

# **Spirit-Empowered Migrants in the Anthropocene: The Defining Role of the Spirit in the Entanglements of Charismatic Evangelical Churches, Latin American Migration and the Spanish Public Sphere**

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## **Abstract**

*Since the 1990s, migration from Latin America has had a considerable impact on the Spanish religious landscape. Many charismatic evangelical churches in major cities like Madrid and Barcelona are filled to the brim with migrants who have crossed the Atlantic. These charismatic evangelical churches – with a considerable Latin American presence – are, moreover, increasingly stepping into the Spanish public sphere. In this paper, I will focus in particular on charismatic-evangelical-church-run foodbanks as an exemplification of this increasing public presence. In these foodbanks, a complex space with a multitude of complex entanglements between Latin American migration, the Spanish public sphere, and charismatic religious beliefs and practices come to light. The questions this paper strives to answer are twofold. Firstly, how might I make sense of a space with a multitude of entanglements through the concept of the Anthropocene? I will particularly focus on Latour's understanding of the Anthropocene, as he demonstrates its relevance beyond questions relating directly to the climate crisis. Secondly, how might Tillich's theology of the Spirit bring to light the defining role of the Spirit for migrant charismatic evangelical communities in such complex spaces? The answers to these questions will be based on ethnographic research conducted among charismatic-evangelical-church-run foodbanks, which were mainly run by Latin American migrant volunteers. This ethnographic research was conducted over the course of a year, between February 2021 and January 2022, in southern Madrid. In this paper, I will demonstrate the defining role of the Spirit for migrant charismatic evangelical communities in navigating the complex realities as understood through the concept of Anthropocene, moreover demonstrating how the Spirit enables entanglements and connections which are salutary for the life of these charismatic migrant individuals and communities.*

**Keywords:** Anthropocene; Spirit; Migration; Public sphere; Charismatic evangelical churches

## **Introduction**

Spain – like many countries in Europe – has been shaped by a long history of migration. "With immigration to Western and Northern Europe becoming more restrictive, Southern European countries have emerged as major destinations for immigrants."

(Hierro 2016:65) One such country is Spain, which up to the 1990s was predominantly an emigration country and in the following decades rather rapidly transformed into a destination country (Hierro 2016:65–66). In this paper, I will focus on migration from Latin America to Spain. Recent figures stated that 2.2 million Latin Americans had settled in Spain, which amounted to 40.1% of the total migrant population. These migratory flows have gained intensity with – among others – worsening and stagnating economies ‘back home.’ (Bayona-i-Carrasco and Avila-Tápies 2020:199–205) Moreover, after 9/11, migration to the United States became increasingly difficult, resulting in many Latin American migrants looking for alternative destinations in Europe (Hierro 2016:75). Colombia, Ecuador, and Brazil are the most prominent Latin American sending countries of migrants to Spain. Most migrants arriving from these countries choose to live in Madrid or Barcelona (Bayona-i-Carrasco and Avila-Tápies 2020:26). What makes these migratory flows unique is the rate at which they occurred. In the early 1990s, there were very few Latin American migrants in Spain. It was only towards the 2000s that Latin American immigration gained momentum. In this short time span, there was a significant influx of migrants.

These migratory flows have had a considerable impact on the Spanish religious landscape. Many migrants have found community in and through churches, particularly within evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches. In many of the churches I visited over the course of a year – for ethnographic research – most of the congregants would have migrated from Latin America.<sup>1</sup> I would argue that these churches have not only been sustained through migration, but have even been able to grow numerically as a result of these migratory flows. Increasingly, such evangelical, charismatic, and Pentecostal churches – with a strong Latin American presence – have been stepping into the Spanish public sphere, be it for political advocacy, education, foodbanks, and public prayer events, to name a few. In this paper, I will focus in particular on charismatic-evangelical-church-run foodbanks. This is a space where many agents come together, interact, and become entangled. Moreover, it is a space in which charismatic Latin American migrants are able to grasp agency within the Spanish public sphere. Thus, a landscape emerges with complex multiple entanglements between Latin American migration, the Spanish public sphere, and religious practices and beliefs.

