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Spiritual and Identity Transformations of Migrants: An Approach from the Experience of an Andean Community

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Abstract: Understanding transformations in the spirituality of people involved in migration processes poses new challenges to theological approaches that usually operate within national or regional boundaries. A central question in this study is how to approach transformations in spirituality and identity, taking into account the migrants' orientations, both towards their country of origin and towards their country (or countries) of destination. This article argues that migration is an experience that leads to profound changes in the spirituality and identity of migrants. Taking advantage of insights from transnational studies, this article investigates the traits of a spirituality transformed from a transnational identity with regard to the experience of an Andean community. Particularly, their devotion to the Lord of Qoyllor Riti in Curzco, Lima and New York.

Keywords: migrant spirituality; spiritual transformation; migrant identity; theology of migration; syncretism; popular religion; transnationalism

1. Introduction

To gain access through the door of a church whose members are migrants can be equated to entering another world. Whoever ventures in during a celebration is met with people of all ages, participating with a devotion now extinct in faith communities impacted by secularization. Some of the faithful wear clothing typical of their regions of origin; one can hear tongues from other languages and sonorous singing and hand-clapping to the rhythms of a musical group. In Catholic migrant communities, it is possible to recognize the scheme of a liturgical canon but seasoned with the ritual expressions of the originating countries. The world behind the door of the temple is a scenario where the spiritual experiences of migrants, woven since the inauguration of their own migration histories, are being transformed. Messages regarding the equality of all the sons and daughters of God are being conveyed as well as messages speaking of the search for communion of the whole human race or regarding the family and social responsibilities of the members (Castillo Guerra 2018, pp. 168–71). From their faith and supported by their religious community, migrants build a space that contradicts the expectations of the policies for social integration that point to a neocolonial assimilation of migrants into the culture of the dominant group (Schinkel 2018).

Through my research on the Theology of Migration and my experience with the pastoral accompaniment of migrant communities during the last decades, I can state that to those who are not familiarized with religious expressions of an ecclesial community of migrants that the visit to a religious service provokes an ambivalent impression. The expressions of faith of the community visited, perceived through their rites, the cultural performances and remembrances that remit to their original countries, do not always fit in to the canons of official liturgies. A formal study could compare them to theoretical models that explain the trends in religiosity of the contemporary world and will probably

run the risk of generalization regarding the incommensurability between the “archaic” expressions of the faith of migrants and the “post-modern” expressions of autochthonous groups. The study could also probably judge the faith expressions of migrants as “conservative” (Jenkins 2014). However, how then to approach the spirituality that emerges from the experience of migration to help us understand it in a more profound manner? In particular, how to approach transformations in the spirituality and identity of people, taking into account their orientations both towards their country of origin and their country (or countries) of destination?

The purpose of this article is to develop new theoretical insights for the research field on spirituality, including the identity that emerges from the experience of migration. In this way, at the end of this article, I am able to outline the traits of a spirituality transformed from a transnational identity. I make use of a model proposed by Kees Waaijman to research spirituality, one which I relate to the need of a new understanding of the context of the migrants in theology. The sources for this study come from a diversity body of research in the anthropological field research and are identifiable in the body of the text. For this research, I therefore explain the analytical method employed and the significance of migratory contextuality for a theological frame of spirituality (1). I then analyze the transformations in the spirituality of migrants, based on a transnational approach from Cuzco, Lima, and New York (2). The characteristics of a spirituality transformed through a transnational identity are also formulated (3).

2. Spirituality and New Contexts in the Migratory Experience: Methodology and Perspective

Among the multiple definitions of spirituality, I opted for one that expresses its meaning as “lived spirituality” (Frohlich 2001), which is rooted in profound human convictions and in its openness to the divine. Spirituality is therefore a life experience characterized by the capacity of “self transcendence” (Perrin 2007, pp. 19–20), which allows for community interactions within and without institutional spaces. Regarding the Latino/a Theology of the USA, celebrations are considered as core aspects of the Latin American spirituality in the USA: “Celebrations are seen as communal events, such as patron saint’s feasts, and many include prayer, meals, dance, processions and poetry” (Fernández 2005, p. 340). When studying spirituality from ritual expressions, as I do in this paper, spirituality, expressed as lived spirituality allows us to understand “how people as actors in a specific social and cultural context perform all kinds of actions to manifest their perceived values and transform themselves in ways they expect will satisfy their longing.” (Van den Hoogen 2011, p. 15). To approach this spirituality from a “popular” meaning, I also analyze it as a lay spirituality, which I explain below.

In his extensive work, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, Waaijman (2002), affirmed that there is a particular trait of lay spirituality that has not been valued or studied within the development of Christianity. In contrast to monks or persons from religious congregations, lay persons do not have formal structures nor schools dedicated to teach spirituality, or, much less, rules of life to guide the formation of the followers. There is a transmission of spirituality, however, in the oral form, as well as through interactions at home, the neighborhood, the work place, church, and so forth (Waaijman 2002, pp. 23–24). Waaijman proposed a method to research lay spirituality through lived spirituality and pointed out four constant components (Waaijman 2002, p. 15): (a) The *Sitz im Leben* in the family environment, where interpersonal relationships are intermixed between home and neighborhood; (b) the temporal dimension of the family environment, where time is an experience of generations and not necessarily a process carried out by an official chronology; (c) the spatial dimension, with the locus at home, and family intimacy as the convergence point with public life; and, lastly, (d) the personal biography as the “raw material” for family spirituality.

