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*RELIGIOUS PRACTICE, RELIGIOUS CHANGE*

Evangelicals and Catholics in Santiago de Chile's Civil Society

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*PhD in Sociology  
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I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

M. Nekelmann C.

## **Abstract**

Religious life in contemporary Chile is marked by both a sustained growth of Pentecostal churches and by an increase in those without religion affiliation. These developments suggest that Chile is an interesting case study for exploring religious change. This research aims to understand and interpret how religious change is experienced among religiously involved individuals, and how the formerly dominant Catholic and recently powerful Pentecostal churches are reacting to this changing environment. The thesis draws on social differentiation theory; viewing secularisation as the specification and specialisation of the religious sphere and not its disappearance in modern societies. The thesis undertook explorative qualitative comparative case study, including ethnographic interviews, participant observation and secondary data analysis as its main methods. The Catholic Chapel of Del Carmen and the Zelada Temple of the First Methodist Pentecostal Church of Chile, two churches located in Santiago's city centre, were selected in order to understand how the two main denominations in the country were changing in an urban and modernising location.

The thesis is organised into six chapters. The first presents and discusses the main versions of the secularisation theory and the public role of churches, in order to locate my cases in the sociological discussion of religion in modern societies. I further locate discussion in religiosity in Latin America, and in Chile in particular. In the second chapter I reflect on the methodological aspects of the research, namely the research problem and research objectives, and the rationale and choice of an ethnographic approach. I also review the main research methods: ethnographic interviews, participant observation and secondary data analysis. The third chapter provides a descriptive analysis of the particular field of this research, namely the municipality of Estación Central and the two churches where fieldwork took place, in Santiago, Chile. I describe this location as an appropriate place to observe religious change and its consequences, given its urban character and the social mobility of its inhabitants.

Chapter 4 is the first of three 'findings' chapters. It focuses on the intergenerational transmission of religion, and examines how the new generation of Evangelicals -the most commonly used term to refer to the main branch of Latin American Protestants- are problematising and adapting certain religious practices within this new social context as a means of integrating in contemporary Chilean culture. In Chapter 5, I analyse how both the Pentecostal Methodist Church and the Catholic Church engage, in different ways, with leadership challenges emerging from a changing environment. I suggest that Weber's idea of charisma is useful to understand the contrasting but also the similar processes that both churches are undergoing. Chapter 6 analyses the problem of how religious-based morality is exercised in the context of an increasingly secular society. I discuss how religious individuals conceive and practise the moral teachings of their churches, revealing contrasts between Catholics and Evangelicals. At the institutional level, I argue that the Catholic and Evangelical churches reflect different approaches to the public role of religion in a secularising society. The concluding section reflects on the findings as a whole and seeks to understand the ways in which they contribute to and are reflective of the emergence of a vibrant civil society.

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*To Javier, Gaspar and Pedro*

## Introduction

When Pope Francis visited Chile in January 2018, he found a very different country to the one that had received John Paul II in 1987. In the intervening 30 years, Chile experienced a political transition to democracy and a considerable improvement in the quality of life of its inhabitants: GDP increased from 20 billion USD to 260 billion USD, and the number of Chileans living below the poverty line decreased from 5 million to 2 million. As I will discuss in this thesis, this economic transition resounds in my fieldwork, especially among Evangelicals -the most commonly used term to refer to the main branch of Latin American Protestants-, for whom social mobility is an evident process that will have enormous generational consequences.

The visit of Pope John Paul II was marked by the political demonstrations and protests of the last years of Pinochet's dictatorship. Of particular significance was the homily in Parque O'Higgins, during which protesters raised a banner with the legend "*Holy Father, welcome. People are being tortured in Chile*". A clash with the police followed, leaving around 600 people wounded. Today, although the country has consolidated its democracy, the visit of Pope Francis was not free of political conflict. In fact, his visit was preceded by incendiary attacks on churches in Santiago and also in the region of La Araucanía, where the conflict between the State and the Mapuche population was a central theme of the Pope's homily.

And of course, there are the institutional conflicts of the Chilean Catholic Church, related to the cover up of sexual abuse that resulted in a conflict between the hierarchy and the faithful in the southern city of Osorno. The topic that dominated the press coverage of the papal visit was the presence in all official ceremonies of the now former Bishop of Osorno, Juan Barros, who had been accused of covering up the abuses committed by the priest Fernando Karadima. Since Barros was designated, the *Organización de Laicos de Osorno* (Organisation of Laypeople of Osorno) has advocated for his resignation. In the northern city of Iquique, Pope Francis was asked by the press about the case, and he answered that there was no evidence against Barros, and that these were false accusations: "The day you bring me evidence, then

I will speak ”, he declared (Emol 2018). The statement caused various negative reactions among the public opinion and also among abuse victims. The case took an unexpected turn on May 2018, when, after the Pope ordered an investigation, he received Karadima’s victims at his residence in the Vatican, asking for their forgiveness and showing a clear intention to renew the Chilean hierarchy. Overall, it seems clear that the institutional crisis of the Chilean Catholic Church has been put in the spotlight, and this research is reflecting these turbulent times.