This brings me to the Anthropocene, a concept which initially emerged as an effort to make sense of increasing awareness of human *entanglements* with our material environment, in the context of the contemporary climatic crisis (*see* Haraway 2016; Tsing 2015). However, the consequences and the impact of the Anthropocene must not be confined to spaces where the natural environment is prominently present. Latour argued that the Anthropocene, this contemporary era, must be understood as a “wicked universality” which has an impact that goes far beyond (our relationship to) the natural environment and the climate crises. He stated that: “(...) now that the previous universality of globalization, seems to be receding from the horizon. The new universality consists in feeling that the ground is in the process of giving way.” (Latour 2018:9) This universally shared feeling of “the ground giving way” is a result of not only what he called “the New Climatic Regime,” but also as a result of “migrations, and the

<sup>1</sup> A rough estimate (as there are no official numbers) would be that between 50% to 80% of congregants in Charismatic churches have migrated from Latin America.

explosion of inequalities (...): *These are one and the same threat.*” (Latour 2018:9) Thus, it can be argued that the impact and consequences of the Anthropocene are also making themselves known and felt beyond the context of the climate crisis (*for example* Baldwin, Fröhlich and Rothe 2019). As will become evident, this shared threat – the feeling of the ground giving way – ushered Latour towards a fundamental re-evaluation of agency and agents within political collectives in the Anthropocene (Latour 2014). Thus, while the concept of the Anthropocene is often written about in relation to the contemporary climate crisis, it might also prove productive in making sense of complex (political) realities as encountered in charismatic-evangelical-church-run foodbanks.

Considering the research context and the conceptual potential of the Anthropocene, the research questions of this paper are twofold. Firstly, how might I come to understand the entanglements of charismatic evangelical churches, Latin American migrations, and the public sphere in Spain – as made visible through foodbanks run by charismatic evangelical churches – through the concept of the Anthropocene? Secondly, considering that I will focus on charismatic communities, for whom the Spirit plays a central role in religious life and beyond, I ask the question: “how might Tillich’s theology of the Spirit be engaged to make sense of a charismatic response to the (frightful) consequences of the now emerging Anthropocene, made visible in a cosmopolitan city?”

### **A Foodbank at a Charismatic Church**

On a Monday afternoon, in an industrial zone of a *ciudad dormitorio* (or dormitory city) south of Madrid, a group of about 70 people – with shopping carts – could be seen queuing in front of an old warehouse. It was very diverse group of people: Moroccan mothers with children, homeless people (at times under the influence of some kind of substance), Spaniards who recently lost their jobs or businesses during the pandemic, and Latin American migrants struggling to make ends meet in this city. However, they weren’t queuing in front of any old warehouse. On the face of the warehouse, on a large poster, the words “Jesus is changing lives today” could be seen. Next to these words, the starting times of the church services, to which onlookers were warmly invited, were written. As you approached and entered the church, you encountered many volunteers hard at work, setting up boxes and crates of food and greeting the beneficiaries still waiting outside. The group of volunteers were all members of this charismatic evangelical church and were just as eclectic as the group of beneficiaries waiting outside. Almost all had a migratory background, coming from Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela. There were only three volunteers who were Spanish.

Once beneficiaries entered the church to collect their food, many things occurred. They had to go through a rather complex bureaucratic process. If they were regular visitors, they needed to bring the necessary documentation demonstrating their eligibility to collect food on that particular day. Those who came for the first time needed to bring even more documentation demonstrating that a social worker had evaluated that they truly needed the service of the foodbank. All in all, there were many lists and documents that passed through many hands. All this did not come without frustration as beneficiaries tried to make sense of this complex bureaucracy.

This bureaucracy was required by the local municipal welfare system. This foodbank, and many others like it, were not only the initiative of churches. They received government support in an effort to extend the reach of the welfare system. As such, all

the food handed out by these church-run foodbanks was given for free by the government-supported central Madrid foodbank. Moreover, it was not the church who decided who received the food; rather, it was a government-approved social worker who made such decisions. The imposed bureaucracy was in place so that the government could make sure the food was handed out to people whom they perceived to be the rightful people. This involvement of the government, which allowed the church and the government to reach around 150 families through this particular foodbank, did come with another limitation: Churches were strictly inhibited from using these resources as a way to evangelise.