To research the particular trait of migrant’s spirituality, I followed Waaijman’s model. To that end, I interpreted these four constant components as distinctions in the migratory daily life where migrants live, co-live or co-exist, and develop their spirituality and identity. However, these distinctions also require an interpretation from the context of migration, a task which, as I explain in the following paragraph, presumes a broadening of the notion of “context” in theology.

Towards a New Perception of the Context of Migrant's Spirituality

The 1990s signaled the end of the cold war with the fall of the Berlin Wall. We witnessed the crumbling of the division between the First and Third Worlds, which segregated the countries of the south to a third position with regard to the Soviet Union and the North Atlantic. The term “Global South” emerged to signal the new geopolitical relationships where countries in sub-alternate status, reframed and reversed the past colonizing effects as well as the current systems of exclusion (Grosfuguel 2006). The participation of Christian groups from various latitudes since the First World Social Forum in the year 2001 evidenced how this new geopolitical understanding took shape. “Global South” also reveals the geographic re-distribution of people, goods and services that are currently accelerated by globalization processes, which Anne Mahler describes as follows: “There are souths in the geographic north and norths in the geographic south” (Mahler 2018, p. 32). The south, and the north have experienced the process of globalization, and both have interacted with local contexts in a process that Roland Robertson called “glocalization” (Robertson 1995).

The known division between the theologies of north and south does not seem to be so clear anymore. The increase in human mobility that characterizes the new millennium questions the mapping of theology. Therefore, we frequently find more Christians from the south in the east, west and north—a change that was already highlighted in the decade of the 1980s with the term “mission-in-reverse” (Barbour 1984, pp. 304–5) that characterized the new Christians from the global south in the north.

The new geography of world Christianity has theological repercussions regarding the spirituality of the new multicultural and religious plurality contexts. When the theology of the north questions her own interlocutor or the “other” in the south, the theology of the north has problems in recognizing this “other,” among the members of the churches and societies, as bearers of other Christianities in Europe and North America. The “other” is not only present in the notion of a universal church but is also a part of its physical contextuality. It speaks of a “glocalized catholicity” (the global in the local), a new understanding of the universality of Christianity from the local as explained by Robertson or, in other words, the diversity of world Christianity that shows up in a compacted manner in specific places.

Throughout the last few decades of the past century, the migration of “the other” from the south to the north or from the east to the west garnered no attention from theological studies. This is because, in part, they did not fit in the matrixes of sociological and philosophical studies impacted by secularization, modernity and post-modernity. However, this is because local theologians and ecclesiastic authorities followed the governmental predictions which affirmed that migration had a temporary character, waiting for a re-migration. However, not all migrants returned. In fact, they brought their families and established their homes permanently. Migratory processes have not stopped. New groups of migrants arrive continuously due to employment related reasons or as political refugees.

Migration, whether as human mobility or as a faith experience (Castillo Guerra 2017), constitutes a challenge to a theology accustomed to operate within national or regional boundaries, between languages, cultures, and known religious expressions. The answer to this challenge comes from a new way of understanding theology. In fact, at the beginning of the century, reflections emerged that would later be known as the Theology of Migration (Estermann 2004; Fornet-Betancourt 2004). The new theological approach was motivated by the human condition and the suffering of migrants that constantly challenged increasingly restrictive border policies. It emerged as a reflection on the faith and identity among persons that occupied marginal positions within destination societies. When theologians realized the suffering of the migrants, they came into contact with a great spiritual strength, matured by new images of God, the encounter with other migrant faith communities, and the hopes of reaching the goals of their own migratory projects. The Theology of Migration emerged as a way to reflect and offer answers to the challenges regarding spaces characterized by cultural diversity (Groody and Campese 2008). It takes into account spaces that bring together multiple spiritual experiences and where encounters and dis-encounters are produced among human groups. It also opens spaces for a

theological reflection regarding the fields where migrants re-signify their faith notions and practices to give meaning to their human condition.

The Theology of Migration offers criteria to reflect on the spiritual experience of the new interlocutors of theology in the destination places. For this to happen, it proposes a re-thinking of the notion of contextuality from “daily life” in the immigration territories, which has been a key contribution elaborated by Latin theology in the United States, from the pioneering work of Ada María Isasi-Díaz. *Lo cotidiano* (Daily life) “constitutes the immediate space of our lives, the first horizon in which we have our experiences” (Isasi-Díaz 2010, p. 240). However, this human experience where there is a struggle for life is deeply intertwined with the spiritual experience of gratitude because “it is the experience-place, in which the grace of God is present” (Isasi-Díaz 2010, p. 252).

The Theology of Migration values “daily life” as the spiritual ambiance of lives that have been impacted by spatial changes, by a new rootedness to new rhythms of life, and by other perceptions of “being” and “being in the world.” The context of their theological work is the space that is made up by the “daily life” of migrants, precisely there where they display areas of intercultural overlapping with other persons or communities within and outside international horizons (Groody and Campese 2008; Baggio and Brazal 2008; Kessler 2014; Padilla and Phan 2016). However, how can we understand the relationship between national and international contexts in a study about the spirituality of migrants?

