

Abstract

This work focuses on analysis of Europe's most massive pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, which I use as a case study to show how contemporary pilgrims understand their experience. Through the analysis of interviews with 9 other pilgrims and my own auto-ethnographic diary with a strong dose of reflexivity I want to show that pilgrimage can be understood as a process of constructing a pilgrim body. To gain such form of habitus, or in other words "to become a pilgrim", is achieved through several different strategies, such as walking, socialising, solitude, separation (from everyday life), asceticism, and others. This experience results in a form of gained habitus, or a technique of the body (Mauss 1968) which can be learnt and used in everyday life after the pilgrimage ends. Pilgrim body is then a complex skill, consisting of physical, psychical, spiritual and social dimension, each describing different aspect of the pilgrimage itself, all embodied in the physical body of a pilgrim. Through such approach I want to show, that we might understand pilgrimage as a form of physical experience with transcendental overlap, focused mainly on individual progress, but constructed together in friendly *communitas* of pilgrims, described by Victor Turner in his classic study (Turner 2004). Usage of these benefits gained from pilgrimage and life of Pilgrim body in everyday life is analysed as well.