

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE LORD OF MIRACLES:
THE EXPATRIATION OF RELIGIOUS ICONS IN
THE PERUVIAN DIASPORA**

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Never try to take a cab in downtown Lima, Peru's capital, on October 18! You will be stuck for the rest of the day because of the millions of people who fill up the streets to celebrate the Lord of the Miracles, the most popular religious icon in the country. No other event can mobilize so many people; not even national soccer matches or political elections. It has even been claimed that the procession of the Lord of the Miracles is the religious event in Latin America that gathers the largest number of people on the streets. The icon kept in Lima's Nazarenas church is worshiped by a multitude of people united by a common hope that the Lord will protect them against disease and accidents and give them strength in their daily lives.

Most religious icons adored by Peruvians are either images of official Catholic saints that have been adapted by peasants or urban migrants to their local life worlds (Cánepa Koch 1998: 161-234; Marzal 1988: 103-202), natural forces that are attributed divine powers in local Andean belief systems (Isbell 1885: 137-165; Allen 1988: 37-66) or sites in the nature (mountains, rocks, etc.) that, according to regional legends, have been deified by the revelation of God (Sallnow 1987: 207-242; Molinié 1999: 245-279). By contrast, the Lord of the Miracles is an image that represents a drawing of Jesus Christ believed to have been the object of the Saviour's disclosure. The painting made by an African slave in the 17th century has become known as the Cristo Moreno (Coloured Christ) because Jesus Christ was portrayed as an Afro-Peruvian. The widespread faith in this image incarnates fear over the earthquakes that periodically hit Lima and the rest of Peru and respect for the powers that control these natural forces. The adoration also symbolizes the country's long history of cultural hybridity and reflects a collective consciousness of the process of *mestizaje* (ethnic mixture) that shapes Peruvian history and society. Thus the legend of the Saviour who reveals himself in a drawing of a Coloured Christ made by an African slave contains a religious message to millions of Peruvians and other Latin Americans of mixed racial heritage to whom conventional images of Jesus Christ and other Christian icons are difficult to identify

with.¹

The History of the Lord of the Miracles

Peruvians' belief in the image can be traced back to the first Africans that the Spaniards brought to Peru in the 16th century to work in the plantations on the Peruvian coast (Lockhart 1968: chap. 10; Rostworowski 1992: 135-148). The slaves rapidly learned Spanish, converted to Christianity and, inspired by the Spaniards, formed their own religious brotherhoods.² The newcomers from Africa were also influenced by the indigenous population on the Peruvian coast who taught them to make mural paintings believed to please the spiritual forces that control the earthquakes. However, instead of painting images of local Andean gods, the Africans made murals of Christ (Rostworowski 1992: 149-160). In 1655 an earthquake hit Lima creating panic among its citizens and causing extensive physical damages. Yet according to the legend, the wall with the mural of the image of the Lord painted by an Afro-Peruvian slave remained intact (see Banchero Castellano 1972). Later and stronger earthquakes in 1687 and 1746 laid large parts of Lima in ruins and prompted a growing number of mestizos and Spaniards to join the African slaves' deification of the image. Initially, the Catholic church regarded this adoration with great mistrust but when it ordered the murals to be erased in 1671, the icon revealed its godly power once again and resisted the attempts to destroy it. In the aftermath of the event, Lima's citizens began to make processions carrying the icon around the streets of the city to ask for protection against the terrible quakes. It was eventually recognized by the ecclesiastical authorities in Lima and the hermitage of Pachacamilla where African slaves had painted the image of Cristo Moreno and where the Lord's miraculous revelation had occurred was turned into a convent. Later this

1 Rostworowski suggests that a similar identification of pre-Hispanic deities with Christian spirits and saints have occurred in Bolivia and Mexico where the Virgin of Copacabana and the Virgin of Guadalupe both represent images of colored women and today are celebrated by the two countries' indigenous and mestizo populations as powerful symbol of religious as well as regional and national identity (1992: 170-173). She asserts that, as with the Lord of the Miracles, in these virgins 'an accumulation of beliefs, symbols and roots of a remote American past crystallized. With these [images] the triumph of Christianity over the pre-Hispanic deities was established; however, antique gods did not lose their importance for people' (*ibid* 173).

² African-Peruvians formed their first *hermandad* (religious brotherhood) in 1540 as a branch of a local Spanish religious institution (Rostworowski 1992: 150).

became the church of the Nazarenas (*ibid* 151-3).

Since the 18th century a religious brotherhood has arranged annual processions in the honour of the Lord of the Miracles on October 18, during which male devotees organized in squads (*cuadrillas*) carry the icon through the streets of central Lima. Currently, there exist 20 such *cuadrillos* in Lima. Female devotees also participate as *sahumadoras* (women carrying the thuribles) and *cantadoras* (women who sing). Together with the *cargadores* they are organized in a brotherhood called Hermandad de Cargadores y Sahumadoras established in 1878. Other devotees participate as *martilleros* (male devotees ringing the bell to direct the march of the carriers) and *capataces* and *subcapataces* (male devotees directing the *cuadrillos*) (*ibid* 181-184).

In 1996 the brotherhood decided to extend the processions to other parts of the city in response to the growing attention which the icon had received among the city's inhabitants during the past three decades. As a result, a crowd of more than one million people participated in the procession when the icon was transported on truck around Villa María del Triunfo and Villa El Salvador, two huge shanty towns on the southern outskirts of Lima. This massive participation is proof of the tremendous popularity that the image has gained among Peru's urban poor including many migrants from the country's Andean hinterland. Obviously, the legendary story about the search by African slaves and later urban mestizos for religious strength and social unity to cope with natural disasters has a strong appeal to Peruvians who either descend from the country's indigenous population or are of mixed race and who identify themselves in opposition to the Spanish rulers of Peru's colonial society. Further, to the devotees of the 20th century, the icon represents not merely a protector against earthquakes but also other dangers and fears. To have faith in the Lord of the Miracles means to have somebody that accompanies you wherever you go in life. Indeed, there is much reason to believe that the faith millions of devotees today attribute to the icon symbolizes a general concern among Peruvians about the country's current economic and political crisis.

This conflation of religious faith and national identity has been further spurred by the massive exodus of Peruvians in the past 30 years. Today, Peru's fast growing diaspora covers four continents with immigrant communities in several major cities in the industrialized world and constitutes a highly differentiated population (Altamirano 1992: 62-84, 2000: 23-34). Despite geographical dispersion and social heterogeneity, however, migrants share a

common interest in forming religious brotherhoods and participating in annual processions to honour the Lord of the Miracles. Currently, there exist more than 50 such brotherhoods in the United States, Canada, Argentina, Spain, Italy, Japan, Chile, Columbia and Venezuela, the countries with major concentrations of Peruvian migrants.

In this paper I explore the particular religious dimensions of Peruvian transnationalism that induce migrants to expatriate their religious icons and organize processions in Spain, Italy, Argentina, the United States and Japan. The material demonstrates that the organization of brotherhoods and adoration of images outside Peru strengthen migrants' ties to their home country and re-confirm their sense of belonging to Peru thus transcending the national borders of the home as well as the receiving countries. However, it is also evident from the material that the formation of brotherhoods and organization of religious processions by migrants in one part of the world to a large extent occur independent of similar initiatives in other parts of the world. This observation suggests that religious practice in the Peruvian diaspora is deeply embedded in migrants' local life-world and that the faith in the icons and participation in religious procession in foreign countries are triggered by a concern for social and political problems in their new settings. Finally, my data show that the conflicts and tensions that arise within the brotherhoods reflect traditional political and ethnic relations of inequality in Peru.

Between Transnationalism and Diaspora

In a time of growing contact and mobility between different regions and countries in the world social scholars are debating the concepts and terms used to examine and understand contemporary processes of globalization. Some argue that increasing flows of people, goods and ideas are the result of hybridization and creolization of cultural life (Hannerz 1996; Canclini 1995), while others claim that they are caused by the deterritorialization of the national state and the emergence of new politics of cultural difference (Gupta & Ferguson 1997; Appadurai 1998). Yet others assert that the growth of population movements in the contemporary world is facilitated by the emergence of transnational spaces in border areas (Rouse 1991; Alvarez 1995; Kearney 1996: 115-120) and the increasing diasporization of culture and identity (Basch, Glick Schiller & Blanc 1994; Smith & Guarnizo 1998; Clifford 1997).