I answer this challenge with a brief introduction to the contributions from the so-called “transnational turn” in migration studies (Amelina et al. 2010). I then continue this study of the spirituality of migrants from their daily life as related to international boundaries.

Transnational understanding follows a new comprehension of the migration space, interpreted from different perspectives. For some, migration entails the emigration of family members and of fellow citizens that leave their own territory for various reasons. For others, migration is immigration, that is the entrance of others into a territory where they were not born. Migrants establish relationships with both territories, as well as with the territories through which they are obliged to transit when they do not have entrance visas. According to the transnational perspective developed by Schiller et al. (1995), through their relationships with other persons or communities, migrants constantly cross international borders. The social networks, printed material, food consumption, music or clothing, the decoration of their homes or the participation in political parties or development projects in their originating countries—all of these evidence the importance of the transnational space in their lives. Guarnizo and Smith (1998) characterized these activities as “transnationalism from below” to make a distinction from a “transnationalism from above,” which is executed by institutional actors, international policy and economy.

One of the key contributions of “transnational studies” relies on the study of the identity of migrants regarding the transnational space to conclude that the migrant is actually a “transmigrant.” The term “transmigrant” helps us to understand the daily life of people which, from their own physical context, are preoccupied with a context that they experience as virtual and imagined. Transmigrants are persons that bring contexts together and transform them into transnational fields. Within the field, they maintain relationships with those that have stayed in their originating countries. By participating in transnational networks, they cross the international border and generate new forms of symbolic capital.

Another basic contribution of the so-called transnational turn that I wish to highlight relates to the critique of the standard studies on migration. They limit their approach of migration to the receiving countries and therefore fall into what is known as “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer and Schiller 2003). Because of the application of methodological nationalism, studies will continue to appear based on a limited perception, incapable of considering the broader world shaped by transnational contexts.

The transnational perspective allows us to understand that any study regarding the spirituality of migrants that does not include the territories linked by the experience of migration would end up being a de-contextualized reflection. Theology would not be able to fully analyze its transnational *Sitz im Leben*. Its perception would not be far from the superficial perspective of the visitor that I referred to in the introduction of this article. Additionally, from its approach to “*lo cotidiano*,” the Theology

of Migration offers new possibilities to overcome these limitations and study spirituality within the migrant groups, attending to their transnational context. However, a transnational approach is still at a relatively early stage and needs further development. In the following section and based on the experience of an Andean community in New York, I analyze the spirituality of migration from a transnational perspective. My starting point is the spirituality present in the devotion to the Señor de Quyllorít'i in New York. I will briefly describe its origin, following the history of colonization, mission and syncretism in the Andes region. The last section is dedicated to describe the innovations and transformations that have taken place by the migrations to Lima and to New York.

3. The Devotion of an Andean Community in New York: An Approach from the Transnational Perspective

Each year, during the months of June and July, a group of more or less one hundred persons, mostly from the Peruvian Andes community of origin, gather in the city of Port Chester, New York, to celebrate the feast of the Señor de Quyllorít'i. Upon approaching this feast, the visitor is immersed in folklore, a strong religious fervor, the vision of participants dressed in exotic, finely embroidered apparel, and a lot of music and dancing groups. Probably the last thing that crosses the mind of the visitor is to associate this event of this group of migrants with spirituality and the expression of a new identity. However, as can be seen during this transnational approach that I am eliciting, it is, precisely, all about this. An experience of lived spirituality and an expression of identity in a community with other Andean migrants. During this celebration, they re-enact their connection with God, with their family members, friends and the scenic views that they left behind when they began their migratory daily life. However, what is the origin of this celebration? What is the importance for their spirituality and identity?

3.1. *Between the Spiritual Conquest and the Andeanization of Catholicism*

In Cuzco, Perú, in the year 1780, during the colonial era, a religious devotion emerged that combined the elements of the Quechua people with elements of Catholicism (Ceruti 2007). The story is that in the Andean Mountains, the boy Jesus appeared to a young shepherd and from that encounter a friendship flourished. The young shepherd returned home with a sample of a very fine cloth to sew a cloak for the new found friend. No one believed him and instead accused him of stealing the cloth from the church. The parish priest tried to contact the shepherd's friend, but when he searched, he was met with a crucified person from whom blood was sprouting. The little shepherd died suddenly, probably due to the pain for the loss of his friend. They buried the boy, and an image of Jesus appeared on the tomb in a crevice of a rock close to a mountain with an elevation of more than 6000 m known as the Asuaguate Snow Mountain.