Despite these limitations and bureaucratic requirements, this church had found creative ways to work their way around them and make the foodbank work towards their own ends. Firstly, there was a huge emphasis on the volunteers building personal relationships with the beneficiaries, and many made an effort to get to know the beneficiaries personally. Volunteers would often be seen praying personally for the beneficiaries, be it for healing, God's provision, or even liberation. Moreover, the beneficiaries would also be invited to come to church the following Sunday, and most Sundays someone from the foodbank did visit a Sunday service for the first time. Quite a few members of the church became involved as a result of the foodbank. The leaders of the foodbank were well aware that they were stretching the no-evangelisation rule, and they accepted the risks involved. Speaking to a manager of a Pentecostal diaconal work organisation, she stated: "If I had to choose between support (from the municipality) and not being faithful to my principles, I would prefer to remain without any support. That's it. God will provide, God is the owner of everything and will continue to provide. I cannot lose sight of that, you cannot lose sight of that."<sup>2</sup> Secondly, after a day's work, there was often spare food. This food was handed out to people in need who were unable to get the necessary paperwork to be legitimate beneficiaries. This spare food was even handed out to another church, who did not work with the local municipal welfare system, to hand out among their own community members who were in need. As a result, this welfare extended beyond its intended reach.

How might we make sense of such a space where religion, government, and migration were entangled? Latour's approach to the Anthropocene will be of help in making sense of such complex multiple entanglements.

### Latour's Anthropocene

In Latour's book on the Anthropocene – *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime* – he stated that he strived to understand increased deregulation, the constant rise in inequalities, and climate change as "one single historical situation," rather than as disparate issues (Latour 2018:1).<sup>3</sup> All these perceived crises, according to Latour (2018:2), must be understood as a lack of a common world or shared horizon. He stated that all these crises can be related back to one foundational crisis, being that

<sup>2</sup> Translated from: "Yo, antes de, si tengo que escoger entre una ayuda y no ser fiel a mis principios, prefiero quedarme sin la ayuda, ya está. Dios proveerá, Dios el dueño de todo y seguirá proveyendo, entonces eso no lo puedes perder de vista. No lo puedes perder de vista."

<sup>3</sup> See also Latour, B. 2018. Anthropocene Lecture. Online: <https://www.anthropocene-curriculum.org/contribution/anthropocene-lecture-bruno-latour> (Accessed: 29 August 2022).

“(…) the planet is *much too narrow and limited* for the globe of globalization; at the same time it is *too big* and infinitely too large, too active, too complex, to remain within the narrow and limited borders of locality whatsoever. We are overwhelmed twice over: by what is too big, and by what is too small.” (Latour 2018:16)

The dreams of globalisation have become bigger than our shared home can afford. There is no longer enough space on the earth to “house the Globe of globalization.” Yet in stark contrast, we also have become increasingly aware of how large, complex, and frightening this world of ours really is (Latour 2018:5). The uninhibited growth of human aspiration is now destroying our very earth, and consequently also our cultures, societies, and politics. This is manifest in the climate crisis, where precious natural resources are being depleted to feed these aspirations. However, this climate crisis has also been a reminder of the power, violence and grandeur of the earth, from which we unsuccessfully try to hide. Being overwhelmed twice over, by an earth too big and also too small, is also manifest in the so-called European “migration crisis”. Migrants are the casualties of a too-limited globe. For migrants, there is no longer space to flourish ‘at home’; they must find it elsewhere. As such, they too are an expression of a complex and at times frightful world which cannot be contained in one single locality, as they migrate across borders and oceans. Once more, this has overwhelmed much of European society, increasingly hiding behind walls and barbed wire fences from the global migratory flows they struggle to contain.

