident in his approach to children, the sick and the elderly, and even his would-be killer, Mehmet Ali Agca. He was credible when he saw people hungry for bread and God, experiencing violence, being shot in the streets, deported to Nazi camps and persecuted in the post-war period by the followers of Marxism, Leninism and Stalinism. Knowing the history of Poland, John Paul II knew what was conducive to falls and what helped to rise from them. Knowing the history of the Church, biblical figures and saints, he could call on people to make demands of themselves. He himself did not avoid the demands and even when he was sick, he did not stop serving people who were looking for God’s ways.

According to the principles of interpersonal communication, how the listening public benefit from the pilgrimage teaching also depends on their personal maturity and the attitude with which they come. They can experience a strong emotional experience and stay only on the outside of the event. They can stay only for the pleasures of experienced impressions, stop at the experience of these wonderful moments. However, they can internalize the content they have heard and make the effort to implement it in their own lives and improve themselves.

In the relations between a woman and a man, one can also stop at the pleasant but external facade of their mutual relations. However, you can reach a deeper level, taking responsibility for a loved one and the trouble of constant help and care. Such involvement is demanding and it costs a little psychophysically. Except for the joy experienced and the clapping of the enthusiastic crowd when the Pope speaks of love, something else is needed. The need for motivation and a mature decision to work on oneself, continuous growth and improvement to become a more and more valuable gift for husband, wife, children and society. You need an attitude not only to have many pilgrimage souvenirs bought on a stall, but also to be a more and more mature Christian, not only to take from others, but also to give them. A pilgrimage should bring not only temporary emotions, but also stimulate motivation to do better. It should also give new strength to the further effort of self-development and bond building. The pastoral care that John Paul II showed to couples and families during his pilgrimages should be used for further personal endeavours, work on oneself and relationships with other people. It should be understood as an invitation to systematic spiritual work, empowerment and guidance.

It seems that not all changes occurring in the years that have passed since the papal pilgrimages would be in line with the intentions of John Paul II. He would certainly appreciate the developing Movement of Pure Hearts, supporting young people in maintaining chastity before marriage and the Movement of Pure Hearts of Marriages (Ruch Czystych Serc 2021), supporting spouses in responsibility for their vow of love, improving each other and mutual relations, maintaining marital fidelity, passing on life in accordance with moral standards and striving for holiness. (<https://rcs.org.pl/> accessed on 12 November 2021). It can be concluded from the papal teaching that John Paul II would be glad to continue

the work that was already valued many years ago, which is the still existing Light-Life Movement (Ruch Światło-Życie 2021) and the formation of spouses in the Church House Movement (<https://www.oaza.pl/> accessed on 12 November 2021). As a pope who values responsible parenthood and the implementation of moral principles in the field of transmitting human life, John Paul II would positively evaluate the creation of associations of teachers of natural family planning. It would support educating brides in the field of fertility recognition, disseminating this knowledge among medical students, future and current teachers as well as health care workers and advisers involved in the work of family conciliation services.

There are also actions that John Paul II would not approve of. He would be opposed to assimilating the sexualization of children and adolescents from the extremely liberal circles of Western countries. He would not agree to the delivery of depraved content via the Internet, cinema and certain TV programs. He would be negative about offering children workshops by so-called sex educators trying to replace traditional moral norms with permissiveness contrary to Christianity.

For years, the Christians of those countries where the depraving influences had started earlier (McDowell Josh 1986; Riches 1984; Nathanson 1979) have warned Poles against the demoralization of the young generation and the lack of responsibility for love and life. Currently, similarly unfavorable trends appearing in Poland should make us refer again to the teaching preached by John Paul II. The sermons about love and life require repetition, consolidation and deepening as well as constant implementation of the word into action. A proper understanding of love, freedom, responsibility, human dignity and the protection of life from conception to natural death is the foundation not only for individual families, but also for the entire human civilization.

A reminder of papal speeches along with a reflection on the conditions and the form of their transmission implies final summaries and pastoral recommendations.

5. Conclusions

Religiousness, piety, proper hierarchy of values and respect for moral norms are essential both in the life of a specific individual and in the society in which he or she lives. A special place for shaping proper attitudes is the family, and parents are the child's first educators. Love and responsibility are the foundations of marital happiness and the indissolubility of marriage. Current difficulties and irregularities experienced by the modern family, behaviour inconsistent with moral norms: sexualization of children, promiscuity, cohabitant relationships, infidelity, breakdowns of marriages, insufficient sexual and reproductive responsibility, abortion, mistakes and neglect in the educational impact of parents on children, and, on the other hand, looking at the multiplicity and value of tasks, both individual and social, that families have to fulfil, reveal the great need to care for marital and family formation. Karol Wojtyła, a priest and professor of ethics noticed it also as the future Pope John Paul II. He cared very much for the quality of the spiritual life of every human being. A significant place in his teaching was occupied by preparation for marriage and support of spouses in undertaking tasks such as: purity, holiness, expressing love and transmitting life. He also drew attention to the upbringing responsibility of parents, whose testimonies and educational efforts to a large extent determine the attitudes of children. The Pope, who came from Poland, did not shut himself up within the walls of the Vatican, but took the pilgrim's effort to teach people who needed evangelization and ethical content. The value of the article is to draw attention to the formative role of pilgrimages and to make available the issues contained in the speeches of eight papal pilgrimages to the homeland held in the years from 1979 to 2002 to the Readers. This is all the more important because marriage and family formation applies to all nations, and so far some of the content of John Paul II's speeches in Poland has not been officially translated into English.

The shared pilgrimage experiences, the contents heard, the hardships of the journey and the time of being together in a large group of other marriages and families give the

spouses a new chance. It is the opportunity to look at each other with love, appreciate each other, give mutual support, say a kind word, make a gesture of peace, be a gift to each other and notice that this person with whom they walk through life is a great gift. The time of the pilgrimage can teach love and different ways of expressing it. It is a time of mutual closeness and empathy, a reminder of faithfulness and indissolubility, as well as good deeds for other people, the closest of whom are: husband, wife, children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, other family members and other circles of society.

When answering the questions in the Introduction, it should be stated that participation in pilgrimages can motivate and mobilize spouses to better fulfill their marriage and parental vocation. The source of this motivation and mobilization may be the content of the teaching given by the Pope, testimony of other people's religiosity, uplifting mood, time spent together and events with one's own husband or wife, as well as personal prayer and contemplation. The given opportunities for spiritual growth can be used or remain only on the registration of superficial pilgrimage experiences. What choice each pilgrim makes is their decision.

It is not enough, however, to listen to or read the content prepared by the Pope once. You have to come back to them, explore, consider, interiorize them, draw conclusions that are appropriate for you, derive postulates, set specific tasks, carry them out, use the guidelines and put the truths you adopted into practice. Grandparents, parents, teachers, priests and journalists face a specific task to pass on to the younger generation the catechesis of John Paul II. This content should also be understood by spouses and those preparing for marriage. Specific recommendations can be distinguished from the papal teaching:

1. Recognize Christ as your Lord, and be faithful to Christian values.
2. Love and forgive. Trust God's Mercy and be merciful to people.
3. Be strong with the strength of faith and hope, have trust in spite of your weakness.
4. Keep a sensitive conscience and act on it. Be victorious over sin.
5. Identify your own "spiritual Westplatte" (norms, values, vocation). Do not give up, keep on hoping, and serve until the end.
6. Preserve the right hierarchy of values and live in accordance with it.
7. Appreciate the value of the family as a school of love.
8. Pay attention to your spouse's needs. Help one another while maintaining marital unity and solidarity.
9. Do not disregard professional work, but also do not glorify it by putting it above God and people.
10. Do not isolate yourself from others. Don't create barriers between family members.
11. Provide material and spiritual help to those in need. Don't be indifferent to social problems.
12. Resist demoralization, protect others (especially children) and yourself against it.
13. Recognize that true freedom is not enslaving and comes with responsibility.
14. Prevent conflicts, divorce, addictions, long-term dissolution of spouses, Euro-orphanhood. Avoid temptations and do not create them yourself.
15. Make sure that the words that you say serve the truth and do not fight against others.
16. Maintain sexual responsibility through chastity and faithfulness.
17. Maintain a procreative responsibility. Teach yourself and others methods of fertility recognition. Develop appropriate attitudes towards the child in the prenatal period.
18. Remember the love of the married wife / husband and show it to children for whom it provides the right atmosphere for development.
19. Take care to educate the young generation. Develop the virtue of chastity in them.
20. Defend the chastity of the home hearth. Keep your family safe from pornography.
21. Listen to God's voice and His Commandments.
22. Create environments that strive for holiness.

Examples of environments that the last of the above-mentioned indications encourages to create are *Ruch Światło-Życie* [the Light-Life formation movement], *Domowy Kościół* [the Church of the House], or the *Focolare* Movement established in Italy, or the French *Equipe*

Notre Dame. Christians from other countries may introduce other communities that are useful for the spiritual development of marriages and families, and which will support them on their path to holiness. In the first issue of the Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, published on 22 November 1981, John Paul II wrote that “marriage and family are one of the most valuable assets of humanity” (FC1). He recommended that married couples and families be helped, supported and sustained. This kind of support can also be conveying the content of his pilgrimage teaching.

Funding: This article (translation, proofreading) were funded by subsidy Faculty of Theology of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, the discipline of theological science. GD publications: *Więź małżeńska i rodzicielska: wybrane problemy i czynniki wsparcia* (Marital and parental bond: selected problems and support factors) number 1/6-20-21-01-0701-0002-0679.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: I thank Mariano Barbato and Lareina Wang for invitation me to submit a paper to special issue Pilgrimage and Religious Mobilization in Europe. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers and the academic editor.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Abbreviations

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i> —Documents of the Holy See
CCC	<i>Catechismo Della Chiesa Cattolica</i> <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CRF	<i>Charter of the Rights of the Family</i>
DM	<i>Dives in Misericordia</i>
EV	<i>Evangelium vitae</i>
FC	<i>Familiaris consortio</i>
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
RM	<i>Redemptoris mission</i>
VS	<i>Veritatis splendor</i>

Notes

- ¹ The texts of the papal speeches from this pilgrimage this year have been translated into English and can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/1979/travels/documents/trav_poland-1979.html (accessed on 22 October 2021).
- ² The texts of the papal speeches from the pilgrimage this year have not been translated into English.
- ³ The texts of the papal speeches from the pilgrimage this year have not been translated into English.
- ⁴ The texts of the papal speeches from the pilgrimage this year have not been translated into English.
- ⁵ The texts of the papal speeches from the pilgrimage this year have not been translated into English.
- ⁶ The texts of the papal speeches from this pilgrimage this year have been translated into English and can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/1997/travels/documents/trav_poland-1997.html (accessed on 22 October 2021). This pilgrimage was the longest of all pilgrimages to Poland.
- ⁷ The texts of the papal speeches from this pilgrimage this year have been translated into English and can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/1999/travels/documents/trav_poland-1999.html (accessed on 22 October 2021).
- ⁸ The texts of the papal speeches from this pilgrimage this year have been translated into English and can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/2002/travels/documents/trav_poland-2002.html (accessed on 22 October 2021).

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Article

The Main Philosophical Inspirations in the Teaching of John Paul II during His Pilgrimages to Poland

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Abstract: The article focuses on the philosophical aspects of John Paul II's teachings during his pilgrimages to Poland. The pope, as an academic and philosopher, often discussed, in his teaching, topics that had also previously been part of his scholarly philosophical studies. Therefore, the philosophical legacy of Karol Wojtyła serves a significant context that enriches the papal teachings. This way, a complementing light is shed on his teachings, the terms he was using gain a deeper meaning and one can observe a deeper sense in his message. Under the influence of the statements of John Paul II during his pilgrimages to Poland, an unmistakable impression arises that they form a logical and comprehensive moral teaching firmly rooted in his pre-pontifical theological and philosophical thought, developing ideas (especially in the theological dimension) and giving them practical expression. The philosophical work of Karol Wojtyła is an important pillar and source of inspiration for the theology of John Paul II, especially in his teaching about the human person, laying the foundations for Christian anthropology. At the end of the paper, a specific aspect of the papal teaching in the Polish context is stressed.