According to Quechua cosmovision, "Asuaguate" means the "creator of the waters," because its "apus" (spirit) is responsible for a glacier from which the river Vilconata flows and on which all fauna, flora and agriculture depend. As the years went by, the number of pilgrims to visit the image of Jesus engraved on the rock increased, and this event became known as the miraculous "Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i" (The Lord of the Star of Snow) or in a more popular manner as "Taytacha Quyllorít'i" (Daddy Quyllorít'i) (Simon 2008, pp. 91–92; Ceruti 2007). This devotion is very much extended among the Quechua country people. Each year, one week before the Catholic feast of Corpus Christi, thousands of devout persons travel to the shrine, built at an elevation of 4600 m. They dress with ceremonial clothing and organize dances accompanied by autochthonous instruments; it entails a three-day pilgrimage, under dire nocturnal temperatures of sometimes 15 °C, below zero. Ecclesiastic authorities have intervened to try to control the cult, provoking a detachment in the Quechua spiritual perception. The celebration within the catholic temple isolates the people from the sacredness of the surroundings and direct contact with nature.

The devotion to the Señor Qoyllur Rit'i has, at its foundation, the transformation of the spiritual and identity experience of the Quechua people provoked by the violent military occupation by the Spanish

Empire. The arrival of the Spanish to the Abya Yala—the autochthonous name of the continent known as America—does not begin with a friendly encounter but rather with an occupation that absolutely denied the culture, religion and humanity of the peoples recently “discovered.” Boaventura de Sousa Santos pointed out that in this denial, there was a planned destruction of knowledge, an “epistemicide,” that endeavored to eradicate the wisdom of the original people in the “new” continent (De Sousa Santos 2005). The first evangelizers arrived within a warlike strategy of colonization, geared to destroy pagan religions, subdue the Andean people and oblige them to convert to Christianity, just as they did with Islam in Al-Andalus. In the missionary’s view, as explained by Paulo Suess: “Mission meant crusades in foreign lands, conquest of territories occupied by enemies of the faith, a liberation of souls from the grasps of the devil” (Suess 2002, p. 10).

The colonization process also had a spiritual goal, as the phrase “spiritual conquest” describes, which was coined by the Peruvian Jesuit Antonio Ruiz de Montoya in his work *Conquista espiritual hecha por los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús en las Provincias de Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay y Tape*, published in Madrid in 1639 (Ruiz De Montoya 1892).

Spiritual conquest was justified because of the need to save the souls of the countries of Abya Yala. Baptism without any knowledge of the Christian creed was the first step in this spiritual enterprise because of its soul-saving nature. The difficulty with the local language, the geographic distribution of the population, or the insufficient number of catechists left catechesis on the back burner. Missionaries carried out linguistic studies and even translated biblical quotes in order to conduct catechesis in their local languages. They worked with the encomienda system, that submitted the indigenous populations to a strong rule of taxes and even to slavery. The system of reductions, applied later, organized the reservations of the indigenous people and facilitated a structural foundation for catechesis. Outside of the rule of encomienda or reductions, the organization of the catechesis did not develop as expected, which resulted in a prevalence of the original cosmology of the Andean people.

The spiritual conquest was not successful in Abya Yala because it did not totally eradicate the autochthonous spirituality. However, its failure was not only in the problems that made evangelization difficult but rather in the initiative of the subjugated people themselves. In order to survive the violence, submission and the risk of extermination, the indigenous people adopted the model of syncretism. This model was eloquently described by Octavio Paz: “The indigenous convert to Christianity, and, simultaneously they convert the angels and saints into pre-Hispanic gods” (Paz 1997, p. 15).

The spiritual conquest was a “symbolic strife” (Parker 1993, p. 22) in which syncretism appeared as a “spiritual submission, accepting Christianity, but safeguarding the preservation of ancestral beliefs” (Parker 1993, p. 27). This strife did not intend to end in a victory by submission or exclusion of the adversary but rather to include them into their own spiritual matrix; in other words, the “ordination of the opponents” (Marcos 2004, p. 239) in order to structure them in a complementary manner. Syncretism set up a hermeneutical process that allowed for the linking of their own cosmology with the catechism imposed upon them.

Roberto Goizueta explained that the success of syncretism of the cosmology of Abya Yala with the Pre-Tridentine cosmology was due to similar elements. In both instances, the idea of an interrelation between the sky (heaven) and earth, between the divine and the visible or material, prevailed. In Medieval times, it was understood that the Creator remained intimately intertwined with creation in such a way that “the sacred, therefore, would be encountered, not above or outside creation, but in and through creation” (Goizueta 2009, p. 65).

For the original people of Abya Yala, nature is impregnated with a divine dynamic, and, consequently, they can detect divine forces (energy) in trees, mountains, water, rocks, glaciers. The apu, divine energy, present in the snowed mountain of Ausangate, is one of the pillars of the devotion to the Señor Qoyllur Rit’i and constitutes an example of the Abya Yala spirituality. Josef Estermann explained this: “A stone (Rumi), for example, is not simply a separate ‘entity’ existing for itself, but rather it is the ‘concentration point’ of certain relationships of ‘strength’ and ‘energy’” (Estermann 1998, p. 96). All of creation is united by divine energy. Other originating peoples of Abya Yala, share this spirituality,

coined as “Cosmo-consent” by the “Aiban Wagua” (the theologian of the Guna people), to describe the vitality of the relationships in the cosmic experience (Wagua 1992).

Syncretism was a process motivated by the originating people of Abya Yala that leaned from their own search for meaning towards a re-interpretation of the Iberic Catholicism at the juncture in which they were branded as a subjugated people. A popular spirituality emerged that ensued in a popular religiosity, for the Quechua, Andean or Abya Yala people, as a space where the relationship to the divine was established from a bottoms-up perspective.