In the research on global migration, transnationalism and diaspora have emerged as two central concepts. The former has been introduced to explore flows and movements that extend beyond national borders and entail global linkages between people and institutions in different parts of the world. In the transnational paradigm international migration is a process 'by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement' (Basch, Glick Schiller and Blanc 1994: 7). Similarly, the term 'transmigrants' has been proposed to denote 'immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships - familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political - that span borders' (*ibid*). The concepts of transnationalism and transmigrants induce us to invent new approaches to the study of population movements and point to the need of rethinking binary dichotomies in traditional migration theories and focusing on activities and institutions that link immigrants to their place of origin.

Recently, the broad use of the term has been the object of concern by several scholars. Thus Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt contend that 'if all or most things that immigrants do are defined as "transnationalism", then none is because the term becomes synonymous with the total set of experiences of this population' (1999: 219). In a similar vein, Smith and Guarnizo (1998: 5) criticize the concept for its emancipatory connotation and deplore the counter-hegemonic import of the term transmigrant. They argue that 'transnationalism is a multifaceted, multi-local process' and that 'we need to unpack the deceptive local-global binary that dominates a significant segment of current academic discourse' (*ibid* 6). A close inspection of the definition of transnationalism also reveals that it fails to account for migrants' creation of new identities and their efforts to be recognized as immigrants in the host society; likewise, it lacks sensitivity to the everyday life of transnational migrants and their interaction with the social and cultural environment of the receiving country. This concern has been also raised by Mahler who calls for more 'sensitivity to the social constellation of the actors of transnationalism' (1998: 73).

Unlike transnationalism, the concept of diaspora has deep roots in European literature which conventionally refers to it as the exile of the Jews from their historic homeland (Safran 1991). It reflects the ambivalent role displaced people occupy as cultural minorities whose national loyalty is divided between their country of origin (whether mythical or real) and the host country; a position that implies a latent contradiction between belonging and travel or, as

Clifford phrases it, between roots and routes (1997: 251).³ Since the early 1990s the term began to resonate among scholars of global migration, refugees, immigrant communities, etc. To these academics, diaspora evokes the image of people who either are on the move or located in other places than their homeland. Tölölyan, the editor of the journal *Diaspora*, suggests that the concept's renaissance was caused by a belief among academics that 'the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guestworker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community' (1991: 4). Clifford goes one step further in his reading of the concept and asserts that '[i]n the late twentieth century, all or most communities have diasporic dimensions (moments, tactics, practices, articulations). Some are more diasporic than others' (1997: 254).

As in the discussion of transnationalism, the extensive reference to diaspora by migration scholars creates confusion about its meaning. Vertovec claims that 'the current over-use and under-theoretization of the notion of "diaspora" among academics, transnational intellectuals, and "community leaders" alike threatens the term's descriptive usefulness' (1997: 301). Before ascribing it analytical value the researcher should ask, '[w]hat is the range of experience covered by the term? Where does it begin to lose definition?' (Clifford 1997: 249).

Because the meaning and use of the two concepts are so slippery migration scholars tend to employ transnationalism and diaspora rather indiscriminately. What is transnational may as

³ Stratton (1997) suggests that we distinguish between several forms of diasporas on the basis of the Jewish experience. In the pre-modern version, the meaning of the concept is linked to not only colonial capitalism that demanded the movement of workers between the colonies but also the Greek as well as the Jewish (and Armenian). These classic diasporas implied the ideas of displacement, exile and return (Safran 1991: 83-84) which gave rise to a strong collective identification of an ethnic group with its homeland (in some diasporas such as the Jewish this identity even conflates with religion). In reverse, the post-modern import of the term derives from the massive population flows that took place in the western world when the modern nation state was formed in the 19th century and later when it started to come under pressure in the late 20th century (Stratton 1997: 307-310). In both periods diasporas have been central to the conceptualization and imagination of a confined and homogenous national population and acted both as catalyst and barrier for the development of the nation state. Paradoxically, then, nationalism as well as transnationalism are inherent in diasporic identities (Tölölyan 1996: 5) and 'diaspora discourse articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes' (Clifford 1997: 251).

well be diasporic and vice and versa. The confusion is partly caused by the counter-hegemonic imaginary evoked by both concepts that entails the same danger of romanticizing the people under study and essentializing their practice and identities. Further, because of their semantic intersection scholars studying different aspects of contemporary processes of globalization use the two concepts rather uncritically. Thus both of transnationalism and diaspora refer to the multifocality that moulds the identity formation of migrant populations and the communities and the networks and multi-stranded ties these forge with migrant groups in other parts of the world as well as with their home country.

In this paper I shall use transnationalism and diaspora as complementary concepts to describe different aspects of Peruvian migrants' organization of religious brotherhoods. Theoretically, my argument is that although the two concepts share meanings in numerous ways, their different analytical connotations and descriptive imports should not be ignored.

Metaphorically, the difference between the two concepts is like that of rain pouring down from the sky and weeds springing up from the ground. While transnationalism conveys the horizontal networks and linkages that link migrants to their home country, region or community, diaspora expresses the multifocality that induces them to establish vertical relations with their new environments, challenge the status ascribed to them as immigrants by the receiving societies and thus localize their identities in the world they inhabit. Whereas the concept of transnationalism incarnates the evasive nature of contemporary migration processes and the mobile character of modern lifestyle, diaspora reflects the identities and social relations that emerge from migrants' grounding in already existing localities and engagement with the dominating native majority and other ethnic minorities.

The Expatriation of the Lord of the Miracles

The first religious brotherhood honouring the Lord of Miracles outside Peru was formed in 1972 by Peruvians in New York City.⁴ The image that these migrants brought to the United States almost 30 years ago is today kept in the Sacred Heart church on Manhattan.⁵ When

⁴ Some Peruvians claim that an earlier brotherhood was formed in Chicago in the late 1960s.

⁵ While the brotherhood in charge of organizing the procession is based in the Sacred Heart church, another brotherhood called La Hermandad de Sahumadores y Cargadores is affiliated

celebrated on October 18 (or the weekend either preceding or following this date), the procession forms one of the largest gatherings of Peruvians outside Peru. This pioneer brotherhood later broke in two, giving rise to a second institution. Shortly after the split the followers of the new institution brought another icon from Peru which is housed in the church of Saint Benedict (also in Manhattan). Later migrants in other parts of New York City such as Queens, Yonkers, Westchester and Long Island as well as neighbouring cities such as North Bergen, Paterson, Elizabeth, and Kearny, NJ, followed the example. In the late 1970s and early 1980s Peruvians in Stamford, Connecticut, Washington DC and Virginia also formed institutions. The latter two, however, soon split in two independent brotherhoods each adoring their own icons.

This interest in adoring Peru's famous Lord of the Miracles among migrant in New York and other parts of the northeastern United States in the 1970s was only the first of several waves of religious wakening in the Peruvian diaspora. During the late 1970s and early '80s migrants in the New York City area established a number of similar institutions to honour other Catholic saints or icons. These include brotherhoods honouring San Martín de Porres in Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan, NYC, Paterson and Union City, NJ, and Hartford, CT. Similarly, brotherhoods honouring Santa Rosa de Lima, the Lord of Muruhuay and the Virgen of Cocharcas were formed in New York City.⁶ In response to this intense mushrooming of Catholic brotherhoods in the northeastern United States, Peruvians created a national organization (OHCAPERUSA)⁷ in 1977 to strengthen and coordinate the activities of the many independent institutions. However, the organization failed to develop into a national institution and as new brotherhoods continued to crop up in other parts of the United

with Saint Patrick's Cathedral. This latter brotherhood is formed by the followers who carry the image and the thuribles and spread incense during the procession.