Keywords: Karol Wojtyła; John Paul II; pilgrimages; dignity of the person; truth; freedom; conscience; Poland

Citation: Zajączkowski, Ryszard. 2022. The Main Philosophical Inspirations in the Teaching of John Paul II during His Pilgrimages to Poland. *Religions* 13: 106. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13020106>

Academic Editors: Mariano P. Barbato and Greg Peters

Received: 30 October 2021

Accepted: 18 January 2022

Published: 21 January 2022

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1. Introduction

Many works are devoted to the pilgrimages of John Paul II to Poland (Jackowski et al. 2009). Researchers have analysed various aspects of the papal pilgrimage, such as the historical (Polak et al. 2019), political (Klima 2014; Wnuk-Lipiński 2017), psychological (Biela 1980), sociological (Mach 2009; Ruskowski et al. 2006), cultural (Skrzypczak 2019), aesthetic (Mrowiński and Przystek 2020), linguistic (Bartmiński 2000; Puzynina 2002), geographic (Jackowski et al. 2009), mediatic (Baczyński 2011; Pieniak 1997; Mydlarska 2019), evangelization-related (Adamiak 2020) or theological (Baczyński 2007) aspects. Less frequently, attention is paid to the philosophical message of the pope's teaching. The reason for this probably lies in the fact that John Paul II—although he was a philosopher—tried to formulate his statements as simply as possible during his meetings with the faithful. At the same time, there is no doubt that, when he took over the papal ministry, he brought, to his teaching, a rich philosophical message and deepened the ethical analysis of the phenomena he spoke about. At the end of the paper, a specific aspect of the papal teaching in the Polish context is stressed.

2. Resources and Method

This study focuses on selected academic and pastoral statements by Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. In the article, I make reference to the pope's homilies and speeches made during his nine visits to Poland between 1979 and 2002 (Jan Paweł II 2012), as well as to some of his academic works from when he was active in Lublin and Krakow from 1949 until 1978. Both groups of texts form a coherent whole, albeit of a decidedly different character. Knowledge of Wojtyła's philosophical opus deepens our understanding of his pastoral message as pope. The statements of John Paul II during his visits to Poland include

many texts and focus on numerous themes of his teaching. They are also a testimony to exceptional philosophical sensitivity, shaped by the environment, especially the Lublin Philosophical School (Lekka-Kowalik and Gondek 2019; Duma 2016, Seifert 1981). The main philosophical texts by Karol Wojtyła are also analysed. The article focuses on the thought background of the papal message, thus deepening his message. Whoever wants to competently learn the content of the papal teaching (not only during pilgrimages to Poland) must go deeper, transcend the superficial meaning of words, reach their meaning in the pope's language and, at the same time, accept an invitation to meditate with Wojtyła in the name of seeking the truth about man and the world (Grabowski 2005, 2011). Of necessity, the article focuses only on the most important philosophical themes of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. He undertook only a few of them, but those to which he devoted his attention absorbed him for many years, which resulted in new, more mature and complete depictions. At the core of this thought, there are concepts such as the dignity of a person, truth, freedom and conscience. These issues appeared in various ways in his philosophical works and fell within the scope of papal teaching.

The pope did not visit any other country so often (apart from Italy, of course) and, in no other country, did he leave such rich teaching. His visits to Poland covered a period of 23 years marked by many important changes. The first pilgrimage (perhaps the most important, from today's perspective) took place in 1979 (Balon 2019; Gawin 2005–2006; Bösch 2020). The next ones were held in four-year intervals (1983, 1987, 1991 and 1995) and the last three in 1997, 1999 and 2002. (Podbilska 2008, pp. 145–50; Skibiński 2005, pp. 166–224). The pope visited almost all Polish dioceses (except for the Świdnica diocese) (Nabywaniec 2008, pp. 82–87) and met with representatives of many social groups. Foreign observers treated John Paul II's pilgrimages to Poland mainly as political and media events. However, they overlooked the message contained in the papal homilies and speeches—incidentally, always addressed to an exceptionally large assembly of the faithful. Yet, this message deserves attention for at least two reasons. First, the papal teaching in Poland is extremely broad; it spans a long era marked by significant events in Poland and central and eastern Europe. Secondly, when studying papal statements in Poland today, one might form the impression that they were composed in such a way as to cover as many issues as possible, arranged as a well-thought-out whole. In this way, the pope left Poles (and not only) with a comprehensive moral and religious message. Few of these statements are commonly known. They are rarely mentioned nowadays in Poland (and if they are, this is mainly via Radio Maryja and TV Trwam) and are almost unknown abroad. A non-Polish readership can access them mainly in Italian (and Polish) on the Holy See's website.

Wojtyła's academic works are also obscure. Many of them (articles in particular) have not been translated into English, let alone other languages. Meanwhile, as a theologian and, especially, a philosopher, Wojtyła left a large academic output, especially in the field of philosophical anthropology and ethics. These publications are often written in difficult prose, referring to various philosophical trends, and reading them requires specialist academic preparation. Nevertheless, one ought to remember that the range of issues covered by them also encroached upon papal teaching, although in a popularised form. Often, it acquires depth only when the meaning of the terms used by the pope is expanded to include statements from before October 1978 included in the books *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* (*Love and Responsibility*) and *Osoba i czyn* (*Acting Person or Person and Act*). Many problems that John Paul II dealt with as an academic and lecturer found expression and development in his papal teaching (e.g., theology of the body, human dignity and the relationship between faith and reason).

It is worth noting that, thus far, there has been no study on how Wojtyła's academic work inspired his papal teaching. In Poland, this is probably due to the fact that researchers were particularly interested in the philosophy of the author of *Acting Person* and his papal documents, treating the statements made during pastoral visits as less important, occasional, or even politically motivated. Nor did foreign researchers undertake such analyses, if only because of the language barrier.

The aim of the article is to show the relationship between the teaching of John Paul II during his trips to Poland and his previous academic thought, especially in his main books and selected articles. Over the years, Karol Wojtyła worked over the foundations of his philosophical anthropology and personalistic ethics. The juxtaposition of Wojtyła's philosophical reflections from the pre-papal period and his teaching during the pilgrimages to Poland allows a deeper reading of his papal message to be obtained, which can be perceived superficially or even completely misunderstood, especially by readers from outside Poland. This approach is allowed by Wojtyła himself, who was very sensitive to the precision of concepts, the mystery of the person and the revealing of deeper layers of reality (Piluś 1980). The concepts selected for analysis most often occur in John Paul II's texts delivered during the pope's pilgrimages to Poland and are also present in his earlier academic studies, in order to maintain a sense of coherence. The objective throughout is to rationally gather and explore the concepts used in various contexts by Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. Whereas his academic work is known to have broached a limited number of topics, he worked on them for a very long time, which resulted in an original and mature approach. The article ends with an attempt to explain—on the basis of historical and political circumstances—what specific aspect of Wojtyła's philosophy found expression in his papal teaching to Poles, what was particularly important in this message and why.

3. Excerpts from the Academic Biography of Wojtyła

In 1946, Wojtyła was sent to Rome, where he studied for two years at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum). He ended this period by writing the dissertation on *Faith According to Saint John of the Cross* in Latin (*Doctrina de fide apud S. Ioannem a Cruce*) and, in 1948, he obtained a doctoral degree in Cracow (Kiwka 1999, pp. 65–74). The aforementioned work, although of a theological nature, was of significant importance for the formation of his philosophical anthropology; indeed, it gave it a unique shape and encouraged to deepen his search towards building the so-called integral anthropology (Kupczak 2011). Dealing with the legacy of St. John of the Cross became the starting point for Wojtyła for the fullness of human experience (Galarowicz 1986; Póltawski 2013, p. 7). After returning to Poland, the young priest combined pastoral, didactic and philosophical activities. The result of these activities can be found, for example, in little-known earlier dissertations *Rozważania o istocie człowieka* [*Considerations on the essence of man*, 1999] and *Katolicka etyka społeczna* [*Catholic social ethics*, 2018]. The first work, a series of lectures for the academic youth of Cracow, dates 1949, while the second one includes lectures for students of the Jagiellonian University in 1953/1954 and then for the seminarians of theological seminaries in Cracow (Zajączkowski 2020, pp. 120–24). Both studies prove that, already then, the philosophical issues important to the author came to the fore. In 1953, Wojtyła received his habilitation at the Jagiellonian University based on the dissertation *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera* [*Evaluation of the Possibilities of Building Christian Ethics on the Principles of Max Scheler's System*]. Soon he began lectures at the Catholic University of Lublin (Wojtyła 1986). In 1960, his dissertation *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* [*Love and Responsibility*] devoted to sexual ethics was published and, in 1969, the continuation of this book and the most important work in his philosophical achievement, *The Acting Person*. An important origin of Wojtyła's thought is the spirituality of St. John of the Cross, but the foundation of his philosophising is also undoubtedly the traditional trend of the philosophy of being—Aristotelianism and Thomism—which the author extends to the achievements of the modern philosophy of consciousness, providing new and effective instruments of cognition (Acosta 2016; Havranek 1993; Jaroszyński 2021; Podgórski 2016). In his view, this leads to changes in and enrichment of both the philosophy of being and the philosophy of consciousness, which puts Wojtyła “in the position of a translator, trying to translate the concepts of Thomism into concepts of phenomenology and vice versa” (Wojtyła 1973, p. 306). Certainly, the knowledge of contemporary philosophy made it easier for Wojtyła to communicate efficiently with today's world, while placement in the Thomistic philosophy was a guarantee of defending traditional values in

the changing reality (Gałkowski 2017, p. 75). Rocco Buttiglione, an excellent researcher of the thought of John Paul II, emphasized that it is impossible to understand the teaching of the Polish pope without drawing on and constantly using the philosophical achievements of Karol Wojtyła. The great themes of his encyclicals matured in the pages of philosophical works before his pontificate (Buttiglione 1982, p. 98). Andrzej Półtawski shared a similar view, noting that “Karol Wojtyła’s philosophical views are also an important key to fully understand the teachings of John Paul II” (Półtawski 2013, p. 14).

3.1. *A Man Is a Person—A Unique and Eternal Value*

Already in the 1940s, Wojtyła wrote, “a man is a person—a unique and eternal value” (Wojtyła 1999, p. 97). The phenomenology of the mystical experience of St. John of the Cross from the very beginning led the author to the irreducible centre of the person and pointed to the necessity of self-transcendence of the person towards the truth that is God Himself (Rembierz 2014). Later, his focus on man remained at the centre of his philosophical and pastoral activity. In the 1960s, reporting, in a letter to Henri de Lubac, on the philosophical issues that interested him, Wojtyła wrote, “I use very rare free time for work, close to my heart, devoted to the metaphysical meaning and mystery of the PERSON. It seems to me that today the debate is taking place on this level. Evil in our time consists primarily of some kind of degradation, even destruction, of the fundamental uniqueness of every human person. This evil is even more in a metaphysical order than a moral one. Instead of sterile polemics, we must oppose this disintegration, sometimes planned by atheistic ideologies, with a kind of »recapitulation« of the inviolable mystery of the person ...” (Weigel 2000, p. 223). Man’s way of existence is radically different from the way of existence of things. Man has reason, the ability to think conceptually, as well as a transcendence from within. All these inner qualities, objectively existing, make up the special, exceptionally valuable inner good of man, that is, his dignity—an inalienable quality. Dignity is the inner, innate and natural mark of man. It assigns him a central and unique place in nature and culture. Society and history do not give man dignity but, instead, have a duty to respect and protect it. Recognizing the dignity of a person is also an experience of the absolute obligation to affirm it; *persona est affirmanda propter se ipsum* (Crosby 1984). On the one hand, the dignity of a person significantly determines the basic vision of man in Wojtyła’s work and, on the other hand, it is a criterion of morality, in a sense, a determinant of the moral value of human action. On the basis of this good, Wojtyła formulated the so-called personalistic principle and norm, which is the basic norm of morality—“a person is such a good that only love constitutes a proper and wholesome reference to it” (Wojtyła 1982, p. 42). In an important essay, even the title of which is very eloquent, *Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man*, the author speaks of the need to “objectify the problem of human subjectivity” (Wojtyła 1978, p. 107), reminding, at the same time, that, in order to understand man, one should focus on that “which is irreducible” (franc. *irréductible*) and which makes it impossible to speak of him otherwise than as a person. Thus, “one has to stop in the process of reduction that leads us towards understanding man in the world (cosmological type of understanding) to understand the man in himself. The latter type of understanding could be called personalistic” (Wojtyła 1978, p. 112). The personalistic norm can also be formulated as a prohibition against disregarding the mystery of a person in oneself or in others, which implies a prohibition on treating a person as an object (Aquas 2009). In the book *Love and Responsibility*, the personalistic principle is created by reading the basic truth about man and his goodness in opposition to utilitarianism that treats reality in terms of utility, i.e., only as an object of use and as a means to an end (Wojtyła 1982, p. 42), although, at the same time, the utilitarian principle is not rejected, subordinated to the personalistic norm, because “everything fair and useful to a person is included in the commandment of love” (Wojtyła 1982, p. 43).