The Council of Trent (1545–1563), dedicated to counteract the effects of the protestant reform, emphasized the use of the Iberic popular religiosity in the newly occupied territories. The people of Abya Yala adopted this religiosity placing it in a spiritual space so as to recognize the divine strength of their religious tradition in Christianity just as they had been doing in the syncretizing process. The devotion to the saints and the pilgrimages created the spaces where the syncretic religiosity germinates. The Tridentine notion of sacramentality, in a particular manner of the transubstantiation doctrine regarding the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, opened the door to establish bridges with their own cosmology, which also values the material and visible as access to the revelation with the divine. The Council of Trent prohibited the use of local languages in liturgical celebrations; however, the Councils of Lima in 1567 and 1595 obliged the clergy to learn the language of the community in order to facilitate the catechetical teachings (Marzal 1990, p. 485).

During the colonial evangelization, a persistent problem in Latin-American Christianity was the leadership for the religious celebrations and the understanding regarding the sacred space. In fact, among the various racial, moral or spiritual justifications, the ecclesial authorities prohibited the ordination as priests of Amerindians as a means of controlling the faith (Lundberg 2008). Authorities also restricted the liturgical celebrations to inside the temple to the sacred, while they qualified the outside—where ordinary or daily life happens—as the profane or mundane. Following the ideas of modernity, catholic authorities introduced a dualistic segmentation of the world in the colonized territories to change the unitarian view of the world of the originating peoples.

The segmented view is reflected in the tradition of the Señor Qoyllur Rit'i. Quechua country folk set forth a tradition that was based on a divine apparition outside of the temple in the space of the profane. They interpreted the image of the Lord engraved on the rock as the presence of the divine in nature—in other words, in the material realm. They also fused together the apparition with the celebration of the fertility of Pachamama, or Mother Earth, linked to the yearly cycle of the Pleiades Constellation. They took advantage of the popular lay Iberian tradition of “brotherhoods” or “guilds” to organize an autonomous devotion with regards to the clergy, and the prohibition by these to a religious self-leadership. According to Karsten Paerregaard, from a spiritual association of devoted people with similar professional occupations, the guild or brotherhood became an association of devoted people that shared other traits such as social class, place of origin, or ethnicity. A deep change occurred that transformed these traits to “arenas of contestation and creolization, as well as mobilization and identification” (Paerregaard 2011, p. 187). The Quechua country folk also understood the apparition from the nascent syncretism as an articulation of their own Andean cosmology with Christianity. On the other hand, catholic authorities built a temple with a wall and a roof as a dislocation that separated the sacred territory from the profane.

Therefore, it is possible to state that the devotion to the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i was born from two domains, one under the authority of the priest and the other under the popular leadership of the Andean community, represented by the brotherhood. Popular spirituality emerges from the struggle to rescue religious autonomy and accomplish a degree of expansion on the part of spiritual conquest. First of all, the Andean spirituality had a matrix that propitiated the search for a complementarity with the opposition. Secondly, the Iberic Catholicism had ideas, sacraments and rituals that fitted Andean cosmovision. The devotion to the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i is a reflection of the effort of the Quechua people to reconstruct their own spiritual and cultural identity in the midst of a colonized daily life.

3.2. Migration to Lima

As with other regions of the country, murders, abductions, threats by the violence of the armed groups and the anti-terrorist strategy of the government in Cuzco provoked, particularly during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, the emigration towards Lima, the capital of Peru, ([Laos Atencia 2012](#), p. 12). In spite of the settlement of other Andean country folk from previous decades, the new generation of internal migrants stumbled on a dominating creole (criollo) culture that obliged them to settle at the periphery of the city. Living in places known as pueblos jóvenes “young towns” without water, electricity, paved streets or nearby schools, the emigrated struggled for recognition of their own culture and identity.

Their popular religion was the key element for the recognition of their own Andean identity. In the year of 1985, members of the Provincial Club of Quispicanchis from Lima organized a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i ([Altamirano and Ávila Molero 2016](#), p. 222). During this pilgrimage, they became aware of the number of devotees; elated by this, they decided to establish a brotherhood in Lima. This is how they initiated the ceremonies in their own Provincial Club, and later, with the support of an indigenous pastoral priest, they incorporated the celebrations of the Eucharist in Quechua language, which were in fact the first to be held in all of Lima.

The group of devotees grew, so they transferred to the church of Saint Stephen (San Esteban), the second oldest church in the Peruvian capital. In this church, the brotherhood installed a tapestry with a drawing that reproduced the original image of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i engraved in stone. Surrounding this tapestry, images of the Virgin Mary and patron saints from other originating districts of Cuzco migrants were also installed.

The church of san Sebastián became a centre for the Andean popular religion in Lima, and the devout recreated the rites they have brought from their regions. Known as the Church of the Quechuainhabitants, it is home to 60 brotherhoods or guilds, all with a particular devotion. On the first Friday of each month, the mass is celebrated in Quechua language in a festive ambiance. Troupes composed by musicians and dancers participate with their apparel inspired in the annual celebration of Cuzco. Various generations of migrants from the different regions of Cuzco intermingle during the celebrations. According to Teófilo Altamirano and Javier Ávila Molero, the Lima rites have incorporated urban innovations in order to adapt them to the lives of the emigrated persons. ([Altamirano and Ávila Molero 2016](#), p. 222).