⁶ While San Martín de Porres and the Lord of the Miracles both are images of male *mulatos* (mulattos), Santa Rosa de Lima represents a mestizo woman of Limeño origin who lived in extreme austerity but also strongly committed to her faith to God. In contrast to San Martín de Porres, the Lord of the Miracles and Santa Rosa de Lima which all are Lima-based icons, the Lord of Muruhuay and the Virgen of Cocharcas are images of Andean origin (the former in Tarma in the central highland and the latter in the Ayacucho department). As icons associated with regional legends they primarily attract followers on a geographical rather than national basis.

⁷ OHCAPERUSA means Organization of Peruvian Catholic Brotherhoods in USA (Organización de Hermandades Catlicas Peruanas en USA).

States during the 1980s, it gradually started to lose importance. Today, Peruvians have formed independent brotherhoods in Fort Lauderdale, Broward and Dade County, Tampa, Sarasota, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, Austin, Arizona, LA, Pasadena, San Diego, San Francisco, Denver, Baltimore, and Toronto, Canada.⁸

In recent years migrant communities in other parts of the world have also created religious brotherhoods. In 1988 Peruvians in Buenos Aires established the first brotherhood in honour of the Lord of the Miracles in Argentina. Likewise, religious institutions were formed by Peruvians in Spain in the early 1990s. The first was created in Madrid (which then broke up into two independent brotherhoods) and later another one saw the light of the day in Barcelona. In Italy a similar process happened. First migrants formed a brotherhood in Rome, then in Milan and, finally, in Turin and Genoa, the four cities with major concentrations of Peruvians in the country. Finally, Peruvians in Japan also started to form brotherhoods and today approximately eight religious institutions celebrating the Lord of the Miracles exist in this country.

Throughout the world Peruvians create migrant associations, organize football matches, arrange folklore shows, and engage in collective activities (such as the collection of economic support for their fellow countrymen in Peru after the Niño disaster in 1998) that evoke memories of their past lives in Peru and produce a notion of shared cultural identity. However, no other activity is considered more emblematic of being Peruvian than arranging processions in honour of the Lord of the Miracles and bringing the icon to the streets in foreign countries. Wherever Peruvians go, the Lord of the Miracles follows them. Or as one Peruvian in Los Angeles told me, 'El Señor always accompany us. We just have to bring his image with us and take it to the streets wherever we are.' Indeed, to many migrants, the faith

⁸ Many of these brotherhoods have little or no contact with Peruvian religious institutions in other parts of the United States or Canada. Thus when I interviewed leaders of brotherhoods in Los Angeles and Miami and asked whether they were associated with the national organization of Peruvian brotherhoods, many replied that they did not know that such an institution existed. Rather than identifying themselves as part of a national or global religious movement, their faith in the Lord of the Miracles reflects a wish to create alternative meanings of being immigrants in North American societies. This attempt by migrants to localize the belief in Peruvian images in their everyday lives is evident in the growing number of brotherhoods in the United States that design their own home pages on the internet. Despite the global compass of this media, the information and news offered on these home pages are primarily directed toward the local community.

in the Lord is regarded as the essence of being Peruvian. Religion has become the glue of their diasporic identity.

Finding a Home for the Icon

In order to organize processions and thus honour the Lord of the Miracles, Peruvians need to acquire an icon representing their religious protector. As most devotees agree that such an image must be made as an exact copy of the original drawing in the Nazarenas church, the first step in forming a new brotherhood is to collect money to send someone to Peru to hire a professional artist in Lima to make a painting of the Lord on canvas (*lienzo*).⁹ Such an arrangement can cost several thousand dollars, which represents a considerable expenditure for migrants who mostly work as low paid (often illegal) workers. A more feasible option is to acquire a photo of the original image on lamina (*lámina*) and wait until the brotherhood can afford to pay someone to make a painting on canvas. Other items needed for the procession are a decorated arch (*arco*) to frame and fasten the icon and a portable wooden frame with four legs (*las andas*) to sustain and carry it. Whereas most brotherhoods start out by producing these articles themselves locally, some decide to have replacements made in and brought from Peru at a later stage. Likewise, the *cargadores*, *sahumadoras* and *cantoras* must be dressed in the purple coloured *hábitos* (monk habits) similar to those used at the original procession in Lima.¹⁰ Again, because of the huge cost of acquiring such outfits from Peru many brotherhoods use locally fabricated habits during their first processions and wait until they can afford to pay the seamstresses of the Nazarenas church in Lima to produce a set of 'true' *hábitos* for their members. Finally, a flag (*el estandarte*) carried in front of the icon

⁹ On the back of the original icon in the Nazarenas church in Lima is a drawing of the Virgin of the Clouds (La Virgen de las Nubes). Most brotherhoods have a drawing or photo of this saint made on the back of their icon too.

¹⁰ Ruiz provides an interesting piece of information about gender roles in the Catholic brotherhoods in Paterson, NJ. Traditionally, Peruvian males play a dominant role in the annual processions as the carriers of the icon while women are responsible for singing and carrying the incense. However, in Paterson the brotherhood of San Martín de Porres has endorsed the creation of a women's *caudrilla*; i.e. the team in charge of carrying the wooden frame on which the icon rests during the procession. Moreover, this change in gender relations has generated an echo in Peru where local brotherhoods of San Martín de Porres recently have introduced female *caudrillas* (Ruiz 1999: 99-102).

during the procession with the name of the brotherhood, a bell (*la campana*) used to indicate the rhythm of the carriers and different kinds of adornments to decorate the icon are required.

Once an icon has been provided and a brotherhood has been formed the devotees start looking for a Catholic church where the image can stay. Usually a group of migrants form a committee that approaches the local priest in the city or neighbourhood where they live to ask him to shelter the icon, a petition that according to Peruvian migrants is received very differently by the ecclesiastical authorities in Spain, Italy, Argentina, Japan, and the United States. In Buenos Aires, Peruvians report that they had difficulties finding a Catholic church willing to shelter the first icon they brought from Peru in 1988. Raúl, one of the founding fathers of the original brotherhood in this city, relates that a small group of migrants first asked the priest of La Basílica de Santa Rosa de Ocopa to shelter the image. To their surprise, the priest turned down the request arguing that ‘we don’t need more sacrificed souls in this church’.¹¹ Raúl explains that he and three other migrants then went looking for another place to house the icon. He recounts that ‘we followed the flowers of the colour purple [traditionally associated with the Lord of the Miracles] in the streets of Buenos Aires until we got to the church of Our Lady of Candlemas where the local priest welcomed the icon and agreed to house it’. Raçéú adds, ‘You see, I knew all the time that we would find a church for the Lord. We just had to keep on searching.’ In 1993 the brotherhood brought a new *lienzo* of the icon from Lima which is kept in the Lady of Piety church in central Buenos Aires.

A similar experience has been made by Peruvians in Miami who formed their first brotherhood in 1986.¹² Zoila, one of the pioneer immigrants in this city who came to the United States in 1939, tells that the newly established brotherhood appointed her to go to Lima to acquire an icon of the Lord of the Miracles. The prize was \$4,000 including the freight. However, the brotherhood had great difficulties finding a church that was willing to give shelter to the icon. They first asked the priest of the Santa Rosa church on Miami Shores but were rejected and it was not before 1992 that the icon was taken in by a Cuban priest in charge of the Corpus Christi church. Today another image has been brought from Lima and

¹¹ ‘No nesecitamos m̄s sacrificados en esta iglesia.’

¹² The first brotherhood in Florida was formed in 1982 by migrants in Fort Lauderdale. Later brotherhoods were established in 1986 (Dade county), 1995 (North Miami Beach) and 1997 (Kendall).

an independent chapel has been constructed by money collected within the Hispanic community in Miami to house it. The icon enjoys attention not only among the Peruvians but is worshipped by a large number of migrants from other Latin American countries as well. In 1994 the brotherhood even brought the Banda Republicana from Peru which included 18 musicians.¹³ The arrangement cost more than \$40,000 and the Peruvian consulate in Miami was required to make a special request to the immigration authorities to grant the musicians entrance visas to the United States.