Wojtyła emphasizes more than once that man must not be reduced only to an object of use and performing a socially useful function by him. This leads to a further important conclusion; human dignity, although inseparable from him, is not an unchanging state with

regards to its subjective dimension (Duchliński 2008; Koterski 2006). It requires human effort, cooperation with God in the process of grasping and developing the truth. Wojtyła discovered the so-called integral anthropology, the basic thesis of which is that man, with his personal structure, is inscribed in the supernatural (Biesaga 2016; Crosby 2019; Ignatik 2021, pp. 85–92). An integral anthropology, which provides the full truth about man, is the result of cooperation between faith and reason, philosophy and theology (Drożdż 2011a; Grabowski 2004; Mruszczyk 2010, pp. 25–32, 76–94). It contradicts all naturalistic reductionisms that generate the so-called “anthropological error” (Drożdż 2007; Zwoliński 2012) which has devastating consequences for humans in the form of various kinds of reification, which leads to totalitarianism.

3.2. Truth–Freedom–Conscience

The reflection on human dignity has a strong metaphysical foundation in Wojtyła’s writings (Dec 2008, pp. 14–17). Already as the pope, he wrote, “It must not be forgotten that removing the problems of existence into the shadows inevitably leads to a loss of contact with the objective truth and, consequently, with the foundation on which the human dignity is based” (John Paul II 1998, No. 90). It is metaphysics that allows us to explain the concept of a person’s dignity, pointing to its spiritual nature. The constantly developed and deepened philosophical reflection of Wojtyła was primarily aimed at the truth and revealing its ever deeper layers, especially in terms of the mystery of man. Learning the truth in realist philosophy is a man’s reconciliation with an objectively existing reality. As part of the experience of the normative power of truth, the subject learns the truth about the bonum honestum and realizes it in the second stage of the ethical experience, i.e., in the experience of morality. While practicing assertion, thus experiencing the normative power of truth, a person discovers a categorical command to respect it. Thus, man, as a cognitive entity, discovers a moral responsibility. For Wojtyła, “responsibility is an experiential form of dependence on truth, which governs a person’s freedom” (Wojtyła 1969, p. 190). The power to accept the truth can only come from within the human being, from the freedom that is the property of the will and is realized through the truth. Freedom is itself to the extent that it is realized by truth for good (Tarasiewicz 2004). Freedom is an ethical category that finds its fullest realization in the commandment to love God and one’s neighbour. By choosing and realizing good in personal, family, social and global life, man realizes his freedom in truth, thus in a perfect way (Mizdrak 2011).

For Wojtyła, the distinguishing trait of freedom is “the transcendence of a person in act” (Sroczyński 2019, p. 89). This is also the title of a chapter from *The Acting Person* devoted to the issue of freedom. It highlights the foundation of freedom; man is free not only and not primarily because he can undertake various actions, but, above all, because he can guide and shape himself, for man “is not only the originator of his action but also its creator” (Wojtyła 1969, p. 119). If deeds have their source in man’s personal *esse*, then man is shaped by accomplishing them. Through them, he becomes morally good or bad. “To be morally good”—Wojtyła writes—“means to be a good person, to be good as a person. To be morally bad—it means to be a bad person, to be bad as a human being. Man becomes morally good or morally bad through his actions” (Wojtyła 1969, p. 125). The transcendence of a person in the act is not only self-dependence, or dependence on oneself. The fullness of freedom is not manifested in discretion, or in making one’s fate and action dependent only on one’s own will, but by subordinating to the truth (Šlužaitė 2014). Only this subordination allows a person to rule over the world, himself and evil and to create good (Wilk 2007). If freedom ceases to be related to truth and makes truth dependent on itself, it creates morally harmful ideologies (Kupczak 2011, pp. 107–21; Tarasiewicz 2019).

The place where what is given is translated into what is ought to be is conscience. In the view whereby the fundamental and advancing changeability of the human situation and the face of ever faster emergence of new life problems in the moral dimension, special care is needed to strengthen the human conscience in its function of cognitive recognition of the moral value and its leading function, particularly in sensitive places of the human existence.

Without taking conscience into account, which flows from knowing and recognizing the truth, the description of the moral experience is incomplete and, ultimately, inadequate. Wojtyła writes, “Man is not unquestionably rooted in good, nor is he sure of his freedom. This is what the ethical aspect of a person’s contingency and at the same time the meaning of conscience are based on” (Wojtyła 1969, p. 161). Conscience reveals the dependence on truth inherent in human freedom and provides its normative force. However, above all, it presents to the subject the truth about himself and hints at what contributes to his development and—also through free choice—to his undoing. A choice that does not correspond to the truth he has learned contributes especially to the moral ruin of a man. Such a choice undermines what defines and distinguishes a man as a person, his rationality. For Wojtyła, a conscience is an act of knowing the truth, a judgment in a logical sense; the apparent exaltation of freedom by its “release” from the truth leads, in practice, to the enslavement of man by “subhuman” forces over which he has no power. Conscience understood holistically is, according to Wojtyła, an altogether peculiar effort of a person aimed at grasping the truth as a value. It is first seeking this truth and investigating it before it becomes a certainty and a judgment (Wojtyła 1969, p. 167). The decision is the final stage in the process of conscience. Wojtyła wrote, “this effort of conscience (...) is closely related to the specific structure of the will as self-determination, and at the same time to the structure of the person itself. There are two Integrated Aspects here: the cognitive aspect—referencing to truth, and the aspirational aspect—referencing to human purposefulness. Only together do they fully constitute the conscience. It is in conscience that the subordination of action to the truth takes place. It is possible only because man is internally complex, and at the same time, because he is internally superior, that is, transcendent to his powers, both cognitive and aspirational. A man is also superior to the objects of his pursuit, he is “greater” than them or remains at a certain distance from them.

Thus, conscience is nothing but a centre point of this holistic transcendence (Wojtyła 1976, p. 31). Therefore, conscience is also placed in the field of reflection; it is a personal “dominion”, “being above” the content of one’s cognition and awareness. It is also “being above” one’s extra-cognitive, extra-conscious dynamism, above the will and all the other extra-conscious and cognitive dynamisms. Naturally, conscience constitutes the central point of transcendence, but, as an expression of “I”, it is, at the same time, a certain integrating centre of all of these dynamisms. It is the crown of human transcendence. Conscience, through “dependence on the good in the truth, in a way creates a new reality within the person. It is a normative reality” (Wojtyła 1969, p. 163). Man, by referring to the moral norms mediated by conscience, which is showing the truth contained in these norms, can reach fulfilment not only in the ontological dimension but also in the moral dimension, i.e., the most profoundly humane dimension. He can fulfil his human vocation and achieve the state of happiness. However, the respect for conscience, its inviolability and the right to self-judgment require that it does not only reflect the interior of a person, but also that it remains righteous and genuine, that it continues to look for the truth in the form of reconciliation with reality and that it submits to it. Moreover, “a righteous conscience is [...] a vital condition for the fulfilment of not only a man but also of the entire community in which he lives” (Jędraszewski 2015, p. 21).

3.3. *Philosophical Message of Papal Pilgrimages*

The homilies and speeches of John Paul II delivered during his pilgrimages to Poland reflect the atmosphere of those times and the places visited. Therefore, they have a great historical value and are significant for the Polish people. However, it is easily noticeable that his speeches are also of universal character and are relevant for our times. The pope’s speeches carry a message relevant to the entire Church and the world. The pope was a philosopher by education, specializing in ethical issues. It is no surprise that these issues were particularly prevalent in his speeches.

3.3.1. Discovering the Dignity of a Person

Already during the first pilgrimage, John Paul II reminded his listeners of the deep dimension of the human being. He said then, “The human being [...] must be measured by the measure of conscience, by the measure of the spirit which is open to God. Therefore, man must be measured by the measure of the Holy Spirit” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 27). The human being is an entity endowed with dignity, that is, a value incomparable to anything else in the world outside the world of persons. During his pilgrimage to Poland, the pope repeatedly emphasized that the human being has always been and is a sovereign entity in relation to the rest of the world and holds a superior position over whatever surrounds them. “Human dignity has no price,” he recalled, reminding of the testimony of the first Polish martyrs of the 11th century (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 903).

During his third pilgrimage in 1987, in his speech to the authorities, he spoke of human dignity as the measure and basis of political actions, because “communities, societies, nations, states live a truly human life, when the dignity of the human being, any human being, does not cease to set the direction on the basis of their existence and activity. Any violation and disregard for human rights is a threat to peace” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 383). Due to the dignity that characterizes the human being, they cannot be reduced to the role of an object in sexual relations, to a “tool of production” or an object for the “benefit of science”. In a 1997 speech at the Jagiellonian University, the pope gave a prophetic warning against the consequences of an anthropological error flowing from and adopting an incorrect concept of the human being. A flawed concept leads to the formulation of flawed rules of conduct and production. The anthropological error appears both on the grounds of the Orphic–Platonic and Aristotelian concept of the person, providing deformed theories of the human person towards its “deification” (Platonic sources) or “animalization” (Aristotelian sources). It must lead to a crisis of the culture founded in this way; “A deformed or incomplete vision of the human being causes science to transform easily from a blessing into a serious threat to humans. [...] Nowadays, the human being often becomes an object or even a “raw material” instead of a subject and a goal: it is enough to mention genetic engineering experiments, which raise great hopes, but also considerable fears for the future of mankind”—said the pope in Kraków in 1997 at Jagiellonian University (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 988).

According to the pope, the “human–subject” paradigm is a remedy for technocracy, consumerism and various forms of totalitarianism. In a similar vein, John Paul II also spoke in 1999 during his visit to the Polish parliament; “Today, in this place, we are particularly aware of the fundamental role that a fair legal order plays in a democratic state, the foundation of which should always and everywhere be the human being and the full truth about the human being, their inalienable rights and the rights of the entire community, which constitutes a nation” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1081). Therefore, human dignity should be the source of rights and the guiding principle in the creation of the common good. The whole order of truth and goodness is inscribed, for the human being, in God’s commandments. Any action which contradicts this order inevitably strikes the human being who, in turn, discovers their place in the world most fully through their relationship with Christ, because He showed mankind the deepest truth about God and man at the same time. The dignity of a person is ultimately rooted in the mystery of salvation and redemption (Schmitz 1993, p. 82).

3.3.2. In Defence of the Truth

Another very important and universal theme of papal statements concerned truth (Drożdż 2011b). During his second pilgrimage in 1983, the pope, in an address to the episcopate, reminded that “the truth is the first and fundamental condition of social renewal” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 289). A few days later, he argued that truth leads to trust and trust builds community—all the way from family to humanity. The subject of truth was most often reiterated during the pope’s meetings with people of science, i.e., those who are especially called to its research and dissemination, for example, during

a visit to Jagiellonian University in Kraków (1983), Catholic University of Lublin (1987), or Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (1999) (Przybiecki 2001, pp. 81–89). The pope rejected the accusation that it was impossible to learn objective truth. The defence of truth should oppose tendencies that promote a sense of meaninglessness, makeshift cognition, subjective opinion, changeability and relativity. It is dangerous, because “the fragmentariness of knowledge and the fragmentation of meaning destroys the inner unity of the human being” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1048).

In his speech to the rectors of Polish universities, the pope also repeated, after *Fides et ratio*, that “Faith and reason are like ‘two wings on which the human spirit rises to contemplate the truth’” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1048). Therefore, in science and philosophy, there is a need for a sapiential dimension consisting in the search for the overall meaning of human existence (Tarasiewicz 2016). For truth is not only an intellectual “adventure”, but it has an existential character and life without it would be meaningless. According to the pope, the defence of truth is a defence of human dignity and the normativity of ethics and it actually protects human freedom. The human being is called to seek the truth and make judgements according to it, so that their life would not be only a constant struggle to create a convenient space of maximum freedom. According to the pope, truth contains the source of the human being’s transcendence towards the universe. You reach the truth not only on your own, but also through dialogue with others (Modrzejewski 2016).

The pope often combined the philosophical, moral and religious dimensions of truth. Searching for it on every level and shaping one’s life according to it has ultimately a salvific value; “And from this truth that the human being implements, with which they try to shape their life and coexist with others, a path leads to the Truth, i.e., Christ. It leads to the freedom for which Christ has liberated us” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 607). Martyrs bear special witness to the truth. In his speech at the end of the Congress of Central and Eastern Europe Theologians in 1991, the pope emphasized that “The testimony (*martyrium*) constitutes exceptional *locus theologicus*, not only by virtue of the mystery of God, in which it expresses and presents itself, but also on account of the truth of the human being, which becomes exceptionally expressive through this testimony. [. . .] The status of the witness (one who bears witness to the truth) is the basic status of the human being. This is a statement of fundamental importance, not only in the dimension of Christianity as faith, but also Christianity as culture, as humanism” (Jan Paweł II 2012, pp. 824–25). The pope also emphasized the primary importance of the truth in ecumenical activities. During the ecumenical service in Drohiczyń in 1999, he quoted the following fragment of his encyclical *Ut unum sint*: “love of the truth is the deepest dimension of the authentic pursuit of full communion between Christians” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1076). The main threats to truth are scepticism, agnosticism, nihilism and ethical relativism. The latter, allied with democracy—as the pope noted in his speech to Polish parliamentarians—“deprives the life of the civil community of a permanent moral point of reference, depriving it, in a radical manner, of its ability to recognize the truth” (Jan Paweł II 2012, pp. 1084–85).

