

Review of: "Spirituality of Pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago: Existential Questions and the Meaning of Life"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Absolutely, yes, very publishable. There are, however, some shortcomings. First, the positives: Excellent theoretical reflections, extensive source material, a wonderful argument, good structure.

The negatives: The theoretical model is too vague; it is not grounded in the actual discourse on postmodernity. Van Gennep's model does not seem to work so well for the argument developed here. More significantly, there is no reflection on the socio-religious research pertaining to pilgrimage as such and then today specifically. What is the difference between medieval and modern pilgrimage? Next, the author basically gained her insights from the original sources and, in a way, capitalizes on them for her own work. At times, I think that those pilgrimage authors have said everything already, and our author uses that material for her own purposes.

Specifically, what is 'basic trust'? What has broken down today, and why do people return to spirituality? What is the difference between pilgrimage and the revivalism of Christianity, fundamentalist Islam, or radical Jewish faith?

Rite of passage – hmm, I'm not so sure this really applies to pilgrimage.

I do not agree with the concept that time and space have split today. My own experience with Zoom meetings, for instance, contradicts that notion. The author uses here a rather simplistic binary notion that does not explain in many ways the reasons for pilgrimage. But the entire discussion of why people feel so distraught and lost is important. It lacks, however, substance by itself. If the argument were fully true, then why do not more people go on pilgrimage? 350,000 is big by itself, but tiny in the larger framework. I think that the author needs to go more into detail and widen the perspective.

E.g., "According to Giddens (1991, 1994), late modern society is experiencing a fragility in both ontological security and basic trust, which are crucial for individuals to find meaning in their lives." This is the same statement as in the abstract, and it remains vague here as well. Too much reliance on those theories.

I do not see where some of the primary sources (self-published) were published.

The scope of research literature is very limited, and much of the international research is just not there.