The clergy in other parts of in the United States has received the requests by Peruvian brotherhoods to shelter for their icons with more readiness. The principal brotherhood honouring the Lord of Miracles in Los Angeles which was formed in 1986 keeps its icon in the colonial Placita Olvera Church in the city's old centre. Another Peruvian brotherhood worshipping San Martín de Porres also keeps its icon there. Both brotherhoods pay a monthly fee to the church for the service it delivers. Jorge, the current president of the brotherhood of the Lord of the Miracles in the Placita church, explains, 'We are quite satisfied with the arrangement. They let us have our image in the church and we can also use a hall in the building next to the church for the brotherhood's monthly meetings. The priest doesn't interfere in our activities. But we have to pay the fee each month and also for the masses they hold for us.'

In Europe Peruvians have met few obstacles in their search for new homes for their religious icons. In Madrid the first image brought to the country by Peruvians in the early 1990s is kept in a small church in the Ascao district. A second brotherhood keeps its icon in the Majadahonda church outside Madrid but organizes the annual processions in the centre of the city. Similarly, migrants in Barcelona brought an icon of the Lord of the Miracles from Lima in 1991. Although the ecclesiastical authorities initially were reluctant to house the Peruvians' favourite icon, they eventually granted the permission. Today it is located in the city's cathedral. In many Italian cities the Catholic church plays an important role in social work particularly by helping the growing number of Third World immigrants to find lodging and work. In 1992 at a time when Peruvian immigration in Italy was at its peak a group of

¹³ The Banda Republicana is the brass band of La Guardia Republicana, a special police force in Peru. The band occupies a symbolical role in Peruvian national identity because it plays at important events such as July 28 when the President heads the celebration of Peru's day of independence.

migrants brought an icon of the Lord of the Miracles from Peru to Milan. They asked the nuns of the San Martín church to house it. The request was approved and for a number of years the image was kept in the monastery. In 1996 a brotherhood was eventually formed and the icon was moved to the Copérnico church in the centre of Milan where it currently is kept.

In Japan, where Catholicism is regarded a foreign religion, most Catholic priests are of either southern European or Latin American origin. As foreigners in a country that is still struggling to come to terms with immigration on a large scale, they tend to be more understanding of the needs of other minority groups whether Japanese or Third World immigrants, including the requests of Peruvians to shelter their icons of the Lord of the Miracles. In Yamato southwest of Tokyo a local priest of Japanese Argentine origin has not merely agreed to shelter the icon brought to Japan by a local group of Peruvian immigrants but continues to play an active role in the weekly gatherings of the brotherhood and the annual processions in the neighbourhood. Similarly, the French priest in the Catholic church of Kakegawa openly supports the local brotherhood honouring the Lord of the Miracles while a priest of Japanese Peruvian origin in Kyoto personally put a word in when the local Peruvian community requested the ecclesiastical authorities to house its icon in a local Catholic church.¹⁴

Taking the Icon to the Streets

Once a church or chapel has been found to house the image the devotees start making preparations to take it to the streets. While the Catholic church in Japan has welcomed Peruvians' religious images, the local authorities are extremely reluctant to grant permission to arrange processions. So far only one of the eight existing brotherhoods has been successful in taking the Lord of the Miracles to the streets of Japanese cities. In 1996 the Argentine Japanese priest in Yamato helped the local brotherhood to obtain the required authorizations from the municipality and the police to organize a procession in public. Although permission

¹⁴ Once a permission has been granted by the local priest to accommodate the Lord of the Miracles in his church, most brotherhoods are allowed to keep control over the funds they collect from their followers and plan their own activities independent of the church. However, some priests and clergy housing Peruvian icons are very insisting in interfering in the affairs of the brotherhoods demanding that these contribute economically to the church and participate in it's work (see Ruiz 1999: 102-103).

was granted, the brotherhood was only allowed to carry their icon on the pavement on one side of the street ten blocks from the church to a nearby chapel. The event was anticipated with written notifications to all the neighbours and the brotherhood had to hire emergency services including ambulance assistance to follow the procession. Permission was also granted the following years though with much difficulty.

As similar petitions by brotherhoods in other parts of Japan have been rejected, migrants are forced to invent other ways of introducing the Lord of the Miracles to the public. In 1996 migrants formed a brotherhood in Hamamatsu. When their petition to arrange a street procession was turned down by the local authorities, they decided to celebrate it on the river bank outside the city, traditionally used for sports and leisure time activities. Similarly in Mooka, also north of Tokyo, which was one of the first cities in Japan to receive Peruvian labour migrants in the early 1990s, the local brotherhood has celebrated their annual processions in honour of the Lord of the Miracles on a nearby river bank for a number of years. By contrast, in Kakegawa the annual procession is held in the yard of the Catholic school that lies next to the church. Because the families of the children in the school are either Japanese Catholics or immigrants of Japanese descent from Brazil and Peru, the school board approved the petition from the organizers of the procession with few concerns. Likewise, migrants in Tsukuba north of Tokyo who formed their brotherhood in 1992¹⁵ have had to organize their annual processions in the yard of the Catholic church where the icon is sheltered.

In order to encourage social integration and intercultural communication the local authorities in several municipalities in Japan with major concentrations of immigrants have in recent years invited these to exhibit cultural art and perform folklore shows at the *matsuri* festivals. These events, which are celebrated in different cities throughout the year to honour local gods and to display religious shrines, traditionally attract visitors from all over the country. The appeal to immigrants to participate in the *matsuri* festivals has spurred Peruvians to exhibit and perform their cultural identity in a number of ways. Whereas migrants in Kakegawa south of Tokyo have displayed what they regard as Peruvian culinary traditions at several of the city's annual festivals for several years, the Peruvian brotherhood in Hamamatsu uses the

¹⁵ This brotherhood formed is reported to be the first Peruvian religious institution in Japan.

occasion to arrange processions in honour of the Lord of the Miracles. For the migrants of this brotherhood who for several years were obliged to organize their procession on the river bank the invitation to participate in the *matsuri* festival was an important step in their struggle to take the Lord of the Miracles to the streets of Japan and thus conquer the public space and make themselves visible as an organized and articulated immigrant minority. Richard, the leader of a union that organizes Peruvian and Brazilian factory workers in the Hamamatsu area, asserts that '[t]he participation in the matsuri has improved our image here. Japanese have many prejudices against Latin Americans. They believe we do all the robbing and cannot be trusted. Sometimes it's true. But now they can see not all of us are like that.'

While Japan still is struggling to come to terms with the growing immigration, the USA has been a multicultural society for a long time. The presence of immigrant groups in public life is particularly salient in the major cities that receive the bulk of the country's immigrants. Thus in New York City Peruvians organize processions in honour of the Lord of the Miracles along with other ethnic minorities celebrating their religious saints or national holidays such as the Irish (Saint Patrick's Day) and the Puerto Ricans (the Puerto Rican Parade).¹⁶ Similarly, in Miami where Cuban and other Latin American immigrant communities make up more than half of the population, the annual procession of the Lord of Miracles has become a well known public event in the city's famous Calle Ocho with the participation of large numbers of Catholic immigrants of mestizo or indigenous origin who identify with the icon's religious importance and ethnic history. In contrast, Peruvian brotherhoods in Los Angeles that have organized processions over a number of years in different parts of the city are less successful in directing the public attention to their religious icons. One reason for this lack of publicity is that Peruvians in this city are more scattered than migrants in other parts of the United States. Thus Jorge says, 'I know that there are at least two other brotherhood of the Lord of the Miracles in Los Angeles but we do not have any contact with them. We arrange our procession in the center of Los Angeles while they do it other places. That's fine for me. After all Los Angeles is so big and Peruvians live all over the city.' Moreover, Peruvians and other Catholic groups only represent one among many ethnic and religious communities in Los Angeles.