Latour not only described the crisis humanity is facing, he also set out to formulate a new way of orienting ourselves to our contemporary predicament, a new orientation which could possibly guide us towards an inhabitable land for all (*see* Latour 2018:16). He argued that we should start by rethinking “how to live in the same world, share the same culture, face up to the same stakes, perceive the landscape that can be explored in concert.” (Latour 2018:25) This starts by recognising that this shared world on which we live should be perceived as a political actor which participates in human action. This shared world – which has agency and is therefore relational – Latour coined as the Terrestrial (Latour 2018:40–52). The Terrestrial should no longer be the object of our politics, as has often been the case up until now, but should rather be recognised as having its own subjectivity. The Terrestrial should be recognised as responding – at times violently – to human action which destroys our shared ground, as seen in the climate crisis (Latour 2018:20). Consequently, “[i]n this terrible time called the Anthropocene, Latour argues that the fundamentals of geopolitics have been blasted” (Haraway 2016:40). Thus in response to the Anthropocene, Latour strived for a broader definition of what constitutes society, expanding our understanding of what (social) ties are possible. “The choice to be made is between a narrow definition of the social ties making up a society, and a wider definition of associations that make up what have been called collectives.” (Latour 2018:57). The climatic crisis – resulting from a failed globalisation – has brought to light that the Terrestrial has become, and has always been part of, the relational collectives in which we humans (among many others) have our being.

What Latour’s new orientation comes down to is an animation of the Earth and a consequent redistribution of agency (Latour 2018:76–77). This redistribution, however, goes beyond assigning agency to, and recognising the subjectivity of the Terrestrial alone. In an earlier article, Latour (2014:15) argued:

“The point of living in the epoch of the Anthropocene is that all agents share the same shape-changing destiny, a destiny that cannot be followed, documented, told, and represented by using any of the older traits associated with subjectivity or objectivity. Far from trying to “reconcile” or “combine” nature and society, the task, the crucial political task, is on the contrary to distribute agency as far and in as differentiated a way as possible—until, that is, we have thoroughly lost any relation between those two concepts of object and subject that are no longer of any interest any more except in a patrimonial sense.” (Latour 2014:15)

In essence, Latour was arguing for a reconsideration of what are valid agents in the politics of the New Climatic Regime. This redistribution of agency should go to such an extent that the distinction between object and subject becomes obsolete. In a landscape with a multitude of agents in complex entanglements, individuals should not – Latour argued – strive to become the “subject as master of himself.” Rather, individuals (and I would add communities) must strive to become entangled – building bonds and ties – with agents which are beneficial to life, not just for the individual but for *all* who live on this shared world of the Anthropocene, the Terrestrial. Moreover, this redistribution of agency resulted in a critique of the commitments of so-called “progressives,” who seek to break ties and bonds with all agents in search of a supposed liberty. Rather, Latour (2010:57) concluded:

“I am only interested and reassured by those who speak in terms of *substituting* one set of ties by another, and who, when they claim to unmake morbid ties, show me the new salutary ties, and this without ever looking to the subject as master of himself, now without an object.” (Latour 2010:57)

What does Latour’s insight into the Anthropocene bring to light in these charismatic-evangelical-church-run foodbanks? Firstly, it is clear that these migrants have suffered as a result of a too-limited world. In their countries of origin, they simply could not make ends meet, they were unable to attain a flourishing life, be it in Argentina, Colombia, or Venezuela. This could be typified by the story of one young Venezuelan father who had moved to Spain three years prior. He shared how he was unable to care for his new wife, having to sell anything of value to deal with the pressures of hyper-inflation. Life was precarious in Venezuela, never able to live beyond the day to day. It all became too overwhelming. Another Venezuelan elderly couple would, over a *café con leche*, lament that while their home might have crude oil and an incredibly fertile soil, many companies would struggle to survive, resulting in many individuals being out of work. Latin America has come to typify a failed globalisation, with resource depletion, huge inequalities where a few own most of the wealth and states which increasingly refuse to take responsibility for the welfare of their own citizens. As a result, many choose to migrate in order to find space to flourish elsewhere, to be able to care for their families and build something which lasts for their children and communities, to no longer have to live from the day to day. Secondly, we can come to recognise the many agents involved in their new lives in Spain. Migrant volunteers, beneficiaries of aid, government migration policies, social workers, bureaucratic processes, theological beliefs and practices, and even the pandemic are all agents which come together in spaces like