3.3.3. Freedom—But Not Absolute

The issue of freedom was of great importance in the pope’s pilgrimages to Poland right from the start. In the 1970s and 1980s, the very presence of the Holy Father reminded us of the nation’s aspirations for freedom. The theme of freedom recurred during every pilgrimage (Karasiński 2007). The pope always proclaimed that freedom is a gift from God, but it can be misused, as “Freedom is given to the human being as a measure of their dignity. However, it is also entrusted to them. ‘Freedom is not a relief but a hardship of greatness’—as the poet expresses (Leopold Staff, *Oto twa pieśń (Here’s your song)*). For freedom can be used well or misused by people” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 272). This issue became particularly important with the introduction of martial law in Poland and then with the revival of society’s aspirations for political and economic transformations. The pope was constantly associated with the desire for freedom of Poles and supported the trade union “Solidarity”, which was dissolved upon introduction of martial law. During

the pilgrimages in 1983 and 1987, the participants of meetings with the pope often held banners reminding of the existence of “Solidarity”. The pope, in turn, repeatedly referred to the issue of freedom, thus showing support to those who struggled with the communist regime in various ways; “There cannot be a healthy society if the issue of freedom, personal freedom, community freedom, national freedom is not resolved fully, honestly, with a full sense of responsibility” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 449)—he said in 1987. The situation changed drastically during the fourth pilgrimage in 1991. Its slogan “Thank God, do not quench the Spirit” marked the joy of regained freedom, but also anxiety about how it would be nurtured and used to overcome the socio-economic and moral crises of the Polish society. It was during this pilgrimage that the pope most often spoke about freedom and did not limit himself to capturing it in political terms. Indeed, he pointed to the need of educating for mature freedom, which presupposes a moral order, an order in the sphere of values; “May we refrain from trying to take shortcuts in our efforts to shape a new economy and new economic systems, omitting moral signposts” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 646)—the pope exclaimed in 1991 in Białystok. His teachings covered all dimensions of freedom, including its false varieties. On the verge of Polish transformations in 1991, the pope even spoke of an “exam in freedom”. The truth is difficult, but also “Freedom is difficult, you must learn it, you must learn to be truly free, you must learn to be free so that our freedom does not become our own slavery, internal enslavement, or a cause of enslavement to others” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 699). During his fourth pilgrimage, in his speech to the laity, the pope touched upon, among others, issues of the freedom of speech in the work of social reconstruction, explaining that “Our word must be free, it must express our inner freedom. You cannot use any means of violence to impose any theses on a person [...]; in today’s world, even the media can become means of violence if there is some other violence behind them” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 670).

In a sense, John Paul II considered the struggle of Poles for freedom in the 1980s to be an example. In the land on the banks of the Vistula River, a special form of the theology of liberation took shape; “It should be said—the pope said in 1991 to theologians from Central and Eastern Europe—not only because of the fight for the most basic human rights (freedom of religion—freedom of conscience and others), which was waged here—using the radically ‘poor’ means in the clash with the violence of a totalitarian state. It should also be stated because of the evangelical authenticity of liberation itself, which was the underlying motivation of this fight” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 826). On each subsequent occasion, the pope added something on the subject of freedom. During the period of political changes, he always warned against its improper use, emphasizing that it was both a gift and a challenge. This is evidenced by, for example, the words addressed to Polish bishops in 1999, at the prospect of Poland’s accession to the European Union, which sounded prophetic; “Poland enters the twenty-first century as a free and sovereign country. This freedom, if it is not to be wasted, requires people who are conscious not only of their own affairs, but also of obligations: self-sacrificing, animated by the love of the Homeland and the spirit of service, who want to build the common good and develop all levels of freedom in the personal, family and social dimension” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1097). It was always characteristic of the pope that he clearly demonstrated the relationship between freedom and truth as well as with Christ which, in modern times, has often been negated (Kupczak 2011). “Beyond truth, freedom is not freedom. It is only apparent. It is even enslavement” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 670).

According to the pope, freedom can never only be possessed, but “it must be constantly acquired and created” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 718). Political freedom is important, but, first of all, the human being must be free and should not become a slave to instincts, passions, pseudo-values, easy success, consumerism, possessions, economic systems, etc. Over the years, these exhortations recurred in the pope’s teaching. The erroneous concept of freedom consists in its absolutization. Analysing the spheres of human life particularly exposed to the temptation of improper use of freedom, John Paul II pointed out that the value that can properly direct our “freedom” path is the love for God and one’s neighbour, and

“the greatest fulfilment of freedom is love, which is materialized in devotion and service” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1086). That is why the pope encouraged his countrymen not to forget about the heritage of solidarity—solidarity with another, often weaker person, and solidarity exceeding class barriers and ideological barriers (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1083). He reminded of the principle that was widely accepted in the 1980s whereby “there is no freedom without solidarity”; its fullest expression is the joint effort put into building the “civilization of love”. “The ultimate destiny of human freedom is holiness” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1010)—this is the message that the pope left after his pilgrimage in 1997, during which he officiated two beatifications and canonizations. The teaching about freedom which was given by John Paul II in Poland is an important voice on this subject, to which the pope often returned in his various documents (Dulles 1995, pp. 36–41).

3.3.4. Conscience Formed by the Objective Truth

The concept of conscience appeared for the first time during the third pilgrimage of the pope to Poland in 1987, during the reflections for the youth gathered at Jasna Góra. John Paul II commented on the content of the Jasna Góra Appeal—the traditional Polish evening prayer; “What does it mean that ‘I am vigilant’? It means that I am trying to be a man of conscience. That I neither obscure nor distort it. That I call the good and the evil by their real names, not blur them. I work out the good in myself and I try to remove badness by overcoming it in myself. It is a fundamental matter that can never be diminished or pushed to the background. No. No! It is everywhere and always remains in the foreground. In fact, it is all the more important since more and more circumstances seem to favour our tolerating evil and to easily ask for absolution. Especially, if this is how other people act as well. [. . .] You must demand of yourself, even if others do not have demands” (Jan Paweł II 2012, pp. 263–64). The pope considered freedom of conscience as one of the fundamental human rights that was defended by the martyrs.

The greatest cry for people of conscience was the homily delivered by John Paul II in 1995 in Skoczów on the occasion of the canonization of Jan Sarkander. The homily developed the theme of martyrdom as faithfulness to the voice of one’s conscience. “It is our inner guide and the judge of our actions at the same time. Therefore, it is very important that our consciences are righteous and that their judgments are based on truth; that they call the good and the evil by their true names” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 843). Then, the pope explained what it means to be a man of conscience today, i.e., not to silence the voice of conscience, but to “engage in good and multiply it inside and outside of yourself, to never take on the evil”, “to demand from oneself and to rise from one’s failures”, “to courageously take responsibility for public affairs; to care for the common good, and not close our eyes to the poverty and needs of our neighbours in the spirit of evangelical solidarity” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 844). Two years later, the pope asked a rhetorical question which also referred to the testimony of many martyrs whose attitude gave witness to the pre-eminence of the conscience, i.e., “Is the dignity of conscience not more important than any external benefits?” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 904). During his next pilgrimage, the pope added, “Let us do everything to sensitize our consciences and protect them from distortion or numbness” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1034). People of science, who do not disregard the criterion of truth and goodness from their studies, bear a great responsibility for conscience (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1049). The pope also associated the dignity of work with conscience, since “Whoever has lost the righteous judgment of conscience can turn the blessing of work into a curse” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 1150). He saw the great role of the Church in shaping human consciences in terms of sensitivity for the world of work.

3.4. The Papal Message and Polish Context

One might ask what specific aspect of Wojtyła’s philosophy found expression in his papal teaching to Poles, what was particularly important in this message and why. One ought to bear in mind that the future pope practiced philosophy in a post-war Poland that still vividly remembered the oppression of Nazism and, since 1945, had been enslaved

by the communist system. At the same time, he was the bishop of Krakow, had actively participated in the Second Vatican Council and then implemented its teaching in the Polish Church. Finally, from Rome, he observed the changes taking place in Poland and strongly supported the movement for freedom that took place, in particular, under the banner of “Solidarity”. It was this political and church context that significantly influenced the message he left for Poles.

In the autobiographical book *Dar i Tajemnica [Gift and Mystery]*, John Paul II wrote, “[...] the two totalitarian systems which tragically marked our century—Nazism on the one hand, marked by the horrors of war and the concentration camps, and communism on the other, with its regime of oppression and terror—I came to know, so to speak, from within. And so it is easy to understand my deep concern for the dignity of every human person and the need to respect human rights, beginning with the *right to life*. It is also easy to understand my concern for the family and for young people. These concerns are all interwoven; they developed precisely as a result of those tragic experiences” (Jan Paweł II 1996, p. 20).

In his teaching addressed to Poles, on the one hand, John Paul II emphasised topics related to guarding human beings from death and enslavement (hence the protest against abortion and euthanasia, as well as various practices of marginalising the social life of people who demand respect for their subjective rights), which may arise as a consequence of various totalitarian practices. The pope was vehemently opposed to forms of social praxis that harmed human dignity. He stressed that the circumstances of alienation are created by both a totalitarian society that subordinates the individual to its collective aspirations and a liberal capitalist society that loses its hierarchy of objective values—hence the focus on freedom conditioned by truth. Freedom finds its fulfilment when it is used correctly—i.e., in the light of truth, which, however, should be understood more deeply than in the Greek-intellectual tradition. This is truth gleaned from an existential point of view—in particular, a religious and moral truth, ultimately, the truth whereby God sets man free. A personal relationship with God as the highest truth is the culmination of the mature freedom of man. Therefore, in his message to Poles (especially after 1991), the pope clearly exposed the myth of the twentieth century whereby man has been attributed the power to constitute his own essence and to define what is morally just or unjust.

On the other hand, the pope wanted to implement the conciliar teaching in the Polish Church. According to Vatican II, a human being is the place where the Church and the world intersect. Indeed, while the basic question which ideologies try to answer is “what to do?”, the Council seeks to answer “how to be?”. During his pilgrimages in Poland, John Paul II related the breakthrough initiated by conciliar decisions to Polish circumstances. Wojtyła’s philosophical thought, followed by his teaching as pope, is about the consequences of the Council, thought through and re-lived in the contemporary history of Poland. In the same book, the pope also included some thoughts about the Council. In his book *Gift and Mystery*, he even noted that “the Council has pointed to the possibility and need for an authentic renewal, in complete fidelity to the word of God and Tradition” (John Paul II; a specific introduction to the spirit of the Council is offered by Wojtyła’s book *U podstaw odnowy. Studium o realizacji Vaticanum II [Sources of Renewal. The Implementation of Vatican II]*). Reading this work, it is difficult to resist the impression that many of the references to conciliar texts contained therein are consistent with his own philosophical reflection. The hypothesis that this reflection was shaped under the influence of the Council and, at the same time, influenced the shape of those conciliar documents in which Wojtyła was involved, will surely be justified (Millies 2017).

It is also worth mentioning one strand amidst the teaching of John Paul II, most relevant from a Polish point of view. It had already been outlined in the book *Acting Person* and is about solidarity and participation. The independent and autonomous trade union “Solidarity” would never have become a turning point in the recent history of Europe and the world, if, from its inception in the workers’ strikes of July and August 1980, it had not drawn inspiration from the teaching of John Paul II, whose portraits were hung on the

gates of striking factories (for example, Gdańsk Shipyard). However, at the same time, another process was taking place. “Solidarity” was becoming one of the main ideas of the papal teaching. During his second and third pilgrimages to Poland, the pope profoundly identified with the issue of “Solidarity”, which had been banned after the introduction of martial law in Poland in December 1981. He even demanded protection for people who had suffered over and over again from political repression. That is why it was no coincidence that, during his second pilgrimage in June 1983, his thoughts clearly turned to the relationship between the idea of solidarity and mercy—the latter depicted as a practical, truly Christian manifestation of the former. The pope himself became, in a way, a spokesman for the righteous demands of “Solidarity”. In 1987, during a workers’ meeting in Gdańsk, he said directly, “I speak about you and I speak for you” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 405). Praising the non-violent methods of struggle chosen by “Solidarity”, John Paul II emphasised that “Solidarity must go before the struggle. Then humanity can survive. And any nation in a great human family can survive and thrive. [. . .] Let me add: solidarity also liberates struggle. But this is never a struggle against one another. [...] This is a struggle for man, for his rights, for his true progress: a struggle for a more mature form of human life” (Jan Paweł II 2012, p. 447).

