

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

TOURISM AND PILGRIMAGE, TWO SIDES OF THE SAME CURRENCY: THE PORTUGUESE INLAND WAY OF ST JAMES

Xerardo Pereiro

Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Portugal
xperez@utad.pt

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to discuss the relationship between tourism and pilgrimage through the analysis of the well-contextualized case study Santiago de Compostela's Inland Portuguese Way. The routes to Santiago de Compostela originates in the seculars travelers to the "end of the earth" in Galicia (Cunha, 2005), and nowadays they have become a global model of development of cultural touristic routes. The routes to Santiago are also recognized a symbol of European identity and a local, regional, national, and international tourist-development strategy (Lois González et al., 2014).

In Portugal, the ancient Roman roads were used by pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela in the Middle and Modern Ages (Brochado de Almeida, 2011: 15). The PIWSC runs 205 kilometers from Viseu to Chaves, in Portugal, and 182 kilometers from the border with Galicia (Vilarelho da Raia) to Santiago de Compostela, using the Via da Prata (Verín – Ourense – Santiago de Compostela). The PIWSC presents a differential peculiarity in relation to other routes to Santiago in that it is a two-way route, allowing pilgrims to walk to Santiago de Compostela (northern Portugal, in Galicia) or to Fátima (in Portugal's central region) in the opposite direction to the south.

The revitalization of the PIWSC in the twenty-first century was inspired by: a) a book by Professor Arlindo Magalhães Ribeiro da Cunha (1995) on the history of the Portuguese routes to Santiago; b) a walking meeting made on a section of this route in 2000 from Cidadela de Aguiar to Sabroso de Aguiar; c) an exhibition of photographs on the Jacobean routes taken in Vila Pouca de Aguiar in 2011; d) the signing, on April 7, 2011, of a cooperation protocol among the municipalities of the PIWSC to homogenize the signaling along the route. Therefore, it was from the beginning of the twenty-first century that a very close collaboration was initiated between the Portuguese municipalities that cross the route in order to create a product–experience itinerary of cultural tourism and pilgrimage. There

are eight Portuguese municipalities involved in this project: Viseu, Castro Daire, Lamego, Peso da Régua, Santa Marta de Penaguião, Vila Real, Vila Pouca de Aguiar and Chaves.

The leadership of the project is the responsibility of the Vila Pouca de Aguiar City Council; its politicians, in particular, Ana Rita Dias (Vice-President of the City Council), and its tourism technicians, especially Catarina Chaves. The first step of this intermunicipal and transnational collaborative project was to identify, with historical bases, the route's layout. The second step was to create and post signage along the route, and the third was the creation of "hostels" every 30-35 kilometers to house pilgrims. On April 24, 2012, the first official walk of this new stage of revitalization of the PIWSC was celebrated. It should also be noted that the PIWSC project is part of an international collaborative network of the routes of Santiago (European Federation of Saint James Way, 2016) and the most recent Portuguese Federation of Saint James Way (Federação Portuguesa dos Caminhos de Santiago). In the words of one of those responsible: "The Interior Portuguese Way is a recent path... the goal is not to create a product for the masses... it is dangerous" (Catarina Chaves, April 6, 2016, conference at UTAD in Vila Real).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The paper analyzes the process of touristification of Santiago de Compostela Inland Portuguese Path and its contribution to the complex relationship between tourism and pilgrimage discussion. We reflect on its cultural creation, as a way of constructing sustainable touristic cultural routes and pedestrian and cycle routes, that is, a way of "writing" the territory. The Camino de Santiago, known in English as "The Saint James Way," became the first European cultural itinerary, declared by the Council of Europe in 1987, and today has become the "Camin(h)(ñ)os de Santiago," that is, a model of an international cultural route imitated to some degree throughout the world without the same diversity, in a process that the anthropologist Peter Jan Margry (2008) calls "caminonization."

About tourism and pilgrim experiences, the pilgrimage is a symbolic ritual, a rite of passage with a metaphoric frame, a journey to a holy place (Fernández, 1974). Pilgrimages can be analysed from three perspectives: a) a functionalist perspective as a form of social cohesion and connection with the sacred; b) a performative perspective in the vein of Turner (1974); c) from a dialectic perspective as a political field of disputes, discourses and meanings (Eade & Sallnow, 2000); d) from a processual and transformative experience (Graburn, 1977; 1983; 2001).