Among the accomplishments of the devotion to the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i in Lima, it is important to highlight that it allows the Quechuas to appropriate the public spaces surrounding the temple. Additionally, each year, they organize a procession towards the Cathedral of Lima that is composed by a parade with the troupes and the participation of the devout and the brotherhoods that carry the saints and virgins they are devoted to. When they arrive at the cathedral, the mass is celebrated in the Quechua language. The date of the first celebration in the cathedral is 1997, a surprising fact considering that systematically there has been an invisibilization of the indigenous culture ([Ávila 2002](#), p. 239). Known as the “Andean Corpus Christi,” the celebration of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i is, today, an event that does not go unnoticed in Lima. Over 4000 faithful attend those annual celebrations, and more than 50 troupes parade their dances through the main streets of Lima and the Plaza Mayor (the main city square).

The Eucharist is presided by the Cardinal of Lima and ends with the celebration of the “Day of the Andean Song,” which is sponsored by the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima.

Through the faith manifestations in the public arena of Lima, Andean migrants are activated to overcome their social, cultural and political exclusion. At the same time, they develop new forms of identification, a process that Beatriz Silveira Castro Filgueiras summarized as: “In opposition to this Lima-lization, where they were not welcome, the new inhabitants of the city affirm their presence and cultural security identifying not as people from Lima but rather as provincials, as inhabitants from some popular district of the city (. . .), as Cholos, or simply as Peruvians” ([Silveira Castro Filgueiras 2014](#), p. 82).

The term “Cholo” has a racist slant directed towards people of Andean origin or from rural areas. Used as a verb, “cholear” means to humiliate or degrade. The growing visibility of country folk is known as “cholification,” and it is also related to the construction of a new rural or Andean identity in a city that is exclusionary, where the people from Lima were normally seen as creoles (or of European descent). Take note that the Andean migrants transform the negative semantic to identify themselves as Cholos, proud and conscious of their culture, and they have accomplished their recognition in Lima. In this sense, they avoid being identified as “limeños,” or people from Lima, and in turn adopt the national identity of Peruvian in order to create “a new symbolic horizon where everyone can be recognized” (Bonilla 2010, p. 110). Avoiding exclusionary identity classifications, they set the stage for a new national culture of inclusion, “un nuevo “nosotros” nacional” (a new national us (Bonilla 2010, p. 112).

Jürgen Golte pointed out the innovative meaning of these transformations: “In this sense, the creation and the cultural reinterpretation and reconstruction in the urban context, in fact, is not only a feat for continuing forward with a localist identity, referred to the village origin. Instead, it is the creation of something new, new rites, and new customs, where the Andean ties are unavoidable” (Golte 2001, p. 120). In other words, the innovation noted as “cholification” does not reside in a transplantation of the Andean identity or popular religion to the city but rather in the way the Andean emigrants have transformed them to create new zones of intercultural overlapping. In other words, it is an inclusive Andean identity that allows for adaptation in their new urban setting and the recognition by the dominating groups.

3.3. Re-Emigration to New York

The idea to take the devotion of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i to the United States came about by an invitation of a brotherhood of Peruvian migrants to take the tapestry of Lima to a procession dedicated to the Lord of Miracles in New York in the year 1994. The Lord of Miracles is an Afro-Peruvian devotion dating from the XVII Century, and because it is the national patron, it is the most extended devotion throughout Perú. The Brotherhood of the Lord of Miracles in New York has been organizing processions since 1971; other migrant Peruvian communities have similar processions in cities such as Tampa, Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles or Washington (Paerregaard 2008).

The Brotherhood of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i in Lima accepted the invitation and included a troupe of dancers and musicians in their delegation. The group had problems at customs and had to wait. The image of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i was “detained” because the agents feared that the tapestry, painted in colonial style and decorated with precious metals was an intent of art contraband. Finally, the delegation arrived in New York and at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, where they celebrated mass with the Brotherhood of the Lord of Miracles of Limean origin. When the celebration ended, they travelled to the city of Peterson in New Jersey to celebrate the first Eucharist in Quechua language in the United States territory. Persons with roots in Cuzco were among the devout. The last celebration (during that trip) resulted in the foundation of the Brotherhood of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i in Nueva York. Very soon, the devout reported miracles and apparitions in dreams, inspiring others who did not know about the devotion to a re-encounter with their faith and to become members of the Brotherhood (Ávila Molero and Oshier 2005, p. 188). Some of these faithful felt encouraged to make the three-day pilgrimage to the shrine in Cuzco.