The timelessness of the idea of solidarity would also return during subsequent papal pilgrimages. John Paul II pointed out that solidarity is not only a thing of the past, but also a task waiting to be fulfilled (Doran 1996). The pope recalled, “I heard you say then in Gdańsk: there is no freedom without solidarity. Today it must be said: there is no solidarity without love”. During his final pilgrimage in 2002, the pope consecrated the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Krakow-Łagiewniki and entrusted the whole world to God’s Mercy. In a homily delivered to nearly three million believers at a mass in Krakow, he called for the “creation of an imagination of mercy”. Solidarity is definitely not confined to overthrowing a totalitarian system. It is a universal lesson of humanity, a practical implementation of the principle of social participation and love.

4. Conclusions

The teaching of John Paul II is deeply rooted in his pre-pontificate philosophical reflections and it is them that reveal the deepest dimension of the papal message. The phenomenology of the mystical experience of St. John of the Cross from the very beginning led Wojtyła to the irreducible centre of the person and pointed to the necessity of self-transcendence towards the truth which is God Himself. Wojtyła discovered deep humanism and, at the same time, abundant experimental material in the writings of the Spanish mystic. This helped him turn to personalism and phenomenology. The author of *The Acting Person*, starting from theological reflection, at the same time, lays the foundations for original philosophical anthropology. In the homilies and speeches preached by John Paul II in Poland, his long articulated and precisely constructed anthropology comes to the fore, in the centre of which is the thesis about the irreducible dignity of the human being and the formation of humanity through action and conscience, which should be grounded in objective truth (Kupczak 2002, pp. 128–40). John Paul II considered the salvation of the person in a human being as the most important. He regarded this as the criterion for any progress and value of social and political activities. Hence, he arose his opposition to the anthropological error that takes various forms, thus to false, reductive humanisms. Wojtyła, not confining himself to criticise ideological anthropological constructions, showed the value of integral anthropology. This was also reflected in his papal statements. During the pilgrimages of John Paul II to Poland, the theme of the deformation of truth by totalism first appeared and, since 1991, the error of liberalism was mentioned more and more. In both cases, a misreading of the truth about the human being violates their dignity. Along with this, there is the pope’s emphasis on freedom of conscience. It is not only an affirmation of a person’s transcendence towards any socio-economic system but also an expression of solidarity with every human being who struggles for recognition of them being “someone” rather than “something”. John Paul II also postulated that the freedom of conscience

should not be understood merely as the freedom of worship and thought, but also as the freedom to act by the known truth—obviously within the limits of the right protection of the common good.

An important life, pastoral and intellectual experience of Wojtyła was the Second Vatican Council (whose teaching he was partially responsible for) (Scola 2010, pp. 121–22). His task was to give faith a dimension of life experience, to call for its adequate empowerment. The idea was to create a Christian mentality in which faith is not only intellectually accepted, but also existentially lived. The philosophy of *The Acting Person* helped to undertake this task and, at the same time, provided its theoretical justification. According to Vatican II, the human person is the point where the Church and the world meet. While the basic question that the ideologies of this world are trying to answer is “what to do?”, the Council is looking for an answer to the question “how to be?”. The teaching of John Paul II in Poland is also a translation into Polish conditions of the breakthrough initiated by the conciliar determinations. The philosophical thought of Wojtyła and, later, his teaching as pope are about the effects of the Council that are rethought and lived in the contemporary history of Poland and those countries that faced the violence of communist totalitarianism. On the other hand, in the face of corruption and lobbying in modern democracies, the relativistic conception of democracy reveals its ultimate failure. By recalling the constitutive relationship between freedom and truth and, in particular, between freedom and the truth about the human being, the papal teaching offers a criterion for assessing human action, which must always take into account the truth about the good. This truth is not a prison for action, but a guide. The good in question is the value of the human being. Just as acting together with others constitutes the foundation of the specificity of the social sphere and the basis of (relatively) autonomous political reflection, the reference of this activity to the objective value of the human person constitutes the foundation of the specificity of the moral sphere and the basis of autonomous ethical reflection, which integrates economic activity into the system of human action and its moral evaluation. Therefore, the teaching of John Paul II on political order does not contain clear political principles but is, above all, deeply marked by the defence of the person’s dignity, freedom and the truth that precedes it. The pope, while traveling to his homeland, taught in a country first ruled by communists, then by liberals.

Thus, John Paul II observed a country undergoing rapid cultural and economic changes. However, he did not provide any clear political rulings. He was aware that more than political reform, a reform of the national mentality was needed, fidelity to the truth of life and man against the claims of power. Under the influence of the statements of John Paul II during his pilgrimages to Poland, an unmistakable impression arises that they form a logical and comprehensive moral teaching firmly rooted in his theological and philosophical thought before his pontificate, developing this idea (especially in the theological dimension) and transferring it into the order of practice—especially in social solidarity.

Funding: This research was funded by the Minister of Science and Higher Education within the program under the name ‘Regional Initiative of Excellence’ in 2019–2022, project number: 028/RID/2018/19.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Article

From Archangels to Virtual Pilgrims: A Brief History of Papal Digital Mobilization as Soft Power

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Abstract: The perpetual public display of successful mass mobilization and pilgrimage has become a pillar of papal soft power. During the 20th century, the papacy had repeatedly demonstrated its ability to use new technologies for public communication, media content production and mass mobilization. John Paul II endorsed the establishment of the first Vatican website and an official papal e-mail account, which provided Catholics a new form of communication with the Holy Father. During the pontificate of Benedict XVI, the papacy created several Twitter accounts, which would become the backbone of papal digital mobilization. Francis built on the success of his predecessors as he initiated the modernization of the Holy See's media department. However, with the growth of the Internet and the stress test of the COVID-19 pandemic, the mechanics of mobilization, pilgrimage and power have considerably changed. With the religious role of the popes taken as a given, the paper looks into the history of papal mobilization, the role of the Internet and why it is not used to its full potential yet.

Keywords: mobilization; pilgrimage; internet; John Paul II; Benedict XVI; Francis; soft power

Citation: Löffler, Johannes Ludwig. 2021. From Archangels to Virtual Pilgrims: A Brief History of Papal Digital Mobilization as Soft Power. *Religions* 12: 657. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12080657>

Academic Editors: Mariano P. Barbato and Malachi Hacohen

Received: 28 June 2021

Accepted: 16 August 2021

Published: 18 August 2021

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1. Introduction: Papal Mobilization and Soft Power

While the papacy has had a wide set of mobilization tools at its disposal, such as the voluntary infantry regiment of the papal Zouaves in the 19th century, or financial donations such as St. Peter's Pence, the media has always played an important role for papal mobilization. Until recently, the public power of the modern papacy rested largely on its ability to physically mobilize the masses through public appearances of the pope (Barbato and Heid 2020; Barbato et al. 2018; Klimczak and Petersen 2017). While St. Peter's Square in Rome remains a central stage of mass mobilization, apostolic journeys abroad have become a reliable tool with which to mobilize Christians around the world during papal visits to local sites of worship and historical relevance. In addition, the modern papacy introduced recurring events, such as World Youth Days, to visibly demonstrate its vitality and legitimacy in the public space. Mobilization became a strategy of public papal communication (Löffler 2018, forthcoming). However, with the ongoing decline of Catholicism in Europe, the transition towards a digital communication culture and the current situation of a global pandemic, including substantial limitations to social contacts and gatherings, the modern papacy has, at least temporarily, lost its ability to physically mobilize the masses. In this sense, the papacy is in dire need of a new strategy.

A quick survey of the history of the modern papacy indicates that paradigm shifts of mobilization frequently occurred in times of crisis. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the papacy continuously adapted new technologies to its strategy of public mobilization. For instance, before the unification of Italy and the dissolution of the Papal States, Pius IX (1846–1878) initiated the construction of several railroads that connected the Italian states with the territories of the Papal States in order to increase the number of pilgrims (Nersinger 2020). Pius XI (1922–1939) introduced the Vatican Radio, which became an important asset of transnational papal communication during the Second World War (Pollard 2010; Samerski

2020; Valente 2020) as well as the Cold War (Bösch 2020; Hänni 2020). Since Paul VI (1963–1978), and especially since the papacy of John Paul II (1978–2005), papal air travel and official visits abroad have become an integral part of the pontifical mobilization toolkit (Barbato 2020a). With the rise of new technologies and their successful integration into the strategies of public performance, mass mobilization has started to transform into a digital phenomenon of papal power.

This article focuses on the current state of digital papal mobilization and its potential as a source of power. Its quantitative–qualitative analysis evaluates the range and content of digital papal communication channels such as the pontiff’s Twitter and Instagram accounts, the Holy See’s YouTube channels and other forms of electronic communication, such as electronic prayers (e-prayers) and virtual pilgrimages. In order to understand the current shift towards a digital papacy, I draw a brief genealogy of mobilization, from the first Vatican web presence in 1995 to the state of the digital papacy during the 2020–2021 COVID-19 pandemic.

What is mass mobilization? As the paper focuses on the current state of papal digital mobilization, the term mass mobilization refers to different overlapping aspects of power: from a political science perspective, it is used to describe the process of gathering a crowd at one place as well as acts of participation and interaction. Finally, mobilization also includes forms of orchestration, such as the usage of media in order to publicly display the masses. In summary, the success of mobilization depends not only on the number of people, but on their transformation into one group that is part of the event. Contemporary research hints at the importance of papal mass mobilization in the form of trans-local, large-scale events as a public display of papal power between the late 19th and early 21st centuries (Heid 2020; Matena 2018; Samerski 2020; Valente 2020). This suggests that the success of papal mobilization also depends on its ability to adapt to the zeitgeist of communication technology. Its development into the virtual playing fields of digital communication can be understood as the papacy’s next step to mobilize the masses as followers, viewers, subscribers and virtual legions.

How does mass mobilization work? The famous frontispiece to Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* may serve as a starting point: in Hobbes’ metaphor, the legitimacy of political power is visualized through the body of a ruler made up of his subjects; the pope can be understood as the head of a fluid, composite body made up of everyone that physically gathers around him (Löffler, forthcoming). According to Horst Bredekamp’s theory of the picture act (*Bildakt*), where the picture and the observer become public communicators on their own (Bredekamp 1998, 2015a, 2015b; Schmitz 2007), the continuously repeated act of papal mobilization produces a publicly visible community of believers and followers. Within the field of political thought and theory, this public display of the masses can be understood as a strategic tool to represent an otherwise invisible *corpus mysticum* (Kantorowicz 1990, pp. 279–316). The publicly visible mobilization of pilgrims as a celebrating crowd transforms the power of the modern papacy into a latent political entity that can survive the politically unused moment, and its aggregation brings about structural transformations (Barbato 2018, p. 96). The modern papacy uses the mortal head of the pope to represent and legitimize an immortal and unique hybrid body—that is, a political, religious and social entity. The papacy demonstrates its significance through successful mobilization, while in return, the masses legitimize the pope. In addition, the crowd publicly communicates different aspects of papal power: praying and singing become a representation of faith; cheering and waving become a demonstration of personal affection towards the pope; the composition of flags and banners becomes a nonverbal representation of the pope as a transnational actor.

What are the characteristics of the papal crowds? It is a crowd that can gather regularly and in various places, such as St. Peter’s Square in Rome or Christian pilgrimage sites; Catholics are visible as residents and pilgrims, as a mixed crowd of locals and travelers. In addition to its own sites, the modern papacy is able to use locations with historical and social significance as stages for mass mobilization. The papal mass is a multitude

oriented towards the pope, who guides it through the event (e.g., Angelus; Apostolic Journeys; World Youth Days) with the help of well-known rites, common chants and personal messages. Thus, the pope becomes a public magnet, a messenger and an event manager. In this regard, he plays the role of a charismatic leader. Based on the type of event, the papal mass mobilizes different parts of society. Catholic youth gather during the World Youth Days, while regional venues of worship and pilgrimage attract both local and international pilgrims. Finally, the papal mobilization is embedded in the public staging of the event itself. To mobilize also means to involve the masses as participants—e.g., the entourage of high-ranking political representatives, heads of state and government gathered during the papal funeral (Schlott 2018, 2013)—through their joint presence and their visible expression of respect for the deceased pontiff. At the end of the Angelus, it is customary for the popes to greet selected groups of pilgrims, Catholic associations and the citizens of Rome, who in turn contribute to the performance with waving flags and banners and with brief applause and cheers. In short, masses have become the starting and endpoint of papal legitimacy and power.