charismatic-evangelical-church-run foodbanks. Consequently, there is a transcendence of the object-subject dichotomy in these spaces. These migrant volunteers are not just objects of migratory processes, distant European Union politics regarding migration, the welfare system, faltering economies in Latin America, the pandemic, and many more objectifying forces. In these foodbanks, migrants are claiming subjectivity. They are able to participate in Spanish civil society, they seek common ground with local government authorities and creatively negotiate their way around complex bureaucratic processes. In the lives of charismatic evangelical Latin American migrants – as encountered in the foodbanks – a plethora of agents come together and become entangled in a shared space to such an extent that the object-subject dichotomy becomes obsolete. These charismatic migrants are not simply claiming a liberating agency and becoming subjects. In the foodbank, many agents come together and become entangled in such a way that they are salutary to the lives of the migrants who are able to contribute to their community's wellbeing, salutary to the beneficiaries who have their basic needs met, and even salutary the municipality, who is able to extend the reach of the welfare state.

### **Beyond Latour's Anthropocene**

While this paper is about migration in the age of the Anthropocene and the resulting reorientations of what we understand politics to be, it is also about religiosity and religious communities. In *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods* (2010) – a prequel to Latour's reflections on politics and the Anthropocene – he reflected on and wrote about religion and modern science. This might appear to be a tangent to the argument of this paper. However, his thinking on object-subject dichotomy – or rather his efforts to transcend it – can already be recognised in this work, be it in relation to his understanding of religion and modern science. In this short book, Latour (2010:9) argued that in modernity the belief persists that there is a distinction between object and subject, between a “thing” and its “representation”. Moreover, he would also argue that there should not be a distinction between “constructing subjects and autonomous objects.” Latour introduced the concept “factish” to argue this. This concept incorporates ‘fetish’ as that which is constructed and (falsely) perceived as belonging to a pre-modern time. It also incorporates ‘fact’ as that which is supposedly autonomous and outside of human action. Thus, “[t]o think in terms of “factish” requires some getting used to, but once the initial surprise at such an outlandish form passes, one begins to regard those obsolete figures of object and subject, the made and maker, the acted upon and the actor, as more and more improbable” (Latour 2010:56).

Just as in *Down to Earth* (2018), Latour here also argued for a world beyond the object-subject dichotomy. Moreover, he argued that in moving beyond the object-subject dichotomy, our world

“no longer moves from alienation to emancipation but from entanglement to even greater entanglement – no longer from the pre-modern to the modern but from modern to the non-modern – the traditional division between determinations and liberations serves no useful purpose in defining a ‘globalization’ whose complexity, for the moment, defies political understanding.” (Latour 2010:61)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Eight years later, in Latour's *Down to Earth* (2018), this would no longer defy political understanding.



These insights were the result of the reading of historical texts describing the first encounters between the religiosity of Portuguese colonisers and that of West Africans, but also through a reflection on the lives of West-African migrants in Paris with their divinities. As such, Latour (2010:66) stated:

“But the migrants heal us, at all events, and to that I can attest. They entertain entities in multiple, interesting, fragile states, without demanding that they stubbornly persist, or that they stem from our psychology. Thus they fray for us the difference between fabrication and reality, mastery and creation, constructivism and realism.” (Latour 2010:66)

These migrants and their religiosity – who Latour saw wondering through Paris – have come to embody so-called ‘factishes’, thus becoming a critique of modernity and its persistent distinguishing between object and subject, between a “thing” and its “representation”. They demonstrated how to cope with the increased entanglements that result from the transcending of the object-subject dichotomy. Migrant’s lives, their factishes and religiosity, might well point us in the direction of how to be, live, and flourish in the midst of the complex entanglements of the Anthropocene.