Each year, over 100 Andean migrants gather to celebrate the feast of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i in Port Chester, NY, at Saint Peter’s Church, which in fact is an Episcopal Church that offers the pastoral accompaniment of Spanish speaking persons. The ceremony is organized by the ‘Hermandad Folklórica de Ccoyllorritty’ (Guanca 2014). During the mass, they sing hymns in Quechua and once concluded the devout leave in procession carrying their tapestry of the Taytacha QuyllorRit’i in a small altar. The procession walks on the sidewalks carrying flowers, others dance, and others, known as “pablitos,” walk in colorful traditional dress. They do not return to the church but rather they meet at a venue where the procession turns into a party. When they arrive, they place the tapestry on a

podium by the musical group; they share food and drink, and dancers express their devotion with choreographies inspired by the pilgrimages to Cuzco. The ceremony turns into a dance party with the participation of the public and ends with words of gratitude by the brotherhood.

It is important to note that the devotion of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i arrived to the United States due to a transnational orientation of another brotherhood that opens up to groups from another devotion—a brotherhood that expresses its transnationalism by bridging social capital to promote new interchanges of material and symbolic capital with new groups.

The Brotherhoods of the Lord of Miracles and the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i emerged in the United States to maintain the Peruvian culture, faith and identity in connection with the territories of origin and destination. At first glance, the Andean celebration gives the impression of restricting to known schemes of organization originating in Peru. Without a transnational perspective, it is difficult to recognize that behind the appearances there are significant innovations. One of these innovations is that they make up a de-territorialized ethnic minority in search for elements that give meaning to their new migratory identity. Another innovative element is that they actually build a community of uprooted people coming together from the common referents tracing back to their origins, the organization, and the celebration of a ritual devotion. What is presented as religious folklore is more than a transplantation of habits and orientations. It is in fact a re-definition of self based upon the territory of origin and the immigration territory. There is a religious and identity transformation based on their own needs in their migratory daily life (Groody 2013; Castillo Guerra 2014).

In other brotherhoods of Peruvian migrants in the United States, it has become more visible how these innovations result in the organization of the celebration. The quadrille, for example, is the section of the brotherhood made up by those who carry the images of the patron saints during the processions; traditionally, this group is composed by males. In a study by Larissa Ruiz Baía, she described the foundation of the first female quadrille of the Brotherhood of the Lord of Miracles in Peterson, New Jersey in 1995 (Ruiz Baía 1999, pp. 97–102). Other brotherhoods in the United States followed the example, and the initiative has extended even to the Lima Brotherhood. Slowly but surely, the female leadership reached the organization of brotherhoods and broke the male monopoly. These transformations indicate how the recreation of a tradition in a new context of migration favors the active role of women. It also shows the reciprocity of the transnational transactions between brotherhoods. Another aspect of the innovative character has to do with the relationship between the devotion of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i and the strategies for social inclusion. During the devotion, the ancestral roots of a great past that is still alive are evoked, and in doing so, they garner the prestige and recognition of a society in which they occupy an asymmetrical position insofar as they conform an ethnic, cultural and religious minority.

We saw that in Lima, Quechua emigrants assumed the Peruvian identity to overcome the exclusionary sense of the Limean identity and to be visible in public spaces. In the United States, migrants extend their brotherhoods to members of other nationalities to create inclusion among the Latin-American migrants in the United States. Consequently, in the processions, according to Larissa Ruiz Baía, there is participation by faithful and brotherhoods from other Latin-American countries (Ruiz Baía 1999, p. 104). Through the spirituality present in their devotions, migrants are building a Latino identity, they are making themselves visible, and they are creating the foundations for an interchange of spiritualities with other migrant groups.

4. Traits of a Spirituality Transformed from a Transnational Identity

Taking into account the model for the study of lay spirituality proposed by Waaijman (2002, p. 15) which I introduced at the beginning of this study, I now organize the constants of spirituality using the frame of the celebration of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i, such as it has been transformed through the migratory processes, the transnational practices, and the construction of new identities.

- (a) Transmission: Spirituality is shared through oral transmission and through the ritual experience composed by dances, hymns, processions and pilgrimage experiences. The guilds or brotherhoods

coordinated by a steward or stewardess organize the celebration of the devotion and the contents, which is popular and not regulated by formal instances. Transmission is not simply transplanting but rather the creation of new transnational spaces for the transmission of spirituality through a new translocal sense.

- (b) The *Sitz im Leben* of Andean spirituality in New York is *lo cotidiano*, everyday life. Under the influence of a spirituality that emerges from syncretic processes and of adaptation to the city of Lima, it is transformed into a transnational spirituality. Through the ritual expressions of Andean and transnational spirituality, migrants establish contact with other communities in Peru with which they interchange contexts from their new migratory daily life. This spirituality is mainly communitarian and is framed by gratitude towards God.
- (c) Temporality: Waaijman affirmed that lay spirituality is conditioned by the experience accumulated through generations; however, for Andean migrants in New York, the relationship with time is much more complex. Andean migrants intermix time frames from their own stances and understanding of the world and the interactions with other rhythms of life in the destination societies.

Theologian and anthropologist Diego Irarrázaval, who has dedicated many years to research of the Andean peoples, expressed temporality in the Andean spirituality as follows: “Original peoples have autochthonous spaces and times, and mix where and when they manage their experiences of the sacred” (Irarrázaval 2006, p. 199). Ritual celebration is a way of capturing their relationship not with one but various modernities (Eisenstadt 2000), Andean, from Lima, from New York, a temporal and spatial combination of the archaic and the contemporary, of places of life articulated in a mixed time frame.