How to understand mobilization as soft power? With the religious role of the popes taken as a given, it should be noted that the papal soft power approach is limited to questions regarding the history of papal digital communication. Contemporary papal power can be described as soft, the counterpart of traditional forms of political hard power through means of military dominance or threats; in a broad sense, it encapsulates, among other things, the ability to influence the public by means other than force or coercion and is mostly understood as a set of diplomatic skills. To quote Joseph Nye, who introduced the concept of soft power in the context of diplomatic power during the late Cold War:

“Soft power is not merely the same as influence, though it is one source of influence. . . . Nor is soft power just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though that is an important part of it. It is also the ability to entice and attract. Attraction often leads to acquiescence. In behavioral terms, soft power is attractive power. In terms of resources, soft power resources are the assets . . . that produce such attraction” (Nye 2008, p. 31)

The concept of a distinct form of papal authority as soft power has been widely discussed (Byrnes 2017; Hall 1997; Mazo 2015; Sommeregger 2011; Troy 2010), and recent research on the modern papacy suggests that the successful use of soft power depends, to a large extent, on the public perception of the reigning pope, his ability to verbally and nonverbally communicate with the public and the Church’s capability to regularly mobilize the masses as pilgrims in Rome and abroad (Barbato 2020a; Löffler 2018).

The next section of this paper discusses the history of papal mobilization. It starts with its pre-digital state of mobilization, before taking a closer look at the rise of a digital papacy and the transition from John Paul II to Benedict XVI and Francis. This section explains how papal mobilization works and how each of the three popes used the Internet to mobilize their legions.

The third section analyzes virtual mobilization as a potential soft power resource. Drawing on the medieval concept of virtual pilgrimage and the contemporary debate about digital pilgrimage as an alternative to physically and spiritually demanding trips, it discusses the current transformation of papal authority. It uses the case of COVID-19 as a stress test of digital papal mobilization and its potential and limitations.

2. A Short History of Papal Mobilization

The history of papal mobilization as a main source of soft power began with the popes’ downfall as hard power political actors. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the political power of the papacy was in rapid decline. During the Napoleonic era, it lost most of its secular power. In 1799, Pius VI died in French captivity. In 1807, French troops occupied the Papal States, and Pius VII became a prisoner until his release in 1814. The political setback was tremendous: the pope’s diplomatic network temporarily diminished, and its status as an accepted political player and as a negotiator among the

European powers considerably weakened. The restoration process following Vienna merely postponed his political regress. After the unification of Italy under King Victor Emanuel II in 1861 and the occupation of Rome in 1870, the papacy was politically disempowered and the Papal State formally dissolved. The papacy reached its low and a turning point (Barbato 2020b, pp. 17–18). The rise of the modern papacy had begun.

With the acknowledgement of Italian sovereignty over the formal territory of the Papal States through the Lateran Treaty in 1929, the papacy managed to maintain two pillars of its public power: its status as a recognized subject of international law and the territory of the Vatican City State, which, despite its limited size, quickly developed into a public stage of papal mass mobilization. Thus, the papacy survived the leap into modernity due to its transformation into a hybrid actor (McLarren and Stahl 2020) with a growing number of diplomatic relations and its ability to use the physical body of the masses to continuously reshape papal authority. The pope has been transformed into a sovereign without armed forces—with the commonly known exception of the colorful Papal Swiss Guard as a visible reminder of a previous form of papal authority. He developed into a diplomatic powerhouse currently entertaining 183 diplomatic relations. The nuncio, as representative of the Holy See, the Church and the pope, mirrors even further the modern papacy's status as a hybrid actor.

To summarize the current research, the rise of political papacy during the 20th century is based on the successful mobilization of the masses (Barbato and Heid 2020). The papacy managed to successfully combine different aspects of political, religious and moral power.

2.1. John Paul II and the Rise of Digital Archangels

A possible starting date for the many paths towards a digital papacy (Barbato et al. 2018) could be Christmas 1995, when, for the first time, the Holy See's official website went at least partially online. At a time when major international businesses as well as a few governments were setting up their own websites—e.g., Microsoft and the White House published their first webpages in 1994 (Izadi 2014; Bort 2014)—the papacy was, at least at the time, one of the forerunners of the digital presence. Its beginnings were rather modest. The very first page featured only a low-resolution picture of John Paul II and his *Urbi et Orbi* address of 25 December 1995. In the following decades, the website would transform itself into an archive of the Church as well as a papal instrument of public communication.

The groundwork for the digital papacy was paved a few years earlier in 1991, when the president of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, Cardinal Rosalio José Castillo Lara, chose Judith Zobelein, an American nun of the Order of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, to work for the Vatican as coordinator and instructor for computer-related matters. Her father worked as a programmer and she was knowledgeable with computers, having taught unemployed immigrants basic informatic skills (Zobelein 2021) and having supervised, in 1986, the organization of computer systems for the Catholic Relief Services (Tagliabue 1999). After her arrival in Rome, she was given the task of creating a unifying standard for the separate offices and to link the computers with one another in order to establish a single Vatican Intranet. It soon became evident that, aside from creating an internal network and giving programming lessons, the time was ripe for the creation of a Vatican web presence. As the Internet continued to transform into an open public space during the early 1990s, Zobelein pushed for the creation of an official Vatican webpage to test the public response. Joaquín Navarro-Valls, director of the Holy See's Press Office, became one of her most important allies and, in 1994, proposed the concept of a digital papacy to John Paul II as a promising form of evangelization (Zobelein 2021). The pontiff's popularity presented a golden opportunity to mobilize Catholics around the world via the Internet. The pope quickly gave his approval. To quote Zobelein:

“[A]t that point it was Pope John Paul who was enormously popular and very human, someone very approachable that people really wanted to know more about. So, we said, ok let's give it a try. . . . And it's not as that Pope John Paul understood the technology, he had vision beyond that. He saw that the Church

needs to be out and needs to be something that can be a source to people that can be . . . in their living rooms if you will or be something that people can refer to. And so, he immediately said yes, do it". (Zoebelein 2016)

Thus, Zoebelein became responsible for the creation of the first Vatican homepage with a team that consisted of only two people: herself and one technician (ORF 2021). There is evidence that, during the early creation process, mobilization already became a driving force for Zoebelein. To visually represent the Church's two thousand years of history, she selected an ochre background design similar to parchment, which is still in use today. Besides creating an archive for the Vatican, the website was designed as a virtual storefront to display what the Church does and stands for (Zoebelein 2021). Early on, the website was based on a strategy of verbal and nonverbal papal communication to orchestrate a new form of virtual connection between the pope and the visitor. It is because of the Vatican website that the pope became even more publicly visible through digital photos, which became the new standard of the papacy's nonverbal communication strategy.

After a one-year trial stage, the Vatican website faced its first field test: hosting John Paul II's *Urbi et Orbi* message of 25 December 1995. The public response quickly overwhelmed the Vatican hardware and staff, taking many observers by surprise, including Sister Zoebelein. During the first 48 h, the website registered more than 300,000 visitors (Tagliabue 1999), an early demonstration of the potential mobilization power of a digital papacy. The decision to not only create a public papal e-mail account but also print every digital message addressed to the pope may indicate that the Vatican heavily underestimated the mobilization power of a virtual Pope John Paul II. The website could not handle the number of simultaneous requests and collapsed under the pressure (Helland 2004).

To explain the initial success of the papal digital sphere, it is important to consider the parallel physical format of papal mass mobilization. Among public papal performances, the *Urbi et Orbi* messages are only given on solemn occasions, traditionally on Easter and Christmas Day and upon the proclamation of a newly elected pope. According to the Catholic teaching, everyone who hears or sees it and that and is a man/woman of good will is granted an indulgence for their sins. Thus, it is an important asset of the papal mass mobilization, which already entailed the use of earlier forms of virtual participation such as listening to the radio or watching TV. As the *Urbi et Orbi* regularly mobilized people in Rome and in their own homes, it became the perfect opportunity to test the digital coverage of John Paul II.

An unexpected incident further increased the public awareness of the digital papacy. Due to a cold and sudden weakness, the pope temporarily suspended his message (Tagesschau 1995). The masses at St. Peter's Square and at home became worried. Since the newly created Vatican webpage included a public papal e-mail address, followers with a computer and internet connection had the unique opportunity to "directly" communicate with the pope. In the days following the event, people from all over the world sent e-mails, mostly offering prayers for the Holy Father's health and personal recovery, medical advice and even family recipes. From the very first day, the concept of e-prayers became a new phenomenon of papal mobilization, created by individual followers as a digital form of personal communication with the pope:

"And then we had also opened an e-mail [address] for the Holy Father which we also did not realize what that would mean and we got thousands of e-mails which does not sound like much now but back then it was an enormous amount. Right after we put that page up the Holy Father over New Year's got sick with the flu so that became the news so we got a flood of e-mails of chicken soup recipes and 'this is why my grandmother says . . . ' and this is . . . 'we are hoping, we are praying for you' . . . ; but it was a phenomenon that was kind of fun. . . . We also found out that having John Paul who . . . people loved and wanted to know more about, with the e-mails all of a sudden, he became somebody they knew. So, we got e-mails saying like 'you know my sister's divorced and I do not

know what to do; she's leaving the faith because of that' or 'I have cancer and I'm dying could you pray for me'". (Zoebelein 2016)

Another important factor for the success of the Vatican's first webpage was the provision of real-time translations of papal speeches, which were usually given in Italian. Between Paul VI and Benedict XVI, the tradition to greet the different nations in their respective languages after the *Urbi et Orbi* was established. However, the main messages were still expressed in Italian. The website enabled the Vatican to release official translations shortly after the event.

Finally, in addition to radio and television broadcasts, followers could use the Internet to receive the papal blessing as an alternative to a pilgrimage to Rome, which further legitimized the concept of virtual religious participation. While the Internet was not the first step towards a virtual mobilization of followers, it certainly offered new and growing possibilities for the papacy and the faithful.

After the successful field test of digital papacy, the Vatican closed the website and suspended operations for 18 months, until Easter Sunday 1997. After that, no public papal e-mail address was available. The Vatican servers, which were still at work nonetheless, were named after Archangels: the server supporting the website content took the name Raphael, patron of pilgrims and travelers, to symbolize a guide for everyone crossing the digital ocean; the server providing the firewall was named Michael, the defender against Satan, now also a protector of the virtual space; and the server hosting the Vatican's e-mail accounts was called Gabriel, assuming the role of a digital messenger of the Church.

While the website has been continuously modernized behind the scenes, its original appearance as well as its core structure with the three Archangel servers remain substantially the same. However, in order to match the transformation of the Internet into the so-called Web 2.0 of the early–mid-2000s, through which the users became active communicators, designers and content creators, the papacy was also compelled to become an active virtual entity. Despite the technological limitations of the time, the Internet was in a good position early on to become an additional form of Christian pilgrimage and participation. It was certainly no coincidence that the Vatican choose the papal *Urbi et Orbi* as its first digital event; thanks to the increasingly widespread use of the Internet at the private level during the mid-1990s, the physically mobilized masses at St. Peter's Square, the virtual participants at home and John Paul II's sudden sickness during the event, the website received the necessary boost to be immediately noticed. The timing could not have been better.

2.2. John Paul II, Benedict XVI and the Creation of Digital Stages

Following the success of the digital mobilization, John Paul II felt compelled to further adopt the Internet as a new type of social communication. Since the 20th century, the Catholic Church has had its own definition of the term social communication in order to describe the Church's technological and normative challenges of modern communication, e.g., print media, radio, film or television. The popes began to include the Internet into their communication strategy (Löfler, forthcoming). The annual event of the World Communications Day provided an opportunity for the popes to deal with matters of communication technology. Since the introduction of World Communications Days in 1963, the popes used the event to publicly show their stance towards communication technologies, present themselves as important actors within the public discourse on communication culture and public media and further develop the Church's usage of public media.

As a mobilization tool, the Internet is mentioned by John Paul II in his World Communications Day speech in 2001, where he advocated for a more active usage of cyberspace by Catholic communities:

"Consider, for instance . . . the positive capacities of the Internet to carry religious information and teaching beyond all barriers and frontiers. Such a wide audience would have been beyond the wildest imaginings of those who preached the Gospel before us. What is therefore needed in our time is an active and imaginative engagement of the

media by the Church. Catholics should not be afraid to throw open the doors of social communications to Christ, so that his Good News may be heard from the housetops of the world!" (John Paul II 2001)

The papal message of the following year was entirely focused on the Internet, called a "new Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel", similar to the "public space" of the forum in ancient Rome (John Paul II 2002). More importantly, John Paul II defined the virtual world as a starting point for real-world mobilization: "It is important, therefore, that the Christian community think of very practical ways of helping those who first make contact through the Internet to move from the virtual world of cyberspace to the real world of Christian community" (John Paul II 2002). Pope John Paul II's vision of the Internet was that of a stepping stone towards physical mobilization, a megaphone to enhance the range of Catholic communication. This view corresponded to the technical tools of the time, including a limited bandwidth that reduced the capabilities of online communication to small pictures and text rather than videos or simulcasts.