What has been discussed is somewhat of a simplification of Latour’s rather sophisticated writing and thinking. Nonetheless, I am striving to emphasise that a continuity can be recognised in Latour’s thinking, a continuity in his efforts to transcend the object-subject dichotomies which dominate much of our contemporary thinking and doing. These efforts can be seen in his work on modernity, science and religion, but also in his later work on politics and the Anthropocene. Foundational structures in his thinking on the Anthropocene thus have their origin outside of reflections on our contemporary climatic crisis. Moreover, in *On the Modern Cult of the Factish God* (2010), he cautiously demonstrated that migrants and their religiosity might offer an insight into how one might navigate a world of complex entanglements upon entanglements, which result from the transcendence of the object-subject dichotomy. However, when it comes to *Down to Earth* (2018) and the Anthropocene, this seems to be forgotten. It is to religion in the Anthropocene that I now turn my attention. What might we learn from the migrants and their divinities I encountered in Spain with regard to how one might navigate the complex entanglements of the Anthropocene?

### **The Spirit in the Foodbank**

Before the beneficiaries would queue up in front of the church, a small group of volunteers could already be found in the church sitting in a circle in front of all the food that soon would be handed out. The Colombian leader of the foodbank passionately stated, to the small group of volunteers, the importance of the presence of the Holy Spirit in this ministry. She thereby motivated us to pray more fervently before the arrival of the beneficiaries. I too participated in these moments of prayer. I would notice that when I prayed for the material and social needs of the beneficiaries, the other volunteers would not really respond. However, when I explicitly prayed for the beneficiaries to come to know Christ, or if I called upon the Holy Spirit’s presence, I would get a fanatic response from the volunteers, with an “¡Amén!” or a “¡Gloria a Dios!” In these moments of prayer, the Holy Spirit’s presence would be invoked or invited into the space. When



speaking about the Holy Spirit and the foodbank with another volunteer, she would mention that the Holy Spirit was needed to guide us (volunteers) in our interaction with beneficiaries. This, so we could recognise and know when a recipient was hungry, tired, or frustrated, or when there was a spiritual struggle going on. The Holy Spirit was considered key in empowering the volunteers to do their work at the foodbank. The leader of the foodbank would add in an interview how the Holy Spirit would guide her in her relationships with beneficiaries, allowing her to say the right things, and how eventually through the Holy Spirit she would be able to bring people into church. Not only that, she considered the Holy Spirit to be the source of the desire of volunteers to have a compassion and “fire” for the beneficiaries who would come each week.

The Holy Spirit would even play a key role in bureaucratic processes and decision making. As I became increasingly involved in the bureaucratic side of the foodbank – making sure all beneficiaries had the correct paperwork and becoming the first point of contact for queries related to this paperwork – I came to the realisation that even these (in my eyes) mundane tasks were considered to have a spiritual dimension. One afternoon, the leader of the foodbank came to check something in one of the folders and let out a big sigh. She confessed that she would experience a big spiritual struggle as she dealt with beneficiaries who did not bring the correct paperwork to receive their allotted aid. This spiritual struggle would particularly manifest itself in the tensions that arose when people became frustrated and angry about not receiving food as a result these bureaucratic process. Faced with such struggles, the Holy Spirit would be trusted upon to guide them in the decision making, in seeking to be fair and just in the midst of much emotion. The Holy Spirit’s presence was considered that which allowed the volunteers to do their work properly at the foodbank.

To make sense of the role of the Holy Spirit in this space, I will use Tillich’s theology of the Spirit. The reasons Tillich could be considered relevant for this context are, firstly, because the object-subject dichotomy plays an important role in his theology and secondly, because his theology has proven useful in making sense of Pentecostal practices and beliefs, particularly in relation to the political, as seen in the book *Tillich and Pentecostal Theology: Spiritual Presence and Spiritual Power*, edited by Yong and Wariboko (2015).