- (a) The spatial dimension: As with the *Sitz im Leben*, the reference to space is linked to migratory daily life and is characterized by a transnational fluidity that includes habitat, the network of migrant relationships and their faith. The spatial dimension takes shape throughout an experience of faith and life, forged during the transit from the initiation of the migratory journey, through various territories. The transnational perspective helps us to understand that migrants re-create relationships with those territories by way of their own bottoms-up transnationalism. From the analysis of the devotion of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i in New York, I am able to infer that through the bonds generated in a spiritual setting, migrants are united to their family members, devout persons and the scenery of Perú. The celebration agrees with others in Cuzco and Lima, and when brought together, they renew their sense of belonging to the same trans-Andian community. Physical barriers, formed by geographic distances, the impossibility of assuming the expenses for travel to Peru, or the implementation of restrictive border policies, are spared within the ritual space. Even more so, with the opening of the rite to the participation of migrants from other Latin-American countries, new supra-community and supra-national identifications are introduced in order to strengthen their new identity and Latina visibility within the United States. At the same time, they extend their transnational spirituality to other migrants from the Global South.
- (b) Personal biography: Waaijman’s opinion is that the personal biography is the “raw material” for family spirituality. In the case of migration, in the relationship between the person and family, a diversity of modalities appear that are coherent with the causes and histories of migration and the possibilities of family reunification. The way in which the separation in the family takes place, depends on the understanding of “family.” In popular and Andean environments, there is an understanding that includes various generations. From the absence of their loved ones, migrants transform their faith community to an extended family. Within the migratory daily life, this is their new family, and, in it, the personal experiences of migration converge. These experiences are characterized by spiritual and identity transformations. For example, the identity of citizen changes to the condition of “stranger” of an emigrant to immigrant and from this to transmigrant.

These transformations happen in spirituality in the same way: “The formation of the brotherhood in New York changed many aspects of the migrants’ daily lives. Before, the majority of them had not been followers of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i” (Ávila Molero and Oshier 2005, p. 187). Migrants have discovered their faith through the devotion to the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i. This is possible when migrants interpret their new identity from faith, and a new relationship with God is established from a new experience of daily life and of transnationality.

5. Conclusions

In this article, I have researched and reflected on a spirituality that emerges through the experience of migration. Our approach was from the perspective of the visitor who attends a celebration of migrants and is impacted by the exotic rituals but is not capable of realizing that there are different contents regarding identity and spirituality. I also indicated that something similar occurs to a theology accustomed to view contextual articulations limited to a particular geographic space. In this sense, I pointed out the contributions of the Theology of Migration, its preoccupation with understanding the faith and life of the migrant, and the need to study its interconnections with different contexts. With the help of a transnational and interdisciplinary approach, I proposed a framework within which to study how migration affects spirituality and what the study of a lived spirituality entails in its relationship not with one but many territories involved in the migration experience. This allows us to go further than the studies that limit migration to the context of destination and to understand that migrants combine meanings that they garner from (a) their traditions and experiences brought from their places of origin, (b) their new contextual rootedness in the destination societies, and (c) transnational interactions, above all with other communities in their places of origin.

Subsequently, and based on the devotion to the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i, I have studied the spiritual transformations throughout moments where three major human mobilities take place: The colonizing migration of the Spaniards, the internal migration of the Quechua country folk to Lima, and the Andean migration to New York. The last migration is the debtor of the first two, insofar as it takes on a popular syncretized religion that was later transformed in the urban context of Lima. On both migrant pillars, a trans-Andean form takes place regarding both spirituality and identity, the constants of which I have described in this study and that only are fully understandable only by articulating the locations that make up the transnational space of migrants.

Waaijman explained that it is not easy to value the spirituality present in popular devotions: “Devotionality and popular piety as a rule fall outside the perspective of institutional spiritualities. The reason is that this form of spirituality concerns itself with such everyday matters as procreation, health, interpersonal relations and property. In addition, its ritual language does not conform to the rational framework of the schools of spirituality which consider it stupid and vulgar” (Waaijman 2002, p. 233). The spirituality present in the devotion of the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i and transformed with the migratory experience is not devoid of the problems regarding its interpretation and recognition by those who study spirituality. Maybe the main problem is not only that it does not fit in rationalist models or doctrinal molds or in the traditions of the schools of spirituality, it is a complex spirituality that garners sense and meaning through the various transnational contexts that claim and revalue the sacred in everyday life. However, at the core of this complexity, we find its greatest value as it generates the possibility for the creation of a framework for theological investigation and reflection on the comprehensions of faith and religious phenomenon according to the new geography of world Christianity, as I have entertained in this article.

In Cuzco as well as in Lima and New York, the devotion to the Señor de Qoyllur Rit’i shows the spirituality that is present in the Andean rites. By enmeshing Jesus with the apu present in the Snowed Mountains of Ausangate, it becomes a part of a symbolic universe that establishes a relationship of gratitude. This gratitude is celebrated in the feast. They show gratitude by singing and dancing, combining the social encounter with all of their beliefs. It is a symbol also of “divine reality and of the

search of the good life in human history” (Irrarázaval 1999, p. 1) from a spirituality for a good life (sumak kawsay).

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