From this last perspective we cannot separate the pilgrimages from their social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts. The journey can be also a fully tourism experience. To Amirou (2007), tourism is a secular form of pilgrimage, the journey to a holy place it's considered a primordium of tourism. Nowadays, the pilgrimage in the most religious sense in contact with tourism is redefined and converted into a complex and polysemic social phenomenon (Álvarez Sousa, 1999; 2005). Many pilgrimages have become a tourist product like others and tourism implies emotions like those of pilgrimage. It is considered that both are a social practice of identities with connection between past and present (Augé, 2003). In this social context, tourism does not only present a commercial or commercial bias, but it integrates sacred and profane elements of which it is imbued

and cannot neglect the fact that tourists do not abandon the sacred senses of their travels. Religion plays a role in tourism, and tourism play a role in pilgrimages.

METHODOLOGY

Anthropological fieldwork in articulation with documentary work and interviews with pilgrims and social agents involved in the PIWSC was the methodology used in this research. This triangulation allowed us to provide qualitative exploratory knowledge about the revitalization of this pilgrimage route (Phillmore & Goodson, 2004; Gutiérrez Brito, 2006, Ateljevitch, 2007; Richards & Munsters, 2010). Since January 2016 and in different periods, we have walked the PIWSC, from Farminhão (Viseu) to Verín (Galicia, Spain). During the walks we recorded the course in an audiovisual fashion, identified and analyzed the signs, and talked with host people including hotel managers, restaurateurs, tourism technicians, pilgrims and the local population. This experience of auto-anthropology and fieldwork, recorded in a field diary, placed us in a position of intimate proximity to the PIWSC, which allowed us to discover how pilgrims live the experience of the touristic pilgrim trip (Galani-Moutafi, 1999; Pereiro and Gómez-Ullate, 2018). Furthermore, we meticulously interviewed the promoter of revitalization of the route, pilgrims, politicians, and leaders of hiking associations linked with the creation of this route. We also analyzed a set of 32 in-depth interviews with Portuguese pilgrims who completed this route. It should be noted that although the PIWSC is used by pilgrims of various nationalities, most of them are Portuguese.

ANALYSIS AND SOME RESULTS

After doing an introduction explaining the cultural revitalization of the Ways of Saint James and a brief discussion about the theoretical approaches about tourism and pilgrimage, we analyze the motivations and experiences of Portuguese pilgrims of PIWSC. We focus on the tour pilgrimage experiences of this transnational and cross border cultural route, the discourses, perceptions and imaginaries of walking and cycling in this old Path as a revitalization process. We underline the multi motivations of the pilgrimages, more spiritual and post secular, and the social meanings of their experience. All the interviews affirm the strong link between tourism and pilgrimage and not only with religion or spirituality.

As an intercultural practice, other elements that reveal meanings of this experience design as an intimate space with few people, quiet, as a personal challenge were considered. The road is shown as a metaphor for life, as a threshold or limiter, an interpersonal space and an immemorial experience. That is to say, all the pilgrim's speeches show that the touring is a ritual of passage and a liminal space, reflective and necessary to rethink the senses of human life. Tourism is a crossing of physical and sometimes mental borders, it is also a game of mirrors between us and the others. In the case of the PIWSC, this is a pilgrimage road that crosses the border between Portugal and Galicia, it is a transnational road, with similarities and differences subjectively perceived by the turpilgrims between one side and the other of the border ("borders" from the local point of view): a) Portugal:

Harder and more beautiful routes; less number of pilgrims; wonderful landscape; b) Galicia: more and better hostels for pilgrims; more empathy in relation to the pilgrims; better signaling of the Caminho; better organization around the Caminho; wonderful landscape.

CONCLUSIONS

Santiago de Compostela's Inland Portuguese Way (PIWSC) stands out not only for the unique characteristics of inland Portugal, but also allows us to capture components of subjective diversity of the tourism pilgrimage. We conclude that the multi-motivations for the turiperegrination are of two types: a) secular (those of desire of escape, recovery by the change, the necessity of communication, the cultural knowledge and the prestige); b) religious-spiritual (sacred motivations, spiritual purification, God seekers, fulfil a vow or promise). The PIWSC is an interior journey through the inland of Portugal and Galicia, a new reinvention of the tradition that presents itself as an alternative heritage to other pilgrimage routes to Santiago. The multiple voices of the turipilgrims show us a new social status upon their return and some bodily, emotional and mental memories that present the possibilities of alternative tourism as enriching from the spiritual, educational, personal and social points of view. We realize that this historic path has been reinvented for the various agents involved. This process has a political, technical, economic, social and cultural basis. To do so, new thematic narratives have been created that are on the way to the turipilgrimage and a new secular spirituality. In addition, its transformation and current conversion into a tourism product now extends its initial Christian and Catholic religious sense for new spiritual and tourist polysemous senses (cf Steill and Carneiro, 2011, Berger, 2016).