In order to understand Tillich’s theology of the Spirit, we must first understand the place of the object-subject dichotomy in his theology. He stated that the object-subject dichotomy precedes all other structures. This foundational structure becomes visible in dialectical elements – which only make sense in relation to the other – such as individuality-universality, dynamics-form, and freedom-destiny. In these foundational structures, moreover, “the dualities of essential and existential being is seen, and the question of their relation to one another and to being-itself is asked.” (Tillich 1953:183) In other words, when speaking of these foundational dialectical structures, one must also question their relationship to being itself, or God. Thus, according to Tillich, this God – being itself – is considered to precede and transcend these foundational dialectic structures, the object-subject dichotomy (Tillich 1953:191). To complicate matters further, Tillich stated that, “Theology always must remember that in the speaking of God it makes an object of that which precedes the subject-object structure and that, therefore, it must include in its speaking of God the acknowledgment that it cannot make God an object.” (Tillich 1953:191) It is therefore impossible to speak of that which transcends

the object-subject dichotomy, as this would paradoxically objectify that which cannot be objectified. In speaking of God, one must always take into account their agency, their ability to grasp the one doing the inquiring, transforming their very being.

The Holy Spirit – though Tillich simply speaks of the Spirit – is not only about inner piety or even only about church life. For Tillich, the Spirit is present in creation, public life, and socio-political liberation (Karkäinen 2015:20). It is through the Spirit that individuals are grasped by the unconditional, God, or the ground of being (Tillich 1953:112). Moreover, individuals (and communities) being grasped by the Spirit, and the ensuing ecstasy, does not negate structure or order (Tillich 1976:115). Macchia would argue that Tillich’s understanding of being grasped by the Spirit “involves healing of life and its structures, rather than their abandonment.” (Macchia 2015:95) In the healing of life and its structures through the Spirit, “a union of subject and object has taken place in which the independent existence of each is overcome; a new unity is created.” Consequently, in the Spirit’s “transcendence of the object-subject structure, [there] is great liberating power (...)” (Tillich 1976:119). The Spirit’s work is thus manifest – in the individual and the collective – in the healing of tensions between freedom and destiny, individuality and universality, dynamics and form, and most fundamentally between existence and essence. What would this look like within Christian communities or churches? Under the impact of the Spirit, “churches (...) are transformed from religious communities with demonic exclusiveness into a holy community with universal inclusiveness, without losing their identity.” (Tillich 1976:262) Being grasped by the Spirit allows individuals and communities to accept the subjectivity of others without becoming the object of the other, thus simultaneously maintaining their own subjectivity. I hope that it becomes clear how – under the impact of the Spirit – the foundational ontological object-subject dichotomy is transcended from within individual existential life to collective shared life.

What does Tillich’s theology of the Spirit bring to light in the snippets of data presented? Firstly, it is clear that the Spirit is that which empowered these migrant communities to participate and step into the public sphere through the foodbank. The Spirit was considered the fundamental agent who guided their work and interactions with the beneficiaries, guiding through complex bureaucratic processes and guiding them in ethical decision making. It was the Spirit who allowed and empowered migrants – who were now volunteers – to no longer only be objects of migratory processes, migration policy, and bureaucratic processes. By being grasped by the Spirit, they were also able to claim subjectivity in their new home, they were able to claim space to *participate* in Spanish society, rather than only being objectified by the multiple forces exerted on them. The Spirit empowered and motivated these migrants to build a “holy community with universal inclusiveness” in their new Spanish home. The Spirit empowered these charismatic migrants to navigate and flourish within these multiple and complex entanglements. However, I believe these foodbanks also challenge Tillich’s theology of the Spirit. Tillich wanted to avoid notions of the Spirit which he considered supernaturalistic and therefore destructive to structure (Tillich 1976:119–120). Yet these volunteers would often explicitly pray for supernaturalistic miracles, liberations and manifestations. Not only that, they testified of how the Spirit had miraculously manifested herself, healing and liberating beneficiaries. Macchia would agree with these charismatic migrant volunteers, arguing that “there are real miracles to behold, that no

power-bearing meaning, no matter how inspirational, can in and of itself provide sufficient substitute for.” (Macchia 2014:99) These charismatic migrants explicitly desired and called upon the supernaturalistic Spirit, which had the potential to transcend, break, and heal all worldly structures.