Related to these controversies, which, as I will discuss, can be interpreted as a symptom of an institutional change, is the fact that Pope Francis found a religiously more plural and less Catholic country than John Paul II had found thirty years earlier. This transformation was visible from the lower attendance than expected to the homilies that took place in Santiago, Temuco and Iquique; a change made all the more evident from the contrasting crowded reception in his next stop, Peru.

Pope Francis’ visit, as a religious and social event, is therefore not only revealing of a specific crisis of the Church in the country, but also of a sociological trend that transforms Chile in an interesting case among Latin American countries. The pattern of religious change that the country is experiencing combines two major transformations: a process of religious pluralisation prompted by the growth of Pentecostal groups and a recent increase of the population without religious affiliation. Both tendencies indicate that Chile may be experiencing a secularisation process that is a novelty in Latin America, with the particular exception of the European-style secular Uruguay. This process is also reflected in the institutional crisis itself, which can be understood within a Catholic Church that is experiencing an institutional transformation commanded by the necessity of adaptation to civil society.

In this context, the questions that follow are: how does this trend allow a discussion with the western secularisation theories? And also, how does this pattern change the way we have interpreted religion and cultural identity in the Chilean context?

The first question is related to the argument that affirms that secularisation is an evolutionary process, coherent with economic and political changes. This European theory could be useful in explaining this trend; however, there is not enough evidence to support a causal relationship between modernity and the loss of importance of religion. In fact, religious manifestations are still vigorous and relevant, especially relatively new religious movements such as Pentecostalism.

Overall, I argue that the theory of social differentiation is the most appropriate framework to explain the relationship between modernity and secularisation and its historical and cultural particularities. In turn, I find that the idea of religious pluralisation is useful in describing the institutional and individual transformations of the Chilean religious field, which includes the public position of the churches and the individual's private practices and beliefs.

Both dimensions, the institutional and the individual, are at central to this research. In the pages that follow, I argue that individual choice is a key concept in the understanding of the contemporary religious field in Chile, where a plurality of religious options are available, including non-affiliation. The religious field becomes complex, with a less institutionalised and more fragile religiosity. This pluralist situation and the consequent importance of choice are especially preponderant among the new generations, meaning that religious transmission and socialisation become harder for religiously involved parents. As will be discussed, this research found a Catholic Chapel with practically no generational replacement. Catholic parents now understand religious transmission to be the providing of a Catholic morality or sensibility, rather than an active religious practice.

The focus on the new generation, however, emerged from the field itself, and not among Catholics, but among Evangelicals. The first interviews at the Pentecostal temple in Zelada were conducted with the middle-aged and older members, and they were very useful in terms of providing the wider perspective of the community and the Evangelical classic idea of religious practice. However, after a few weeks I wanted to go beyond the religious speech, which at this point was being repeated and I had

difficulties to go beyond it. This was a breaking point in this research, when I decided to turn to the younger generation.

Speaking to younger Evangelicals, I was able to discover the tensions that were obscured in the initial interviews with older members of the church. I could observe a new generation that did not share the same material and cultural conditions as their parents and grandparents and that is taking a leading role in terms of their experience of religious and social change in Chile. These young Evangelicals challenged the way I understood contemporary Pentecostalism and how this kind of religiosity is changing in order to adapt to a modern society, where they aspire to be fully integrated as normal citizens. This particular position of young Evangelicals can be interpreted in terms of a constant ambivalence between normative expectations and actual behaviour, reflected in a fluid identity that changes depending on the role they are assuming and on the audience to which this role is performed.

This aspiration of full citizenship is also visible at an institutional level. In particular, I argue that the Pentecostal Methodist Church is increasingly introducing bureaucratic practices to the institution, especially oriented to a changing environment where organisational structures and norms are an essential mechanism of legitimation. One of the dimensions of this challenge is expressed in the Providencia experiment. Providencia is an iconic municipality in Santiago, with a population composed mainly of middle-upper class and upper-class inhabitants, and considered to be the third municipality in terms of quality of life according to the Quality of Urban Life Index in 2017 (A. Orellana 2017). This was the place chosen by the young Pastor José Peña for developing his project to attract middle and upper-class members to the Evangelical Church, with a message that is oriented to the spiritual needs of the members of a secularising society. Assuming the concerns of the new composition of the Church, this incipient project reflects an effort of adaptation that will be analysed in this research. At the same time, the question that arises is related to how the church can modernise itself without losing its identity.

In Del Carmen, in contrast, I could not find these younger members, because almost all of the practising generation's children have abandoned their religion. However,

parents generally do not condemn their children's decision and consider that their Catholic roots and inspiration remain present in their children's lives. This flexible view of what it means to be a Catholic implies a high level of adjustment to the secular world, contrasting with the more rigid demand for moral standards that is distinctive in Evangelicals. At an institutional level, this lack of replacement has resulted in a Church that is fighting against disenchantment, as the younger generations appear as highly inaccessible for the type of leadership of the Chapel. The promise of charisma brought by Pope Francis represents the challenge of a renewed hope.

In this sense, I affirm that religiosity is increasingly a private affair, but I do not imply with this that religions have lost their public aspect. This assumption emerges under the conceptualisation of a religious sphere that cannot be analysed in isolation. Although I recognise that social differentiation implies a religious field that separates itself from the other realms of society, specialising its function, I also think that this differentiation implies an increasing complexity in the ways in which religion interacts with specific political, historical and social situations. I will show in this thesis that religious institutions still play an important role in public discussion, especially when it comes to moral and ethical issues. As I discuss, the increasing participation of Latin American Evangelical churches and its leaders in political life and the emergence of the Catholic Church as an organisation of the civil society are visible phenomena in the Chilean context.