Initially, the local authorities in Barcelona were reluctant to allow Peruvians to celebrate

¹⁶ See Kasinitz & Freidenberg-Herbststein 1992 and Reimers 1992.

processions in the central streets of the city. This obliged migrants to arrange them in the yard of the Cathedral where the icon is kept. Although their petition later was granted, the brotherhood is only allowed to carry the icon a few blocks around the church. Miguel, one of the migrants who founded the brotherhood, recalls that, 'I had to do a lot of paper work. I remember that we wrote letters to the municipality, police etc. and had many meetings. It wasn't easy. It took several years before they let us walk one block around the Cathedral. The Catalans are not used to see processions in the center of Barcelona so we had to explain everything about how we take the Lord to the streets.' Peruvians encountered similar problems when they first asked for permission to organize processions in Buenos Aires. In 1990 the brotherhood asked the authorities of a school called La República Perú for permission to use its yard to pay the annual homage to the icon. Marino, the president of the brotherhood, explains, '[w]e thought the school authorities would receive us well because the Lord is Peruvian and the name of the school is the Peruvian Republic.' However, the school authorities turned down the request because they were concerned that the image of Jesus presented as an Afro Peruvian would upset the children. According to Marino, the school had the wrong idea about Peru. He says, '[w]hen we showed them the image of the Coloured Christ [the Lord of the Miracles] and told them about the African slave who painted it they got very surprised. They had expected an image of the Inca.' He continues, 'the school authorities were afraid that the image of Jesus as an African would scare the children. Don't forget that Argentines aren't used to Blacks.'

The following year the brotherhood was allowed to celebrate the procession in a small square in Buenos Aires. As they still lacked money to acquire *los andas* to carry the icon, they put it on top of a used cardboard box for toys. And as the priest was in a hurry that day, he ordered them to be back in the church within an hour. Marino remarks, 'imagine, the priest treated us as children' and continues, 'we still didn't know how to organize the procession well. We even had to ask the women for help carrying the image. But people were happy because we took it to the streets.' In following years the brotherhood managed to get a permit from the police to carry the image through the streets around the church. In 1998 after the icon had been moved to the Lady of Piety church the procession walked several blocks through the streets of central Buenos Aires. 'It was a great success until a new problem emerged: people started to sell food and beer leaving the garbage on the streets and creating disturbance. Many

neighbours complained and the priest told us it couldn't go on this way. So we had to reorganize everything next year.' The following year the procession was celebrated on the Congress Square and in 2000 the Bishop of Buenos Aires agreed to hold a mass in honour of the Lord of the Miracles in the city's Cathedral on the 2 de Mayo Square after a six-hour long march from the Lady of Piety church. The procession was headed by a van with a huge loudspeaker from which a priest from Buenos Aires Mother of Immigrants church preached not only the spiritual message of the Lord of the Miracles and the Bible but also made claims for civil and political rights on behalf of Argentina's illegal immigrants by shouting 'Viva el Señor de los Milagros', 'Viva el Señor de los inmigrantes', 'Viva El Perú' and 'We hope that the Lord helps regularizing all immigrants so they get their DNI [the national ID document].' Marino contends, '[w]e have gone a long way. Thanks to the Lord we have improved our image in Argentina.'¹⁷

While the local authorities in Spain, Italy and Argentina have gradually granted Peruvians permission to organize processions, migrants report that the icon's appearance in the streets of Madrid, Barcelona, Milan, and Buenos Aires is the object of great curiosity among the local population who tend to associate public religious processions with labour migrants from the southern regions of Andalucía and Sicily or neighbouring countries such as Bolivia.¹⁸ In 1997 while participating in the annual celebration of the Lord of the Miracles in Madrid's Ascao district I witnessed how Peruvians' performance in public space affects Spaniards'

¹⁷ I was in Buenos Aires in October, 2000, and participated in the procession together with more than 10,000 Peruvians. According to some participants, it was by far the largest since the brotherhood was formed in 1988. After the mass, the procession continued to the San Ignacio church where the local priest received the icon. An event of such a magnitude and duration (the event began at noon in the Lady of Piety church and lasted until 10 p.m. in the San Ignacio church) was only possible because the brotherhood has 250 active members organized in four *cuadrillas* of male carriers (formed in 1992, 1998 and 1999) and one group of female *sahumadoras* and *cantadoras*.

¹⁸ In Andean and Meso-American countries such as Peru, Bolivia and Mexico that have experienced extensive rural-urban migration in the past 50 years, migrants often bring their rural icons or images with them to the city where they are celebrated along with other regional or national saints. In effect, religious processions have become an integral part of urban life. By contrast, in southern Europe and the southern cone countries of South America which have been under strong influence by Spanish and Italian immigration the celebration of images and saints in public space is primarily a tradition practiced in smaller towns and villages whereas in the major cities religious processions are restricted to official events in the Christian calendar such as Christmas and Easter.

perception of the country's new immigrant minorities. The procession, which lasted two hours, was carefully observed by the Spanish neighbours of the Ascao district.¹⁹ While watching the scenery I heard a Spaniard asking, '[w]hat's going on? Where are they from?' A man next to him responded, 'it's some kind of saint. They are probably Andalusians.' To the two observers, the Lord of the Miracles was a symbol of an already ongoing migration flow of cheap labour from Andalucía and other marginal regions of Spain.

Brotherhoods and Social Conflicts

Whereas devotion to the Lord of the Miracles unites Peruvians in North and South America, Europe and Japan, the recreation of religious practice and formation of brotherhoods in the new environments often become the issue of conflict and contestation. Some cities such as New York, Chicago, Paterson, NJ, and Miami have economically as well as politically powerful brotherhoods supported by big concentrations of middle- and lower- class mestizo migrants from Lima who also make up the bulk of followers of the Lord of Miracles in Peru. Because of the massive migration to these places, a class and ethnic structure similar to the cultural and economic power hierarchy that divides Peruvians in Peru has emerged within the migrant communities. This differentiation is reflected within the religious brotherhoods particularly in New York City and Chicago where the oldest and most prosperous brotherhoods in the world are found. Moreover, they are often dominated by migrants who have a life long record as devotees of the Lord of the Miracles or other religious images in Peru. In Miami pioneering migrant Zoila asserts, 'I travelled to Lima to participate in the procession there every year before we founded our own brotherhood in Miami. I also have friends who used to be members of the brotherhood in Lima so I knew a lot about how to do all these things.' The presence of such a core of 'professional' followers often creates divisions between one group

¹⁹ The procession was headed by a group of male Peruvians dressed in the traditional purple-coloured habits who carried the icon five blocks around the church where it is kept. The image was decorated with an almost complete set of adornments and sat on top of a wooden frame. A crowd of several hundred Peruvians participated in the procession which looked much like the original procession in Lima. Half way through each block a member of the brotherhood rang the bell indicating that it was time for a break. Accordingly, the carriers stopped and sat the wooden frame with the image down on the ground. After a while he rang the bell again indicating that it was time to continue the procession. The pause was used by the followers to lift their children up to the image to make them kiss it; an act believed to keep them healthy and bring luck.

of migrants with previous knowledge about organizational and ritual practice who already have a model of how to arrange processions and another with little or no experience in worshipping the Lord of the Miracles who join the brotherhoods and participate in the processions to meet other Peruvian or Hispanic migrants rather than to adore the image.

The brotherhoods also mirror social tensions and political conflicts within the migrant communities. In 1998 when I did my field work in Miami, a new brotherhood had just been formed in West Kendall, a neighbourhood on the city's southwestern outskirts with a large concentration of middle class Limeños. The migrants promoting this new institution belong to the more prosperous sector of the Peruvian community in Miami who migrated to the United States in the late 1980s and early '90s in order to escape the economic and political crisis in Peru. Many of these migrants make their living in business and commerce and feel a need to carve out a separate social space within the Peruvian community and thus distance themselves from the majority of less well-off migrants, many of whom live on the margins of the dominant society. These tensions aggravated because some of the prominent figures within the community made complaints about the management of the Peruvian consulate and thus added a political dimension to the existing conflicts.²⁰ As rumours started to circulate that one of the employees of the consulate wanted to prolong his term in Miami, a group of Peruvians in Kendall responded by creating several new institutions as platforms to promote their view points and force the consulate to change personal.²¹ Thus the idea of the Lord of

²⁰ In 1998 I was invited to a party celebrating the brotherhood's first anniversary. The event was organized as a *cena bailable* (dinner with dance) in a rented hall in Miami's West Kendall district and the participants who paid \$US25 to enter were mostly middle-class Peruvians. During the party the organizers paid homage to political leaders, businessmen, artists, students etc. from the Peruvian community in Miami who stand out because of their talents and achievements. They also appointed an honorable member of the brotherhood who received intense applause. The man is a wealthy real estate dealer from Huancayo, a commercial city in Peru's central highland, who migrated to the United States in 1990 because of economic and political disagreements with local politicians and slum dwellers living on his properties. In 1999 he was elected president of the Convention of Peruvian Institutions in the United States and Canada, an umbrella organization of Peruvian migrant associations in North America.