A prime example of the papacy's early usage of modern communication technology was the virtual pilgrimage of John Paul II to the ancient city of Ur, the presumed birthplace of Abraham located in southern Iraq. Despite the tense political situation, the pope repeatedly expressed his intention to personally visit Ur as a starting point for his planned grand pilgrimage to the Holy Land during the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 (John Paul II 1999; 1994). He intended to use "Abraham's footprints" (John Paul II 2000a; 2000b) as a shared symbol of reconciliation among the three monotheistic faiths (Stanley 2000). Although the negotiations with the Iraqi government failed, the pope still intended to visit Ur. During his General Audience of 16 February 2000, John Paul II presented his plan for a virtual pilgrimage: "Since this has not been possible for Me, I would like at least spiritually to make a similar pilgrimage. Therefore . . . together we will relive the key events of Abraham's experience, knowing well that it is not only those who boast physical descent from the great Patriarch who look to him, but also all those who regard themselves as his spiritual offspring. . . . I invite you now to accompany me in prayer on my pilgrimage to the places linked to salvation history . . ." (John Paul II 2000a). What this means is that the pope transformed the concept of locus as he used the idea of the spiritual offspring as a metaphor for a shared virtual experience of pilgrimage. On February 23, following a shortened General Audience, the pope invited the assembled crowd at St. Peter's Square to stay and follow his virtual pilgrimage via large screens, as he led a liturgical celebration inside the Paul VI Audience Hall (John Paul II 2000b). Despite the term "virtual" referring to a spiritual journey, the event illustrates how the pope used communication technology to broadcast images of Ur, the surrounding desert, biblical paintings and churches (Xiarhos 2016; Stanley 2000). Thus, his virtual journey to the historic site became an example of ecumenical dialogue, with the masses representing papal authority.

The next big steps towards digital mass mobilization occurred during the papacy of Benedict XVI, as the Vatican expanded its mobilization strategy to the digital playing fields of YouTube and Twitter. On 23 January 2009, during the Holy See's press conference presenting the message of the Holy Father for the 43rd World Communications Day, the director of the Vatican Press Office, Father Federico Lombardi, announced the inauguration of several official Vatican YouTube channels in order to expand the Catholic Church's ability to communicate with the world and further improve its digital public appearance (Lombardi 2009). On the same day, the first video was uploaded. The Vatican's YouTube strategy centered on the popes' public events—e.g., Angelus, Apostolic Journeys, Audiences—depicting the multiple roles of Benedict as a religious and political leader. However, the Vatican YouTube channels were likely not used for mass mobilization. For instance, the Vatican decided to permanently deactivate the comment function as it claimed not to be able to manage the global flow of messages and responses (Lombardi 2009), thus preventing any possible interaction with its followers. The idea that the Vatican could become another content creator did not seem too far-fetched, since YouTube had already become one of the biggest public community platforms, featuring all sorts of content from

information to entertainment. However, the Vatican misjudged the importance of the platform as a virtual community where people communicate with content creators and each other, forming lasting digital communities of viewers. It chose instead to use YouTube as an alternative TV channel.

Twelve years and a new pope later, the channels' activity is still unknown to many. Since the reform of the Vatican media, the YouTube channels' subscriber numbers have grown, with 579,000 subscribers at present for the English-speaking global main channel, followed by the Spanish (578,000), Portuguese (324,000), English (192,000), Italian (172,000) and Vietnamese channels (132,000). In contrast, between early 2019 and April 2021, the French (45,400), German (20,200), Chinese (8500), Polish (6400) and Lithuanian (2400) channels barely managed to double their numbers. With the exception of videos featuring the Holy Mass on Christmas and Easter, usually obtaining several tens of thousands of views, most videos only reach a few thousand. The ongoing renewal of the Vatican media and the ensuing inclusion of its YouTube channels into the newly created Vatican News did not bring about any significant change. Although during the peak of the global pandemic in 2020–2021, Francis used video messages and YouTube live broadcasts as a last resort to meet the challenge of public mobilization, the papacy failed to create a digital community eager to watch his videos. As of today, the modern papacy does not employ YouTube as a mobilization platform, which appears striking considering its ability to successfully use the Internet to mobilize digital masses.

On 3 December 2012, three months before the resignation of Benedict XVI, the Vatican launched the first official papal Twitter accounts in eight different languages—English, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, French, Arabic and Italian—with a Latin account following soon after. The first tweet was sent during the pope's weekly audience on Wednesday, December 12, displaying Benedict XVI using an iPad (O'Loughlin 2015, p. 30; Pianigiani and Donadio 2012; Donadio 2012) as alleged proof of the authenticity of a digital papacy. The resulting scene closely resembled a previous event that occurred one year earlier, when the pope also used an iPad to tweet the first message for the new information portal news.va (BBC 2011). Of course, the pope's tweet was not entirely his own product. In fact, while he was involved in the selection of his messages' topic and wording, a media team working behind the scenes wrote and translated the 140-character texts (O'Loughlin 2015).

It is difficult to assess the early success of the papal mobilization on Twitter. Within the first hours after the accounts went online, Pope Benedict reached about 250,000 followers (Pianigiani and Donadio 2012), then about 800,000 followers at the time of his first message (Donadio 2012) and about 2.5 million in mid-January 2013 (BBC 2013). However, despite this measurable success, the papacy did not have a communication strategy able to transform followers into digital legions to be physically or virtually mobilized. First of all, in the beginning, not many tweets were published—only thirty-nine over three months. This was partly due to the early decision to use the papal tweets as a digital extension of the General Audiences, but also because of Ratzinger's poor health situation during his last year in office. Secondly, the idea that Benedict XVI would personally tweet did not stand. The already established image of his papacy did not fit at all with the idea of an online pope who communicates with his followers in person. Besides the event of the first papal tweet, the media did not push the idea of a digital papacy. At the end of his papacy and three months after the launch of @pontifex, the official accounts of Benedict XVI managed to gather three million followers altogether.

2.3. Francis and the Orchestration of Digital Masses

After the resignation of Benedict XVI on 28 February 2013, and the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope Francis on March 13, the Vatican, in addition to the situation of a papa emeritus, faced the question of how to handle Benedict's digital heritage. The Vatican decided to integrate the more or less successful digital mobilization on Twitter into the new papacy. During the interim period in between the two papacies (sede vacante), the

Vatican removed all previous papal Tweets, storing them on separate servers, and changed the account description to “Sede Vacante”, thus also removing Benedict as forerunner of the following pontiff. The previous pope’s followers were the only surviving element. For the first time, a successor “would be handed not only the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, but . . . the password to the papal Twitter account and its millions of followers” (O’Loughlin 2015, p. 33).

The total number of Francis’ accounts’ followers is currently greater than 51.7 million, making him one of the most famous political actors of the microblogging service (BCW 2020). During the first years of his pontificate, the growth rate remained impressive, rising from 3.0 to 7.2 million followers in 2013, and then to 14.0 (2014), 19.6 (2015), 28.9 (2016), 37.5 (2017), 48.0 (2019) and 51.7 million (April 2021). Francis became one of the most followed world leaders (De Franco 2020). There are two main reasons for this success: First, in contrast to his predecessor, the public narrative of Jorge Bergoglio, who was known for his accessible and authentic approach in his previous role as Archbishop of Buenos Aires (Willey 2015; Valley 2014; Politi 2015), was in accord with his new position as a pope who maintains a personal contact with his followers. Second, from the first day of his papacy, Francis could rely on his predecessor’s foundational work in the sphere of digitalization. Only four days after his election, Francis used Twitter, asking his followers to further pray for him, a request that would become a recurring element of the papal messages: “Dear friends, I thank you from my heart and I ask you to continue to pray for me. Pope Francis” (Francis 2013).

Compared to his predecessor, Pope Francis undertook a different usage of Twitter, in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Between 2013 and 2021, the average number of daily papal messages on the German account @pontifex_de increased from 0.61 (2013) and 0.41 (2014) to 0.93 (2016), 0.96 (2017), 1.08 (2018), 1.2 (2019), 1.87 (2020) and 1.78 (May 2021). The communication style is similar to that of other papal messages such as the Angelus, further supporting the impression that the Holy Father would personally communicate with his online followers. While the pope does not send his tweets in person, he gives ideas for upcoming messages; based on that, his communication team drafts tweets in the pope’s primary languages, Spanish and Italian. After Francis gives his approval, the messages are brought to the Vatican Secretary of State’s office, from where the Tweets are translated and then published (see: O’Loughlin 2015). For the most part, the tweets are written in first person, and the messages are often directed towards the audience—e.g., Christians, family and society.

Since July 2019, the papacy has also released short videos on Twitter on a regular basis in an attempt to call attention to the Vatican YouTube channels. In these monthly papal prayer requests, which started in 2016, Francis assumes the role of a narrator, sitting at his desk and facing the camera/audience while talking about Christian values in everyday life or core issues of his pontificate. In addition to a verbal communication strategy that invites the audience to follow the example of Jesus, Mary or other fellow Christians, a nonverbal communication strategy characterizes the pope as a charismatic leader, through eye contact and easily understandable metaphoric gestures within a setting reproducing a personal conversation.

The papal Twitter accounts are a prime example of a largely successful digital mass mobilization. While Francis does not send his messages in person, his communication style and his narrative as charismatic leader resulted in a rise of public attention. However, while Twitter remains an important asset for concise online communication, it is only one of many digital arenas. The biggest difference between physical and digital mobilization is the Internet’s multi-locality: the pope must use multiple digital stages to become as visible as possible in order to attract as many people online as possible.

The creation of a papal Instagram account on 19 March 2016, is the latest example of digital papal mobilization. Using the pseudonym @Franciscus, the Vatican publishes papal pictures and short videos to attract followers by means of nonverbal communication, as Mons. Dario E. Viganò, then prefect of the Secretariat for Communication, outlined:

“Instagram will help recount the Papacy through images, to enable all those who wish to accompany and know more about Pope Francis’ pontificate to encounter his gestures of tenderness and mercy. . . . We will choose photographs from the Photographic Service of L’Osservatore Romano, selecting certain details. In this way we can show those aspects of closeness and inclusion that Pope Francis lives every day” (Sala Stampa 2016). A nonverbal communication strategy emerged that presents Francis mostly during personal interactions with individuals and as a religious leader during his trips. Compared to some prominent political figures such as Barack Obama (around 30.1), Donald J. Trump (20.5) and Recep Tayyip Erdogan (8.1), the pope’s 7.6 million followers are still a low number (Statista 2020).

In contrast to Twitter with its mobilization through words of encouragement and persuasion, Instagram uses photographic images of Pope Francis in order to depict, communicate or evoke positive emotions. It implements a strategy of recurring gestures—e.g., shaking hands, hugging, touching someone’s face—and motives—e.g., personal conversations, papal journeys, holy masses—to influence public opinion, and the secular media tend to reuse these positive narratives to describe the pope.

This analysis suggests that the digital mobilization of followers happens on two different fronts: the papacy uses the pope’s charisma to attract digital followers in order to stay in contact, to be seen and heard and to communicate with the faithful, and the papacy uses digital communication channels to depict itself as “modern” in order to remain relevant to communicate with the public. While the Holy See managed to gather a digital crowd on Twitter, its mobilization differs from its physical counterpart. While the papacy frequently uses events such as public audiences or voyages to interact with individuals and groups, there is no replay or retweet to any individual message. As of today, there are no stories of a virtual chat with the Holy Father.

3. The Virtual, the Digital and the Physical

The idea of the virtual is an undisputed part of Christianity as well as of society and politics. It helps to understand the abstract, but more importantly, it influences the individual at the psychological level. It derives from the medieval Latin word “*virtualis*”, meaning strength or power, and refers in scholastic philosophy to “something that exists potentially rather than actually” (MacWilliams 2002, p. 317; Lévy 1998, p. 23). The concept of virtual pilgrimage has its roots in the late Middle Ages. Due to the dangers of lengthy trips and the economic burden that came with them, a great part of the medieval population of Europe could not afford traveling to distant places such as the Holy Land. This led to the creation of what can be described as “spiritual theme parks” that “could spiritually be just as effective” (Kaelber 2011, p. 50). Local shrines became a cost-effective alternative for the faithful to experience the mobilization of a pilgrimage without having to undertake long travels.

Among the most famous examples in Europe are the shrines of Altötting, Częstochowa, Einsiedeln, Fatima, Loreto, Lourdes or Marizell. Many apostolic voyages include papal visits to these local pilgrimage sites (see, Barbato 2020a). John Paul II visited the shrine of Our Lady of Altötting, Germany, on 18 November 1980; Benedict XVI visited the small shrine of Etzelsbach, Germany, on 23 September 2011; during his apostolic journey to Poland on the occasion of the 31st World Youth Day, on 28 July 2016, Francis celebrated the Holy Mass at the shrine of Częstochowa; and in May 2021, thirty shrines “scattered throughout the world” joined the pope’s call to recite the “Rosary to pray for the end of the pandemic and for the resumption of social activity and work” (Francis 2021a).