The discussion about religious institutions and their role in modern civil societies is very important in this research. Taking the argument of the democratic and civil turn of contemporary Catholicism, I analyse the Chilean case in terms of the historical role of the Church in the political mobilisation against the dictatorship and the more recent process of depolitisation and location in the civil society. This location of the Catholic Church in the space of civil society contrasts with the model of political mobilisation of the Methodist Evangelical Church. While Catholicism avoids political partisanship and defends its values based on a universal and pluralistic language, Evangelicals attempt to gain political influence from within the parliament. This political turn of Chilean Pentecostalism is, however, controversial in the context of

the complex relationship between Evangelicals and worldly affairs.

The second question, in turn, takes us to the discussion about Latin American identity and its relationship with religion. For many authors, Latin America can be considered among the cases that cast doubts about the secularisation theory because its modernisation process has been perfectly compatible with religion. However, as previously mentioned, the Chilean case could change this assumption as it shows recent signs of being in the path to a secular modernity. In this context, I will argue that the transformations of the Chilean religious field do not necessarily lead to a disappearance of religion, but to an increasing complexity of the way in which religion is assumed in a plural and diverse context or to a 'post-secularism', as some authors refer to this contemporary trend.

In this sense, popular religiosity offers an interpretative key to this problem. Popular religion is at the core of the cultural description of Latin America as a region that emerges in a process of evangelisation, which operated as a syncretic encounter between Catholicism and pre-Columbian mythology. Popular religiosity, as the result of this encounter, is hardly institutionalised, which can explain why religious practice outside the margins of the Church is not as novel in Latin America as the secularisation theory would expect. The low levels of Church attendance and the considerable proportion of Catholics that do not feel as though they are part of the Church are both part of this popular tradition that includes a non-institutional Catholic identity, based more on religious beliefs and culture than on an institutional commitment. In the context of this research, this tradition is reflected in the perceived Catholic's lack of commitment. This means that although many people go to Sunday mass, participation in other activities is unlikely.

Taken together, these transformations are in the background of this research. However, I believe that the quantitative figures are not self-explanatory, thus this study is oriented to develop an in-depth explanation and description of the everyday life consequences of these macro-trends. In other words, I argue that this differentiated and pluralist field implies a redefinition of the way in which churches

relate with their environment, and also how religiously-involved individuals interpret their own religiosity and engage with the secular world.

In order to understand religious practice in this changing environment, I decided to make a single case comparative study with an exploratory approach. This choice implied abandoning the aspiration of obtaining universal or predictive conclusions and instead gaining a context-dependent knowledge. With that purpose, I selected a specific neighbourhood in the centre of Santiago. In a high-urbanised context, I observed the challenges and meanings that religiously-involved people express and imply in their everyday routines, using ethnographical interviews as the principal method.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first presents and discusses the main versions of the secularisation theory and the public role of churches, in order to situate my cases in the sociological discussion of religion in modern societies. In this context, I further situate the discussion of religiosity in Latin America and in Chile in particular, offering the wider theoretical and empirical background that will resonate through the following chapters.

In the second chapter, I reflect on the methodological aspects of the research, namely the research problem and research objectives, as well as the rationale and choice of an ethnographic approach. The methodological discussion and justification includes detail on the main methods: ethnographic interviews; participant observation; and secondary data analysis.

The third chapter provides a descriptive analysis of the particular field of this research, namely the municipality of Estación Central in Santiago, Chile, and also the two churches where fieldwork took place. This description details why this location is an appropriate place to observe religious change and its consequences, given its urban character and the social mobility of its inhabitants. Additionally, chapter 3 offers a first look at the details of the field, including my informants' profiles and everyday lives.

Chapter 4 is the first of three 'findings' chapters. It focuses on the intergenerational



transmission of religion and examines how the new generation of Evangelicals are problematising and adapting certain religious practices within this new social context as a way of integrating in contemporary Chilean culture. In particular, I analyse the problem of evangelisation as an example of a religious obligation that is part of Pentecostal identity but is losing its appeal to the younger generations.

In Chapter 5, I analyse how both the Pentecostal Methodist Church and the Catholic Church engage, in different ways, with leadership challenges emerging from a changing environment. I suggest that Weber's idea of charisma assists with understanding the contrasting but also the similar processes that both churches are experiencing. In general, I argue that while Evangelicals are suffering the consequences of routinisation of charisma, Catholics are struggling to keep the charismatic element alive.

Chapter 6 analyses the problem of how religious-based morality is exercised in the context of an increasingly secular society. I discuss how religious individuals conceive and practise the moral teachings of their churches, revealing contrasts between Catholics and Evangelicals. While Catholics are adapted to the world, Evangelicals experience a more complex relationship with the secular sphere, experiencing what I call ambivalence. At the institutional level, I argue that the Catholic and Evangelical churches reflect different approaches to the public role of religion in a secularising society. While the Methodist Pentecostal Church has opted for politicisation, Catholics are moving towards a civil organisation.