### **Conclusion – The Spirit in the Anthropocene**

In this paper, I strived to demonstrate how foodbanks run by charismatic evangelical churches – with a strong Latin American migrant presence – were spaces where many agents came together and became entangled. Through Latour’s understanding of the Anthropocene, it became clear how such an entanglement of many agents resulted in the transcendence of the object-subject dichotomy. The migrants who volunteered at the foodbank were no longer just objectified by the many forces and structures exerted on them, but rather were also able to claim their own subjectivity and agency. Moreover, in earlier works of Latour he insinuated that the religiosity of migrants might give insight into how to navigate the complex landscapes of the Anthropocene. Thus, I also strived to demonstrate the defining role of the Spirit in these foodbanks run by charismatic Latin American migrants. Through Tillich’s theology of the Spirit, it became evident how the Spirit was the agent through which these migrants were empowered to become agents and to claim subjectivity in a world which often objectified them. The Spirit empowered them to step into and navigate the Spanish public sphere, within which they became entangled with many other force-exerting agents. The Holy Spirit not only enabled the building of connections with beneficiaries, she also was a guiding force through complex bureaucratic processes, allowing the construction of entanglements with the Spanish welfare system. Thus, for these migrants, it is the Spirit which enables a flourishing existence in the midst of a landscape within which a multitude of agents become entangled, in which the object-subject dichotomy is transcended, in the Anthropocene.

I would like to make some preliminary conclusions particularly in relation to ethnographic data. Firstly, the Anthropocene has implications beyond questions surrounding the climate crisis, even though it emerges from the climate crisis and in my opinion should remain connected to it. The Anthropocene causes a re-evaluation of what constitutes the political, and in our case, the place of divine agents in the political. Even in the concrete jungles, in the hot and narrow streets of Madrid, the Anthropocene – and its political manifestations – becomes visible. Consequently, the Anthropocene and its many impacts and manifestations can and must also be recognised in the lives of migrants in our many cosmopolitan cities, supposedly far removed from the consequences of the climatic crisis, far from so-called nature. Secondly, the Spirit – for charismatic evangelicals in Madrid – is not one among many agents in the Anthropocene. Rather, it is the foundational agent, the agent which empowers communities and individuals to transcend the object-subject dichotomy, to navigate and construct ties with many force-exerting agents thus enabling a flourishing life in the midst of the troubles of the Anthropocene, thus coming full circle with Latour. The Spirit might be a liberating force, enabling the subaltern to claim agency. However, this is not through the creation of so-called “liberated” autonomous subjects. Rather, the Spirit is she who enables flourishing life in the midst of many other force-exerting agents, she who enables an entanglement of agents which are salutary to the life of charismatic migrant individuals and communities, and all the other agents present in these shared spaces. Thirdly,

charismatic communities are uniquely positioned to teach us a thing or two about possible religious responses to the frightful Anthropocene. Charismatic communities can often be found among the subaltern of our world, among those who suffer most from contemporary realities. They are simultaneously local and global, mirroring the (failed) globalised world with all its ensuing anxieties. Though mostly residing in the cosmopolitan cities of this world, far removed from the Terrestrial, the Anthropocene cannot but rush into these cities. The consequences of the frightful new reality cannot but be felt in these global cities, the home of Pentecostal, charismatic and evangelical migrants. What might we learn from the Spirit which enables a flourishing life in the midst of the many entanglements which constitute the Anthropocene?

However, questions do remain. Firstly, do Tillich and Latour really have a similar understanding of the object-subject dichotomy, and consequently agency? Latour, like many other scholars of the Anthropocene, are thoroughgoing materialists (Haraway 2018:46). Can such ontologies be reconciled with a Tillichian theology, which most definitely is not materialist? Secondly, how might we divert insights gained through charismatic communities and the workings of the Spirit within the Anthropocene in the cosmopolitan city more directly towards the Terrestrial and the climate crisis? How might we rethink the role and place of the Spirit in a Christian response to the new climatic regime of the Anthropocene, and what insights can already be found within the lived realities and theologies of charismatic communities in the Anthropocene?

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