Within the field of political thought, the categories of sovereignty, commonwealth, state, nation and people are examples of representing something invisible by means of something visible, describable and relatable (Koschorke et al. 2007; Möllers 2008; Skinner 2007, 2009, 2012). In short, the virtual can be understood as fiction that becomes reality with the power to make others act, believe, think or feel in a certain way, as it represents something that cannot be fully seen or explained.

Today's forms of digital pilgrimage are prime examples of the power of the virtual: for instance, historic sculptures or iconic imagery, such as that of the Virgin Mary or Christian Saints, are used in sites of Catholic pilgrimage to represent and uphold a tradition of local worship and to create a physical stage of mobilization where the faithful make themselves visible. Common belief and tradition are able to turn a location into a field camp of the faithful, while the location becomes the physical destination of the pilgrim's journey.

In addition, the journey of pilgrimage itself operates as "a metaphorical reminder of the Christian journey to Heaven" on which the pilgrims "walk the material roads, which evoke the spiritual road on which they also journey" (Dunn-Hensley 2020, p. 125). The pilgrim's journey becomes a crossroad between the physical and the metaphysical journey (Xiarhos 2016), with the physical hardships of the travel representing his spiritual endeavor. At least to a certain degree, the virtual is part of every form of pilgrimage as it creates a community of the faithful based on a shared physical path that represents a present, yet invisible, common faith.

3.1. *The Internet as a Virtual Realm*

The Internet theoretically provides a golden opportunity for the modern papacy to combine the idea of the virtual with the newly available technologies of the digital in order to combat, especially in Europe, the declining numbers of physical followers. It creates several arenas for virtual mobilization where the faithful can gather in one place in order to read, listen and watch the pope as a trans-local community, as national and regional groups or as individual followers.

While there has been an ongoing debate about the prospects of the Internet with regard to the Catholic Church and pilgrimages in particular, the most important open questions concern the authenticity of virtual representations for individual pilgrims, with a strong focus on the normative question of whether the Internet is able to provide the same experience at the psychological level (Hill-Smith 2011; Cowan 2005). In contrast, the concept of mobilization as a resource of soft power provides an alternative position, as it centers on the question of how the digital space can be used to publicly demonstrate the legitimacy of the pope. This article combines the idea of the virtual with the previously discussed research on mobilization and soft power in order to measure the current state of digital papal power.

Interestingly, even though the papacy has become more and more digital, Francis did not push for a virtual mobilization. On 17 April 2020, during a time when papal communication with the faithful and the world was mostly limited to digital messages on YouTube and Instagram, Francis spoke about the dangers of a Church going viral: "Before Easter, when the news emerged that I would celebrate Easter in an empty Saint Peter's Basilica, a bishop wrote to me, a good bishop, good; and he rebuked me. "But how come, Saint Peter's is so big, why not put at least thirty people in there, so that you can see there are people? There won't be any danger". I thought: "But, what does he have in mind, to tell me this?" I did not understand, at the time. But since he is a good bishop, very close to the people, he wanted to say something to me. When I find him, I will ask him. Then I understood. He was saying to me, "Be careful not to make the Church virtual, viral; not to make the sacraments virtual, not to make the people of God virtual. The Church, the sacraments, the people of God are concrete. It is true that in this moment we must provide this familiarity with God in this way, but so as to come out of the tunnel, not to stay inside it. And this is the familiarity of the apostles: not gnostic, not virtual, not selfish, for each one of us, but a concrete familiarity, in the people" (Francis 2021b).

A few months earlier, on 1 January 2021, Francis spoke positively about virtual mobilization efforts: "I am grateful to all those who in every part of the world, while respecting the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, have promoted moments of prayer and reflection on the occasion of today's World Day of Peace. I think in particular of yesterday evening's virtual march organized by the Italian episcopate, Pax Christi, Caritas

and Catholic Action, as well as the one from this morning organized by Sant'Egidio, being broadcast by streaming worldwide" (Francis 2021c).

Today, the virtual pilgrimage can be broadly understood as "an Internet neologism for a Web site where people can simulate a sacred journey for educational, economic, and spiritual purposes" (MacWilliams 2004, p. 223). It does not need to compete with its counterpart, since the digital legions are an additional instrument for the modern papacy to publicly legitimize itself. In contrast to a psychological debate centered on the question about individual feelings involved in digital pilgrimages, this article offers a look into the past and present usage of the Internet as a strategic tool to mobilize the masses everywhere. It concludes that in order to successfully use the Internet, the modern papacy has to achieve the following steps:

1. Visibility: it needs to become visible online;
2. Actorness: it needs to be seen as a relevant actor;
3. Mobilization: it needs to mobilize the digital masses as participants;
4. Narrative: it needs to create a narrative of success for digital mobilization;
5. Balance: it needs to find a balance between virtual and physical mass mobilization.

While the papacy apparently achieved the first two steps, with a digital presence that has significantly increased over the past 25 years, it has not done enough to mobilize these several million digital followers to become a reliable papal power base. Despite their current numbers, the pope's digital legions have remained mostly passive, as each digital arena limits the interaction to a certain form of communication. Regardless of the capabilities of digital platforms, they cannot fully recreate some of the fundamentals of papal mobilization: the physical-spiritual experience as an individual story of being on a journey, the feeling of being part of a mass and the physical proximity to the pope and others. Especially in the early to mid-2000s, research overestimated the impact of the cyberspace as an abrupt transition into a digital age that could provide a real alternative to the physical world. While it is true that the Internet continues to change society and communication culture, offline events have not simply vanished. As Petr Kratochvíl has pointed out, the ongoing process of virtualization has, at least for the Catholic Church, not "reduced the importance of the materiality of pilgrimage", as in its current state, the "physical aspects of pilgrimage became one of the hallmarks of pilgrimage-related texts and videos" (Kratochvíl 2021, p. 5). On the contrary, it has provided opportunities to advertise mass gatherings. There is no zero-sum game between online and offline.

At this point, the modern papacy has failed to utilize its online presence as a community-generating forum where newcomers and longtime followers, believers and digital tourists are allowed to create their own virtual locations, such as open discussion groups or ad hoc private conversations. Without these basic assets of communication, the sense of a papal online community will never become particularly strong. Almost two decades ago, Christopher Helland described the very same problem, using the Vatican website as an example of the Church's shortcomings with its online communication. While the Vatican website offered a "wealth of information", unofficial Catholic sites already provided an "environment for people to talk about their religious beliefs and practices, ask challenging questions concerning their faith, and participate in a safe environment where they can open up and share religious feelings and concerns" (Helland 2004, p. 31). For example, there is no Q&A space to address the pope and no real opportunity to get in contact with the papacy or other followers besides writing short messages on Twitter or Instagram. In its current state, the papal mobilization online is a one-way street, and while this might work for public appearances in the physical realm, digital communication has always been a multi-way network.

3.2. COVID-19 as a Stress Test for Papal Mobilization

If this paper's considerations about papal mobilization are correct, then the global pandemic would be the modern papacy's greatest challenge since World War II. Thus, this section deals with the Vatican's use of the Internet during the first year of the global

pandemic, using examples of papal livestreams to quantify the pope's digital mobilization power.

The coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) reached Italy at the beginning of 2020, with major regional outbreaks in Northern Italy in February and the first reported viral disease within the Vatican on March 5 (Vatican News 2020). Following regional lockdowns, the Italian government issued an assembly ban and rules of social distancing. The Vatican took similar measures, suspending all major public events and closing St. Peter's Square and Basilica. While all scheduled papal journeys abroad were canceled, other events such as the weekly Angelus Prayers and General Audiences were transformed into virtual events.

On 27 March 2020, Francis began his digital offensive, taking the global pandemic as an opportunity to hold an extraordinary moment of prayer in the form of an *Urbi et Orbi* blessing. Using the visual effect of a seemingly abandoned St. Peter's Square during a rainy evening, Vatican News portrayed the pope as a communicator for all mankind. The scene broadcasted by the Vatican aimed to create the narrative of an invisible, yet present, legion of digital believers, praying with the pontiff during the pandemic.

With the help of two Christian icons, the *Salus populi romani* image of the Virgin Mary and the crucifix of San Marcello, combined with an orchestration of verbal and nonverbal communication, Francis prayed for a rapid end of the pandemic on behalf of all people. His prayer included the sick, their relatives and everyone exposed to the invisible risk of infection due to their work. The verbal content was accompanied by a papal body language using not only Christian symbols of blessings and veneration but also social conventions of nonverbal communication.

The images of the live broadcast generated a narrative triad of pope, location and Christian icons. Francis became the petitioner for a crowd of people that were obliged to remain at home for their own safety, while the icons were part of a Christian tradition of praying for divine assistance in times of crisis. The orchestration of the event suggests that the papacy wanted to expand the definition of the mass itself, from the concept of people visibly gathering at one location to that of a virtual community including all of humanity, the viewers, the followers and everyone involved in the event. The absent masses were represented in two ways: through the empty space and the virtual viewership on the YouTube channels of Vatican News.

Vatican News broadcasted the extraordinary papal prayer as a livestream with audio commentary on YouTube. In order to measure the potential of the papacy's mobilization power, the number of viewers was recorded every five minutes during the livestream. It included the Spanish, German, English, Portuguese, Italian and French channels (VN Spain 2020; VN German 2020; VN English 2020; VN Portuguese 2020; VN Italian 2020; VN French 2020). The combined count of views of all channels reached about 1.09 million people watching the event at the same time. At its peak, the Spanish channel had about 525,000 viewers, followed by the English channel with 270,000 and the Portuguese channel with 170,000. In contrast, the German channel only reached a maximum of about 10,000 viewers, which approximately corresponds to the channel's followers. Since the event was also broadcasted on other news portals on YouTube, the Internet in general and on television, the actual number of people who watched the extraordinary event with Pope Francis is likely to have been much larger.

The success of this digital mass mobilization was only temporary as the virtual events following the extraordinary *Urbi et Orbi* involved far fewer spectators: during the broadcast of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on April 9, the abovementioned channels gathered around 107,000 simultaneous viewers; both the Easter Vigil on April 11 and the Easter *Urbi et Orbi* message of April 12 obtained around 99,000 viewers each; and the regular event of the *Regina Caeli* on April 13 only attracted around 5400 viewers. These numbers indicate that the papacy is certainly in a position to mobilize an audience digitally, but its success depends above all on the occasion and the public attention: first, the public media drew attention to the extraordinary occasion of the *Urbi et Orbi* in advance, so that people knew

about the event; second, the pope seemed to be the only one able to fit the role of divine supplicant during a time of global pandemic and invisible dangers.

These results confirm the current papal research on mass mobilization. Among other reasons, the popes rely on public stages in order to communicate with believers in the universal church and to remain relevant; the papacy uses images of the deserted St. Peter's Square as a metaphor for its invisible digital legions at home. However, the findings also suggest that these legions are not regular troops or a community of papal followers, but rather resemble temporary mercenaries who are mostly interested in the event or the extraordinary.

4. Conclusions

Without its ability to mobilize the masses, the modern papacy faces the danger of losing not only its display of public support but also, more importantly, its legitimacy as a global hybrid actor. By adapting itself to the technological paradigm shifts that changed the rules of public communication and mobilization, the modern papacy became digital. By taking a close look at the recent history of papal mobilization, this article's outcome is that the success of digital mobilization depends to a great extent on the use of digital stages in order to create virtual communities where followers are given opportunities to communicate with each other and enjoy the illusion of a digital pope. In order to mobilize its digital masses, the papacy has to create visible and open digital locations.

After the surprising success of the Holy See's website, the Vatican's failure as a YouTube content creator and its success on Twitter and Instagram, the papacy seemed prepared to face the global pandemic. However, the lockdowns and assembly bans demonstrated the shortcomings of its digital mobilization, which was far less impactful than its physical counterpart. The sight of thousands of Christians gathered at St. Peter's Square or at any other religious or historic location is still far more important than any subscriber count or number of interactions.

The findings of this paper suggest that, despite a relatively good starting position and the ongoing centralization of the Vatican media apparatus, Francis' strategy of virtual mobilization has not achieved significant results. The global pandemic has become the first major stress test for digital mobilization as it resulted in a loss of public space for which the different virtual arenas of Instagram, Twitter and YouTube could not compensate. The papacy's use of the empty stage of St. Peter's Square hints at the importance of physical locations. The 2020 lockdowns proved that, at least at the present moment, the Internet provides no real alternative to physical forms of papal mass mobilization. It may serve as a communication device, but it is a different type of soft power. Rather, the exceptional situation seems to confirm current research on the modern papacy that describes physical forms of mobilization as the main source of papal power (Barbato and Heid 2020; Barbato et al. 2018). The papacy made itself visible online, but it has yet to become a digital actor.

Funding: This research was funded by the German Research Foundation, research project "Legions of the Popes II: A Case Study in Social and Political Transformation", project number 288978882.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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ISBN 978-3-0365-3381-0