The concluding chapter reflects on the findings as a whole and seeks to understand the ways in which they contribute to and are reflective precisely of the emergence of a vibrant civil society.

## **Chapter 1. The Big Picture: Religious Change and the Public Role of the Churches in Contemporary Chile**

In this first chapter, I describe and analyse the general evolving religious and social landscape of contemporary Chile. The sections that follow will present an analysis of the pattern of religious change in the country, which can be briefly described as a declining presence and power of the Catholic Church. This trend can be explained by two major transformations: on the one hand, a process of religious pluralisation that has been prompted by the growth of other denominations, consisting mainly of Pentecostal groups; and on the other hand, a more recent increase in non-religious people. These combined features transform Chile into a unique case among Latin American countries, and make it an interesting place to discuss secularisation theories in the context of developing countries, as both processes have been previously used to describe religious change in modern western countries. At the same time, this chapter also analyses the argument of the privatisation of religion, which takes us to a theoretical and historical account of the relationship between the Churches and the spheres of politics and civil society, highlighting the institutional evolution of the two main religious denominations of contemporary Chile: Catholicism and Pentecostalism.

I will argue that an increasing population that does not declare a religious affiliation in the context of a pluralised religious field is the core of the secularisation theories that were developed to describe the modern religious pattern in western Europe. This is why, in the first section of this chapter, I discuss the modern theories of religious pluralisation and secularisation, assuming the standpoint of the broader idea of social differentiation. In this context, I also analyse the problem of the public role of the churches and their relationship with the political and civil sphere that arises as a response to the increasing privatisation of religious beliefs and practices. This perspective will allow me to clarify the position of Latin America, and Chile in particular, within this broader discussion.

However, as I will discuss through this thesis, in Latin America these recognisable trends emerge in the context of a field marked by popular religion, which includes a set of practices and beliefs that proliferate on the margins of the institutional framework of the church. In this sense, the non-institutional religiosity that appears as a key feature of secular societies is not a complete novelty in the Chilean case. I therefore postulate that the recent trends, which could be read as a transition to a European-style secularisation, have to be interpreted within this specific religious tradition.

The chapter is organised as follows: firstly, I present and discuss the western secularisation theories, focusing on the process of social differentiation, pluralisation and its consequences, and the contemporary forms of religiosity in modern societies. In this same context, I also discuss the public role of the churches in contemporary western societies, focusing the argument on the position of Catholicism in civil society. Secondly, I introduce the discussion about religious change in Latin America, analysing the particularities of the region in terms of the decline of Catholicism and the emergence of Pentecostalism, as well as the background of popular religion. I focus on the Chilean case and its historical and cultural features, including the problem of civil society and the role the churches play in this regard.

## **Religious Pluralisation, Secularisation and the Public Role of the Churches**

### **Secularisation Theories and the Public Role of Religion**

Religion has been a fundamental concern for sociology since its formation as a discipline. Related to the enquiry about modernity and its consequences, religion has been conceived as one of the social spheres that is most affected by the accelerating changes carried out by the modernisation process. In this sense, the secularisation theory has been the traditional response to the question about the cultural consequences of modernity. A shift to the secular has been the general premise of classical sociology. Both Emile Durkheim and Max Weber founded their theories on the crisis of religious consciousness (Martin 2005; Weber 1964; Durkheim 1915),

although both authors understand religion at different levels: Durkheim as an integrative factor at the level of total society; Weber as a motivational factor at the level of individuals (Luhmann 1985; Weber 1964; Durkheim 1915).<sup>1</sup>

As a general idea, contemporary versions of the concept of secularisation suggest that economic and political changes are coherent with cultural developments (Norris and Inglehart 2004, Chapter 1). These perspectives refer to an evolutionary process in which the influence of religion systematically diminishes in its institutional and individual dimensions in West European societies (Goldstein 2009, p.169; Bruce 2002; Wilson 1998). It can be observed individually, in terms of beliefs and practices; politically, in relation to the role of religious beliefs in political life; and morally, which includes the influence of religion in ethical issues (Beard et al. 2013).

This process is related to social changes such as scientific and technological progress, urbanisation and the fracture of traditional communities, individualisation and cultural diversity (Bruce 2002), and to an increasing material and psychological security (Norris and Inglehart 2004). Material prosperity is thus a main explanatory element of these perspectives, which describe secularisation as a multidimensional phenomenon prompted by an improvement of socioeconomic standards.

Although the original case study for the secularisation process was West Europe, the concept has been extended to affluent and prosperous developed societies worldwide (Norris and Inglehart 2004, Chapter 1), reinforcing the idea that material prosperity should promote the weakening of religious manifestations. In this context, as many scholars recognise, and this thesis will sustain, most of the critics point precisely to the difficulties that arise when the theory implies a causal relationship between modernity and development, on the one hand, and the weakening of religion on the other. Religious vitality in the United States; the emergence of new spiritual expressions of Hindu and Buddhist inspiration in the Western world; the growth of fundamentalism in Muslim countries; and the evangelical revival in the

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<sup>1</sup> This research considers both approaches as complementary, as it includes the observation of religious practice at an individual level and also the role of religions in civil society.

South are the most cited examples contradicting this expected trend (Norris and Inglehart 2004, Chapter 3).