²¹ This group of migrants is headed by the same man who was appointed honourable member of the newly established brotherhood in Miami in 1998. The same group also formed a migrant club based on regional ties to Huancayo although there already existed several institutions of a similar kind in Miami.

the Miracles and the history of ethnic and social inequality incarnated in the legend of the image had become pawn in a social and political dispute beyond the scope of religious belief.

The first migrant communities in Argentina were formed in 1950s by young Peruvian men who came to the cities of Buenos Aires, La Plata and Rosario to study but later decided to stay. As most of them married local women and got good jobs as lawyers, medical doctors or veterinarians, their integration in Argentina went smooth. During the late 1980s and early '90s Argentina received a new wave of Peruvians headed by a large number of lower class migrants from Peru's urban shanty towns. They arrived at a time of economic and political crisis in Peru as well as Argentina and live on the margins of society, forming an emergent proletariat of illegal workers. Because the migration and livelihood experience of these newly-arrived differ radically from that of their predecessors, migrant communities in Buenos Aires, La Plata and other cities with major concentrations of Peruvians are now divided not only along class but also social and ethnic lines. During my field work in Buenos Aires I often heard migrants from 1950s and '60s referred to as the *profesionales* and described as *sobrados* (arrogant). In reverse, many old timers deplore the recent immigration which has changed the former image of Peruvians in Argentina.

In 1997 a group of *profesionales* in La Plata formed a brotherhood in honour of the Lord of the Miracles.²² Although this city already has several migrant institutions that date back to 1960s and '70s, this was the first attempt to form a religious brotherhood in La Plata (and Argentina). Inspired by the success of the neighbouring brotherhood in Buenos Aires, the founders approached its leaders to interchange experiences and explore the possibilities of future cooperation. However, contact between the two groups of migrants was cut after the first meeting because of mutual mistrust. Elsa, a female member of the brotherhood in Buenos Aires, explained to me, '[j]ust because they are professionals and have been here longer than we have they come here and want to teach us how to do things. The only reason why they want to form a brotherhood in La Plata now is that they are jealous. Otherwise, why didn't they do it before?' Today, another group of recently arrived migrants in La Plata have formed a second brotherhood honouring the Virgin of the Port (La Virgen de la Puerta), the

²² A third brotherhood of the Lord of the Miracles is reported to be under formation in Mendoza. One member of the brotherhood in Buenos Aires told me that a Peruvian student living in Córdoba who participated in the procession in 1999 returned to his community with the intention to create a brotherhood there too.

female patron saint of their home city of Trujillo in northern Peru. An image of the saint has been kept in the city's cathedral since 1999. Elsa remarks, '[t]hey are professionals but don't know how to organize processions. The Virgin of the Port is only a couple of years old but it is already bigger than the Lord of the Miracles and pulls more people than the Lord. They even have their image in the Cathedral [in La Plata].' In other words, when forming brotherhoods Peruvians reproduce the conflicts that divide them economically and regionally.

Some brotherhoods receive substantial economic support from the local Peruvian communities to have their icon made in Peru, acquire the required equipment for the processions and prepare for them. However, it is not unusual that such contributions become the subject of strife among the followers and even lead to the division of the brotherhoods, as occurred in the Miami areas where there now exist four competing institutions. Indeed, the competition between some of these institutions is so fierce that they more or less wittingly celebrate processions and masses in honour of the Lord of Miracles on the same day (*El Peruano News* 1996). Similar tensions develop in other places too. In 1996 a group of migrants in Madrid broke out of the first brotherhood that was created here and formed a new institution reportedly because of fights over economic funds. A similar development occurred in Barcelona in 1997 when members of the brotherhood started to accuse each other of stealing money from the funds they had collected among the followers. Only through the intervention of the Peruvian consul was a split prevented.

While these conflicts usually break out because of fights over funds, they also reflect more profound social and ethnic divisions among migrants and disagreements between the followers about the purpose of the brotherhoods and the meaning of the processions. This is particular salient in cities and countries where Peruvian immigration is relatively new and dominated by migrants from Peru's lower classes who originate from the country's urban shanty towns and rural areas. In contrast to the institutions run by middle-class urban mestizos in New York City, Chicago and Miami, these more recent brotherhoods in Spain, Italy, Argentina and Japan are often used by migrants as a space to establish networks and social contact with other migrants rather than as platforms to bolster Peruvians' traditional faith in religious images. In Buenos Aires Marino recounts, 'I had never been devotee of the Lord before migrating. You see, I've always been eager to create new things. So I thought it

would be good to organize this brotherhood. I was elected president in 1991 and since then we have made a lot of social activities. We even had the best Peruvian soccer team here in Buenos Aires. That's what I like about it'. Similarly, as they lack a group of core followers and experienced devotees, many of these brotherhoods have difficulties in generating long during and stable institution similar to those in Lima and in cities such as New York, Chicago and Miami. Liliana, the current president of the brotherhood in Kakegawa, Japan, says 'a couple of years ago all the people who formed this brotherhood moved to other places because they lost their jobs. As none of us have been devotees in Peru we have had to learn everything first: how to organize the brotherhood, how to arrange processions, how to decorate the icon, etc.'

Changing Meanings of the Icon

The organizational and ritual practice of the brotherhoods honouring the Lord of the Miracles in Peru grew out of a century-long tradition of worshipping the icon and has therefore only slowly undergone changes. By contrast, in the diaspora migrants are forced to adapt to foreign environments and invent new ways to express their religious belief, form brotherhoods, recruit new devotees, organize processions, collect economic funds, etc. In this process of adjustment of former cultural and religious customs to the new social milieu many brotherhoods become an arena for contestation of migrants' different experiences as devotees and understandings of the symbolic implication of religious icons. To some, the participation in the annual procession represents a mere continuation of their previous religious practice in Peru. To others, faith in the Lord of the Miracles has been triggered by the migration process. Finally, a large group of migrants participate in the processions because they offer them an identity different from that of other Third World immigrants. For them the image is an important national symbol that represents Peru and thus an emblem of their sense of belonging.

This tension between true religious faith, migration experience, and ethnic and national identity is an important motivation for Peruvians' expatriation of the Lord of the Miracles and migrants' reconfiguration of the image's meaning in the diaspora. Raúl recounts that when the first brotherhood was formed in Argentina in 1988 he and a group of migrants suggested that they celebrated the processions on one of Argentina's national holidays in

order to recruit new followers among native Argentines and other non-Peruvians. Raúl explains that '[w] wanted to create an institution open for all Catholics. We thought it would be best for Peruvians not to appear as different from the Argentines. After all we are all Catholics. That was also the reason why we suggested that we called the brotherhood by its real name *Hermandad del Señor de los Milagros*.' However, the proposal to change the date of the procession was opposed by one of the brotherhood's co-founders who accused Raúl and his friends of 'argentinizing' the Lord of the Miracles and betraying the faith in the icon. The same woman also insisted in calling the brotherhood *Agrupación Cristo Moreno* (the Grouping of Coloured Christ) in order to emphasize the ethnic and national identity conveyed by the image. Eventually, both the woman and Raúl withdrew from the brotherhood and in 1991 the leadership was taken over by Marino, its current leader. He transformed the brotherhood into a migrant institution that organizes social as well as religious activities. Up until recently it even had its own soccer team that won numerous trophies in the soccer league arranged by the Peruvian Sport Club in Buenos Aires. Indeed, the team became so popular among the brotherhood's followers (and feared among its rivals) that Marino decided to dissolve it. He says 'I had to think of the fame of the brotherhood. After all, we are devotees of the Lord and not soccer players. Not that I mind. But people started to complain that there was too much drinking and things like that because of the team.'