### ***The Process of Differentiation of Religion***

Considering this criticism, the theory of social differentiation appears as an appropriate framework to explain the relationship between modernity and secularisation. This perspective is useful for this research because it is flexible enough to consider historical and cultural particularities and contingencies (Martin 2011, Chapter 1), yet at the same time leaves space for the persistence of religion in modern societies (Luhmann 1993, Chapter 4). From the standpoint of differentiation, secularisation is the result of the emancipation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms. Secularisation thus strictly means that social spheres are no longer under ecclesiastical oversight, which of course has consequences at individual, political and moral levels. I therefore avoid the use of the idea of secularism, which has an ideological implication based on a rationalistic perspective that celebrates the modern overcoming of myth and superstition (Martin 2005, Chapter 5).

One of the first attempts to explain modern religion from the perspective of social differentiation was made by Talcott Parsons, who saw secularisation as a theory of social evolution, which entails the increasing differentiation of religion (Parsons 1971). For Parsons, differentiation is the separating out of each social sphere from ecclesiastical control: the state, science and the market, and also related systems such as the law, welfare and education. Although the religious and the secular are separated spheres in modern societies, for him they interpenetrate and are integrated with each other. Parsons thus did not see this process as a decline of religion, but as a change that enables it to better fulfil its proper role (Parsons 1971).

For Niklas Luhmann, in turn, the differentiation of religion is an historical process that implies that religion can no longer interfere in other functional systems because it is itself a functional system (Luhmann 1993, Chapter 4). While in the traditional world religion and society were not distinguishable spheres, now there are places outside

the religious field from which religion can be observed and described and, at the same time, religion is confronted with non-religious distinctions and has to react to them (Luhmann 1993, Chapter 4).

### ***Religious Pluralisation***

The idea of religious pluralisation will be considered as a complementary concept, useful in describing the structural and also the individual transformations of the religious field. In simple terms, religious pluralisation means that where there was one religion, now there are many, and this will have significant consequences (Bruce 1998, p.224). On the one hand, politically it implies that the modern state is required to become increasingly neutral regarding religious affairs, which reinforces the process of social differentiation (Bruce 1998, p.224). On the other hand, it has individual repercussions, which can be described as the process of privatisation of religion.

Overall, this process puts choice as a key element in the modern religious landscape, meaning that religious affiliation ceases to be taken for granted at all levels of society (Mouzelis 2012). As Mouzelis reflects, "... in existential and religious matters, generalized choice, real or imagined, is what modernity is all about " (Mouzelis 2012, p 220). In other words, this means that in a differentiated society membership of religious organisations becomes a private matter, independent from other social roles (Luhmann 1985, p.13), which implies that one can be born, live and die without taking part in this social system (Luhmann 1993, Chapter 4). In a similar sense, Thomas Luckmann argues that the search for religious meaning is subjective and personal, and therefore the relevant public institutions are not able to provide a religious worldview (Luckmann 1967). Accordingly, for Peter Berger, this privatisation process has as its main consequence a crisis of credibility of religion. Consequently, within a plural religious field, the individual faces a variety of religious alternatives competing for their adherence, but none with a coercive force. This lack of coercive power results in the loss of plausibility of traditional religious conceptions. The

structures of plausibility get weaker because they cannot count on the whole society in order to obtain social confirmation (Berger 1990).

The effect of religious pluralism on the vitality of religion has brought controversy to the discussion about secularisation in modern societies. For example, Berger argues that the effect of religious pluralism on plausibility undermines participation (Berger 1990). Accordingly, for Bruce, being a modern believer in a context where you always have alternatives produces religious decline in two dimensions: the number of religious people and the extent to which people are religious. It follows that it becomes harder to socialise the new generations in the faith and it becomes harder for those who are religious to preserve the cohesive force of their particular belief system (Bruce 2015, Chapter 2).

This negative correlation between pluralisation and religiosity has been challenged by the religious economies' perspective. Authors such as Roger Finke and Rodney Stark argue that the key mechanism in a plural context is competition, which creates a market situation that stimulates the quantity and quality of religious products available, and consequently the amount of religious goods that are consumed (Stark and Finke 2000). According to this model, secularisation cannot be understood as a decline in aggregate levels of religious demand, which is presumed to be constant. On the contrary, the low levels of religious consumption in Europe can be explained through deficiencies in the religious supply and the quality of the European religious market (Stark and Finke 2000, Chapter 8). From this perspective, in free markets religious entrepreneurs are free to establish religious firms in the context of competition, and consumers are more likely to find the religious product that suits them. In this context, barriers to entry or religious monopolies would lower religious consumption (Stark and Finke 2000, Chapter 9).

Nevertheless, there is little evidence for this theoretically universal positive correlation between religious pluralism and religious participation, with some exceptions, paradigmatically the United States (Chaves and Gorski 2001). The great vitality of various denominations in the US, together with the growth of new religious movements and the dynamism of them in developed and developing countries,

indicate for Mouzelis that secularisation within the religious field is not as strong as some scholars would suggest (Mouzelis 2012, p.211).

However, recent research has brought controversy to the case of the United States. As mentioned, the US has been considered as the main counterexample for the secularisation thesis and the relationship between modernity and the decline in religiosity. Yet in a recent work, Voas and Chaves argue that American religiosity has been declining in recent decades, and that that decline shows the same generational pattern as elsewhere in the West. Thus, according to recent trends, the United States could be included in the religious decline pattern driven by cohort replacement that has been described throughout the western world, and may no longer offer a key counterexample to the western pattern of secularisation (Voas and Chaves 2016).

### ***Religious Conversion***

Closely related to the discussion on pluralism, religious conversion appears as a relevant topic in the context of modern religiosity. Although the classic secularisation thesis gives little space to this phenomenon, understanding it as a deviant behaviour that goes against the general trend of a declining interest in religious practice (Yang and Abel 2014), more recent analysis recognise that in the modern world there is an unprecedented opportunity for individuals to move freely from one religion to another (Bryan and Lamb 1999).

Conversion is a phenomenon that can be found in the realm of universal religions, which in general have a founder that gives his message to a group of followers who in turn spread this message to all humanity (Bryan and Lamb 1999). However, in most cases the proselytising tendency is limited to the members of an ethnic community, which explain its especial importance in Christianity, where conversion acquire a more permanent historical role, especially since the Reformation (Bryan and Lamb 1999). However, there are institutional differences within Christian denominations, which Bryan and Lamb call the “gatekeeper” dimension, related to the institutional mechanisms to recognise and validate the new member (Bryan and Lamb 1999). In



the sacramental traditions such as Catholicism, Anglicanism and Lutheranism, for instance, conversion implies the participation in sacraments, while in the Evangelical traditions it is a personal experience with lower institutional barriers, but relevant social and communitarian aspects (Bryan and Lamb 1999).

The sociological dimensions of conversion include the fact that the convert not only experience an individual religious awakening, but also enters into a particular religious community (Bryan and Lamb 1999). From this perspective, conversion has been understood as a process that involves complex individual and social conditions (Yang and Abel 2014; Rambo and Farhadian 1999; Lofland and Stark 1965). Yang and Abel propose a three-level model to understand religious conversion. At the micro and meso levels, conversion typically occurs in congregations and thus implies a change in the convert's identity and a process of socialization. Ritual, in this sense, and the social bonds that it creates, are important elements of the sociological explanations of the process (Yang and Abel 2014). However, large-scale or mass conversions, as those that include many individuals that change their religious affiliation voluntarily in a relatively short period of time which, require an explanation that should include a macro level analysis. An example of this phenomenon is the rise of Pentecostalism in Latin America, which demands developing an explanation that is not centred merely on individual and ritual factors, but also in sociological trends and in the structure of social relationships (Yang and Abel 2014).

Lofland and Stark also give great importance to the social aspects of conversion. They summarise the process into seven stages, distinguishing between "predisposing conditions" and "situational contingencies". Conversion occurs when the individual is immersed in predisposing conditions of crisis, religious problem-solving perspective and religious seeking. But given these conditions, conversion only takes under certain situational contingencies, such as being in a turning point in life and interacting with believers of the new religion (Lofland and Stark 1965). In turn, Rambo's model also considers an initial stage of "context" that includes social, cultural, religious and personal dimensions. This initial stage is of great importance,

as it sets the parameters for the next phases of the process (Rambo and Farhadian 1999).

### ***Intergenerational Religiosity and Transmission***

The topic of conversion in a context where choice appears as a central aspect of contemporary religious life brings challenges to the religious institutions, in terms of their capacity of retaining their followers and especially their ability to transmit religious loyalties from one generation to the next.

The generational pattern of secularisation means that in Britain and other developed countries religious change is explained by a cohort effect. This means that, in the twentieth century, decade by decade and year by year, each birth cohort has been less religious than the one before (Bruce 2011, p.544). Although there can be also intragenerational decline, in particular in terms of a life-cycle effect, which assumes that people get more religious as they grow older, and of a period effect, which operates under the hypothesis of relevant events that could impact on religiosity, it has been argued that the intergenerational effect is more relevant (Crockett and Voas 2006; Norris and Inglehart 2004).

It has been argued that churches differ in their capacity of intergenerational transmission. A pluralist situation implies that there is no longer a dominant tradition and deviant alternatives, which results for Bruce in two main alternatives for the churches (Bruce 1998, p.225). The first is the liberal denominational, which takes an inclusive view of religious truth, producing ecumenism and accommodation to the secular world. The churches keep belonging to the cultural mainstream, thus the cost of membership is low, but with a weak intergenerational transmission. As Bruce states, “the bridges built to the secular world become roads out of religion” (Bruce 1998, p.225). The second is the conservative and sectarian, which takes an exclusive view of God’s truth and seeks to create a socio-psychological ghetto, isolating the believers from the rest of society. Conversely, this version is effective in recruiting

the children of believers, but the cost of membership can be extremely high (Bengtson et al. 2013, Chapter 10; Bruce 1998).

However, parents are in general the main agents of religious transmission (Bengtson, Putney, and Harris 2013, Chapter 3; Smith and Lundquist Denton 2005, Chapter 2). The effect of the school and the church disappear when self-selection is considered, that is, when the fact that religious parents will select religious schools is taken into account (Voas and Storm 2012). In this context, the effectivity of transmission of conservative religions has been related to strong bonds between family and church, an emphasis on parents' role modelling and the investment in family solidarity (Bengtson et al. 2013 Chapter 10).