Whereas Peruvian brotherhoods in some parts of Japan are obliged to celebrate the annual processions in honour of the image on riverbanks and at the *matsuri* festivals, in other places migrants have made adjustments of conventional ritual practice that challenges the dominating notion of the icon's symbolic meaning and thus question more essential aspects of worshipping the Lord of the Miracles. In 1997 migrants in Kakegawa converted a soccer club called Inca Sport that was on the brink of disintegration because of disagreements over the management of the institution's economic funds into a brotherhood. Although the remaining soccer players had no previous religious experiences as devotees of the Lord of the Miracles, they wanted to create an institution 'where Peruvians can come together and preserve their cultural customs', as one migrant expressed it to me. Another objective of the institution was to collect money to help Peruvians and other Hispanic immigrants in Japan who need help. Liliana, the current president of the brotherhood, says that so far the brotherhood has paid for the flight for a Brazilian woman who got ill and had to return home. They also helped a Peruvian man in Japan who was injured in a car accident and needed a wheelchair. In the future they plan to send money to a Colombian woman who got cancer

while in Japan and had to return home. ‘The brotherhood should a place where all migrants from Latin America can ask for help. We are not well treated here in Japan so we have to work together.’

When the brotherhood in Kakegawa was formed its founders decided to ask a local Japanese artist to paint the image of the Lord of the Miracles rather than ordering a *lienzo* from in Lima. The outcome is an almost exact copy of the original image except that the artist has painted Lord of the Miracles with *ojos jalados* (slanting eyes). Although this rather unconventional representation of the image initially caused commotion among the devotees in Kakegawa, the members of the brotherhood now recognize and worship it as their icon. However, Peruvians in other parts of Japan still disapprove of the painting and question its value as religious image. Thus Victor, one of the leaders of the brotherhood in Tsukuba, told me that he finds it wrong to produce local versions of the icon with the aim to attract Japanese followers. He thinks that these should be recruited by own will and not by changing the image. Yet Liliana claims that she has come to care for this hybrid icon known as Cristo Chinito (Little Chinese Christ). She explains that the founders of the brotherhood no longer live in Kakegawa and that no one in the brotherhood recalls why it was decided to have the image made in Japan and not in Peru. However, she denies that the intention of asking a Japanese painter to make the drawing of the Lord of the Miracles was to recruit local native followers and asserts that the brotherhood’s objective is to make Peruvians recognize that they live in a new and different society. In order to do so they need the support from religious powers such as the Lord of the Miracles. She says, ‘I’m fond of the image of the Little Chinese Christ. The Japanese who painted it still keeps contact with the brotherhood. He’s crazy with Peru and our Inca past. I don’t know why he made the image with slanted eyes. But there are many *nissei* [Peruvians of Japanese descent] who may prefer it that way. That’s fine with me.’

The strife over the image of the Little Chinese Christ reflects the diversity of cultural meanings embedded in the Lord of the Miracles and the ethnic and social tensions the image symbolizes. To Liliana and other followers in Kakegawa, the image of the Little Chinese Christ painted by a Japanese artist is an adapted version of the original icon. Yet it also transcends the popular meaning of Christian faith that gave rise to the legend of the Lord of the Miracles. Just as the conventional image made by the African slave in Lima was created as an alternative representation of Jesus, the Little Chinese Christ was painted as a hybrid

version of the Lord of the Miracles. Whilst the icon has caused indignation among more orthodox believers in the Lord of the Miracles, it also appeals to a new potential group of followers within the Peruvian community in Japan. Although Peru's *nikkei* population (i.e. descendants of former Japanese emigrants who came to Peru in the first half of the 20th century) generally shows little interest in the Lord of the Miracles, the syncretistic image of Christ embodied in the painting of the Chinito has been the object of attention among many migrants who struggle to come to terms with their dual identity as Peruvians as well as Japanese. So far most of the followers of the existing eight brotherhoods have been recruited from Peru's non-*nikkei* migrant population in Japan. Yet in the future, the religious and national appeal of the Little Chinese Christ in Kakegawa is likely to reach out to many *nikkei* Peruvians who increasingly feel rejected ethnically and racially by the Japanese majority (Sellek 1997; Takenaka 1999).

The Lord of the Miracles as a Diasporic Imaginary

The transformation of the Lord of the Miracles from a protector of the citizens of Lima against earthquakes to an emblem of national unity and diasporic identity incarnates the process of political crisis, social change and global exodus that Peru has experienced in the past 30 years. During this period Peruvians have witnessed not only profound changes in the country's traditional class structure and ethnic division but also the formation of a diaspora spread over a wide range of countries and urban metropolis in the industrialized world. Although Peru's migrant population constitutes a highly differentiated socially and an extremely scattered population geographically, it is united by a common faith in the Lord of the Miracles which has become emblematic not merely of the sufferings inflicted on Peru's dominated classes in colonial time but also the dangers and distress that the country's migrants face when travelling as low-paid workers to unknown countries and hostile environments. The conversion of the legend of the Lord of the Miracles into a diasporic imaginary is transcended in Peruvians' own accounts of the icon's expatriation as an odyssey in modern time: first the transportation of the image from the church of the Nazarenas to foreign places in different parts of the world, then the search for a new home for the icon and the collection of funds to finance its ritual celebration, later the formation of brotherhoods in some of the major cities of the industrialized world, and, finally but perhaps most important of all, the conquest of public space in the host society through the organization of the annual

processions to honour the Lord.

A dominant theme in migrant's recounting of the expatriation of the Lord of the Miracles is the transportation of the image to its new destination. Zoila, the pioneer migrant who brought the first icon of the Lord of the Miracles to Florida, relates that before leaving Peru she wrapped it in cloth and covered it with cardboard. When she arrived at Miami airport the immigration officials told her to open her luggage for inspection. Zoila explains that 'When they asked me what was inside the cardboard I said it was a family picture that I had brought for some friends. They believed me and let me pass.' She adds, 'I didn't want to tell the truth because they would never have believed me. So I had to tell them another story. But the Lord got here, that was the only thing that counts.' To this woman and thousands of other Peruvian migrants who feel obliged to change their ID papers or simply to throw them away before they travel to First World countries, the image represents a hidden identity not to be revealed for immigration authorities.

Another aspect that comes to the fore in migrants' narration of the Lord's expatriation is the search for a home for the icon. Thus Raúl's reconstruction of the Peruvians' first attempt to find a church in Buenos Aires to house the icon took the form of a travel account in which the ecclesiastical authorities rejected the Lord in the same way many immigration officials deny Third World migrants entrance in the First World ('we don't need more sacrificed souls in this church'). The same narrative style was used by Raúl to describe the despair that spurred him and his companions to follow the purple-coloured flowers in the streets of Buenos Aires which eventually lead them to the church of Our Lady Candlemas. In this account of the devotees' search for a new home for the icon, Raúl evokes the same feeling of powerlessness that many illegal migrants experience when they put their fate in the hands of smugglers of people, immigration officials and abusive employers. A similar juxtaposition between the Lord's odyssey and migrants' experiences of arbitrary discrimination was implicit in the presentation that Zoila made of Peruvians' struggle to find a home for the icon in Miami.