Recent research shows that religious retention is positively related to the level of religious commitment and similarity of parents, and of the degree in which parents intentionally transmit their faith. At the same time, it is prompted by a good quality of the relationship between the parents and their children, and by a traditional family structure (Bengtson et al. 2013, Chapter 10; Smith and Sikkink 2003). In turn, difficulties in religious transmission are said to be related to the fact that parents do not aspire to have children that are more religious than themselves, conversely to the case of education (Voas and Storm 2012). Another reason is the increasing importance of individual choice, that replaces the ideal of religious concordance within the family. This means that parents do not aspire, as in previous generations, that their children have their same religion, but increasingly value that they make their own choice (Voas and Storm 2012).

### ***Religion and social status***

A similar perspective has been adopted to observe the relationship between religion and social status, which becomes of central importance in societies that improve their welfare standards. With his classic distinction between churchlike and sectlike religiosity, Demerath postulates that the former is characteristic of upper-status groups and the latter of low-status groups. While church is characterised by religious

formalism, ritualism and impersonality, conversely sect is characterised by devotion to doctrine, spontaneity and the sense to be a distinct moral community (Demerath 1961). In this perspective, and as more contemporary evidence show, members of lower status groups would prefer stricter and more conservative religions, while in contrast, upper strata members would choose a more intellectual religious ethos that accentuates individual autonomy, or, in other words, a religion that legitimates their position in society in contrast to a religion that compensate for worldly needs (Finke and Stark 1992).

For Demerath, education neutralises the influence of strict (or sect type) religions, but do not necessarily leads to a decline in faith or religious adherence, but to the transition to a church type religiosity (Demerath 1961). In turn, it has been argued that social status not only influences preferences but also rewards the choice of particular religious goods, as reference groups exert pressure on individuals to conform to specific patterns of cultural consumption that go along with social position (Sherkat and Wilson 1995). In this sense, changes in social status would lead to changes in religious preferences as individuals are exposed to new consumption norms and have incentives to conform to a new group of peers (Sherkat and Wilson 1995).

### ***Religious Identities in Contemporary Societies***

Religious pluralism and their consequences redefine how individuals identify themselves in religious terms and also how churches relate with the secular spheres. To understand these responses is essential to this research, assuming that development is not necessarily linked to the disappearance of religion, but to a transformation of the religious field.

As Mouzelis suggests, the secularisation process may not lead to a non-religious population, but to a different type of religiosity in the contemporary world. This post-secular religious model includes a less institutionalised and a more fragile religiosity, with increasing numbers of non-churched believers or a population that does not

belong to a specific denomination but holds religious beliefs. This means that secularisation does not necessarily imply a path to religious indifference or atheism (Mouzelis 2012).

In terms of subjective identities, the process of individualisation as major socio-cultural feature is a key factor in the understanding of modern societies. For Mouzelis, individualism can be found within the institutional framework, where we can see a growing flexibility and tolerance to divergence; outside the established churches, with new religious movements or fluid informal groups; and also in seekers in constant search for religious or spiritual responses (Mouzelis 2012, p.216).

Evidence shows that in secularising countries there is a large population that is neither religious nor secular. On the one hand, there are those who stand between those who never attend church and those who attend regularly (Bruce 2015, Chapter 4). This segment typically still participates in religious rites of passage such as baptisms, wedding and funerals and is likely to attend to specific religious services at Easter and Christmas. For Bruce, this occasional participation is explained by nostalgia and the search for the solemnity of tradition, thus he predicts that while the weight of tradition declines, so will decline the quantity of this population (Bruce 2015, Chapter 4).

On the other hand, there is the population that never participate in religious services, but still claims a religious identification (Bruce 2015, Chapter 4). This nominalism is for Bruce a form of social positioning or recognition of a tradition of origin, and a category that is on its way to the secular. For him, it is expected that this population of what he calls 'fuzzy Christians' will start to fall, overtaken by the secular segment, which will continue to grow (Bruce 2015, Chapter 4). Among this type we can also include the non-churched believers (Mouzelis 2012), or those who Gracie Davie describes as 'believing without belonging': Europeans that continue to have religious or spiritual beliefs, but with declining participation in religious institutions (Davie 1994).

In turn, assuming a longitudinal perspective, Lim, MacGregor and Putnam identify a specific category among this neither religious nor secular population: 'liminals' (Lim, MacGregor, and Putnam 2010). 'Liminals' show unstable preferences in time, staying out of a stable religious identity: they identify themselves with a religious group at one point in time, but they can claim no religious preference at another, although their actual religious involvement could have changed very little. For the authors, 'liminals' are not a transitional group in the terms that Bruce postulates, but a population that inhabits a grey zone in terms of religious preferences (Lim, MacGregor, and Putnam 2010). In this context, religious individualism, occasional participation in rituals, nominalism, liminality and non-churched affiliation are certainly useful categories to describe the Chilean religious field and the context in which our informants practice their religion. However, it is also true that religious practice outside the institutional margins of the Church has been a traditional feature of the popular religiosity that is the common background of Latin American tradition, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

In sum, generalised individual choice appears as a key element in the religious landscape of contemporary societies: religious affiliation ceases to be taken for granted, and that happens in all social strata (Mouzelis 2012), contradicting a causality at an individual level between material prosperity and secularisation. As Bruce describes the situation, believing in God is a choice, and modern believers are constantly aware of religious alternatives (Bruce 2015, Chapter 2). This accent on choice as the basis of religious life in contemporary societies takes us to the discussion about the public force of religion in a pluralised field. In the next section I will analyse how the public role of religion can be conceived in this context.