The last dimension of Peruvians' narration of the expatriation of the Lord of the Miracles that merits attention is the organization of annual processions in the streets of New York, Miami, Madrid and other cities. Often these events are presented in a form that reminds of migrants' own struggle to gain recognition as an ethnic minority (and thus potential co-citizens) in the host societies. Liliana tells how she intends to continue bothering the local authorities until

they grant the brotherhood permission to organize the annual processions in the streets of Kakegawa. She contends, '[w]e will not conform ourselves with an offer to carry out the procession at Kakegawa's *matsuri* as they did in Hamamatsu. We believe that the right way to celebrate the Lord is to bring him to the streets.' In other words, the procession is regarded as a way to conquer public space and gain recognition in a society that still is struggling to come to terms with the presence of foreign immigrants. A similar viewpoint was expressed by a Peruvian I interviewed during the procession organized by migrants in Madrid's Ascao district in 1997. He said to me, '[s]ee, they think we are Andalucians because they believe all immigrants are from Andalucía. But once they discover that the Lord of the Miracles is Peruvian, they will know where we are really from. Perhaps they will become devotees of the Lord one day themselves.'

In Miami where a large number of immigrants from other Latin American countries participate in the annual processions in honour of the Lord of the Miracles, many Peruvians think that the icon has become a symbol of not only Peruvian but also Latino identity. One migrant pointed out to me that 'we Peruvians are only a small minority here in Miami and the United States but thanks to the Lord of the Miracles we have contributed with something important to the struggle for the rights of Latinos.' The same vision of the icon as representing a religious identity not only for Peruvians but also other migrants with a Hispanic background was implicit in Raúl's proposal to open the brotherhood for all Catholics in Argentina and Liliana's suggestion that *nikkei* Peruvians in Japan may identify with the Little Chinese Christ. Clearly, to these migrants, the icon has become emblematic not merely for Peruvians' attempt to conquer public space in the host societies of their diaspora but also their endeavour to gain recognition as an ethnic minority.

Conclusion

Apart from the attempt to create a nation-wide organization of Peruvian Catholic brotherhoods in the northeastern United States, the global odyssey of the Lord of the Miracles and the formation of brotherhoods in countries and cities in four different continents have been propelled by a sea of local and, to a large extent independent, initiatives rather than a planned or controlled action that starts in one place and then disseminates to the rest of the world. Most brotherhoods are established by individuals and small groups of migrants who

feel a need to introduce ‘a piece of Peru’ (*una parte del Perú*), as one migrant in Japan expressed it, in their new surroundings. Moreover, contrary to the transnational linkages that Peruvian brotherhoods in New Jersey maintain with their fellow institutions in Peru reported by Ruiz (1999), most brotherhoods in Los Angeles, Miami, Spain, Italy, Argentina and Japan are run independent of religious institutions in Peru (as well as in other parts of the world). Although there are exceptions to this pattern in the material I have presented in this paper, they do not suggest that Peruvian brotherhoods maintain enduring transnational links.

Firstly, migrants sometimes engage in communication with the Nazarenas church to ask for help or advice in the initial phase of establishing a new brotherhood. Yet these contacts are seldom enduring. Marino, the president of the brotherhood in Buenos Aires, explains that he wrote a letter to the Nazarenas church to ask for its approval to promote the icon publicly in Argentina. In her reply the *priora* (the superior of the church) said that no such a permission is needed to form a brotherhood. Marino concludes, ‘we are an independent institution. We don’t need the approval of anybody at least not of any church or brotherhood in Peru. The only things we need from Peru are the icon, the equipment to carry it and the dresses we wear at the processions.’

Secondly, most brotherhoods honouring the Lord of the Miracles recognize the church of Nazarenas as the ‘home’ of the image and therefore bring copies of the original icon and other articles used for the processions to their new settings. Nevertheless, these ties to institutions and fellow devotees in Peru are limited to the initial phases of forming of new brotherhoods. And while there are exceptions to this pattern such as the brotherhood in Miami that invited Peru’s Republic Band to play at its annual procession, such activities do not involve a permanent link to other institutions in Peru. Similarly, whereas some brotherhoods periodically participate in the collection of economic help to their countrymen in Peru organized by other migrant organizations as happened in the United States during the Niño disaster in 1998 or raise money to relieve the distress of fellow Hispanic return migrants as the brotherhood in Kakegawa does, these linkages are very fragile and irregular and do not imply any kind of contact with fellow brotherhoods or ecclesiastical institutions in Peru.

Finally, although neighbouring brotherhoods in the same host country or city occasionally communicate or establish some form of contact, these links rarely play an important role in the formation of new institutions. Indeed, in many cities and countries devotees have little or

no knowledge at all about neighbouring brotherhoods (as in Los Angeles, Italy and Japan) and when some kind of a linkage exists such relations are often hostile (as between the brotherhoods of Kakegawa and Tsukuba) and may even lead to fragmentation and open conflict (as between competing brotherhoods in Madrid, Miami and Paterson and contesting fractions of the brotherhoods in Barcelona and Buenos Aires). Thus with the exception of the attempt by Peruvians in northeastern United States to create a national organization comprising all brotherhoods in North America, the more than 50 existing religious institutions in the world honouring the Lord of the Miracles have emerged on the basis of migrants' independent enterprise in the neighbourhood or city where they live. Hence, I suggest that transnational linkages between religious institutions outside and inside Peru is the exception rather than the rule. In other words, the emergence of religious brotherhoods in the Peruvian diaspora has occurred as an autonomous movement with few or no links to other institutions. The religious practice of Peruvian migrants, then, is the product of a diasporic rather than a transnational identity.

I argue that the nature of Peruvian transnationalism can only be understood meaningfully by examining the social and political environment that shapes migrants' everyday life and by paying attention not only to the bilateral relations that connect them to their home countries and regions but also the multiple economic, social and political ties that link them to the host society. Thus Peruvians use the brotherhoods as vehicles to strengthen vertical ties to the host society and create an alternative identity to that of Third World immigrants rather than as means to maintain horizontal transnational connections to their home country. Their lives as migrants are firmly grounded in the localities where they reside and work; similarly, their identities as Peruvians and as immigrants are forged in response to the receiving societies. Hence, their struggle to bring the icon from Peru to their new setting, find shelter for it in a Catholic church and take it to the streets of New York City, Madrid, Buenos Aires and other world metropolis transcends a wish to conquer public space in the First World and present themselves as an organized and self-aware migrant minority with legitimate claims to civil and political rights (as articulated by the priest heading the procession in Buenos Aires) in the host country. In other words, the faith in the Lord of the Miracles and migrants' massive participation in the annual processions are means to contest contemporary anti-migrant discourses and discriminating immigration policies in the First World.

However, migrants are not only up against the mechanisms of discrimination imposed by the

host societies. Their own communities are also divided internally by relations of inequality and domination. The differentiation of the followers of the Lord of the Miracles in social classes and regional and ethnic groups is reflected in the conflicts that occasionally break out between the members of the brotherhoods and sometimes lead to their split. While these disputes are often triggered by disagreements about the managements of the funds collected within the migrant communities, the deeper cause for the recurrent division of brotherhoods should be searched for in the relations of inequality and domination in Peruvian society that migrants reproduce in the diaspora. In places such as New York City and Miami where the Peruvian community is represented by migrants from almost all of Peru's social classes and ethnic groups strives mostly occur because of social and political tensions between the better off sectors of the Peruvian community and the majority of migrants living on the margins of the dominating society. By contrast, in countries such as Spain, Italy, Japan and Argentina that only recently have become the target of Peruvian immigration on a large scale, followers of the Lord of the Miracles are still struggling to form stable religious institutions. Here many newcomers join the brotherhoods to establish contact with other migrants, affirm their sense of belonging and negotiate their identities as Peruvians and immigrants which generate dissensions about the symbolic meaning that the icon has for different social and ethnic groups.

My data suggest that Peruvian religious brotherhoods are created on migrants' own initiatives independent of their horizontal transnational ties to their home country and of already existing religious institutions in other parts of the world. The global mushrooming of brotherhoods can be seen as an analogous response by migrants in different parts of the world to similar experiences of discrimination and exclusions. Peruvian religious practice, then, is grounded in migrants' local life worlds and propelled by the vertical relations of inequality that shape their identity as immigrant and ethnic minority in the host country rather than the horizontal ties they sustain with their home land and other migrant communities. In short, Peruvians' ritual practice and faith in the Lord of the Miracles incarnates a diasporic rather than transnational identity process.

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