### ***The Public Role of Religion***

José Casanova is probably the scholar who has most overtly criticised the secularisation theories from the standpoint of the public role of the churches. For him, privatisation should not be interpreted as a unilateral trend, as there can be

observed simultaneously the persistence of religion in the public sphere (Casanova 1994). For him, religious institutions refuse to be confined to the private sphere, struggling to gain political presence through the articulation of demands in civil society. In this sense, religions maintain their public aspect and this does not jeopardise the social differentiation nor the pluralism of religious ideas (Casanova 1994).

In this context, it has been argued that the churches have emerged as one of the players on the civil stage of contemporary societies, principally because they gain independence and freedom from the old structures of power, mainly the state (Martin 2005, Chapter 1; Wilson 1998, p.52). These episodes do not, however, disprove the general, non-linear evolution of the overall loss of direct control of the churches over other spheres in the Christian West: inter-institutional secularisation, although irreversible, coexists with the emergence of episodes of dedifferentiation between the religious and political fields (Mouzelis 2012, p.210).

In order to analyse the position of contemporary churches as actors in civil society, it is first necessary to broadly define the term 'civil society'. This is a complex task, particularly if the aim is to consider its various empirical manifestations and contexts (Bailer, Bodenstein, and Heinrich 2012). There are, however, some common features that appear as theoretical boundaries of the concept, especially the idea that civil society corresponds to an arena for collective action outside the spheres of the state and the family (Bailer et al. 2012; Berger 2005; Pérez-Díaz 1993). In this general context, civil society includes as a main component the structural and cultural aspects of associational life, or in other words, civil organisations and their values (Bailer, Bodenstein, and Heinrich 2012).

This definition implies a normative component, which is related to the 'civility' of associational life. These institutions have to be 'civil' in terms of their ability to mitigate conflict and promote peace, and to cooperate with a responsible liberal state (Berger 2005; Hall 2013). In this sense, civil society is related to the improvement of democracy through the development of individual democratic

capacities, the formation of a public opinion and the promotion of political action (Ramos-Pinto 2004).

Thus, the associational structure, by itself, does not constitute civil society because it can potentially be used for disintegrative or antidemocratic purposes (Pérez-Díaz 2005). According to Pérez-Díaz, competition between associations could, under specific circumstances, promote a climate of incivility, especially when these associations have high levels of internal solidarity but are at the same time highly aggressive towards the outside world, opposing themselves to other similar groups (Pérez-Díaz 2005, p.210). A normative theory of civil society has to differentiate between civil and uncivil purposes and civil and uncivil effects, which means favourable or unfavourable to a liberal democracy, the rule of law, a plural society and a culture of tolerance (Pérez-Díaz 2005, 1997, Chapter 1). In the same sense, for Hall, civility is based precisely on the recognition of difference and diversity because the promotion of tolerance makes it possible to live in peace (Hall 2013).

Historical examples of uncivil organisations are fundamentalist or nationalist associations based on the belief that individuals can only develop significant bonds within primordial communities, such as family ties or religious faith and not within a plural society. In contrast, a civil society is characterised by institutions that improve the level of freedom of participants, reducing the coercion exercised towards them and widening their alternatives of actions. The public sphere corresponds to the place where permanent conversations about these alternatives takes place (Pérez-Díaz 1997, Chapter 3).

Civil society theorists agree on the idea that religion can be part of civil society under certain conditions, specifically when religious freedom is guaranteed in the context of a plural religious field (Miller 2012; Colas 1997, Chapter 2) and insofar as it constitutes a counterpower to state (Casanova 2001). In this context, a church can only be an institution of civil society when it gives up monopolistic claims and recognises freedom of conscience as a human right (Casanova 2001). If these requirements are fulfilled, religious institutions can be recognised as important locations for moral debate and for the contestation of viewpoints. They can also be



recognised as providers of social services and of autonomous spaces for political action (Miller 2012).

This possibility is related to the discussion about the public role of the churches in contemporary societies. For Casanova, this role is closely related to the process of deprivatisation of modern religion, which has adopted three main forms. First, the religious mobilisation in defence of the traditional way of life against the state and the market, forcing public discussion and rational reflection. A second form of deprivatisation occurs when churches question the functionalistic operation of the political and economic systems, claiming the necessity of extrinsic norms and to subordinate these logics to human needs. Finally, the third form of deprivatisation attacks individualism, defending the principle of common good and the idea that moral issues should be based on intersubjective norms (Casanova 2001).

Another perspective from which the relationship between religion and civil society can be observed is related to the production of civic attitudes and social capital among its members. From this standpoint, contemporary studies in modern societies show that participation in religious organisations is linked to high levels of civic attitudes and behaviour, such as voting and support for democracy, and also to confidence in political institutions (Norris and Inglehart 2004, Part II). In turn, evidence suggests that church members are more likely than non-members to join secular associations. Protestants present higher participation rates than members of other religious denominations (Lam 2002).

Protestantism in the United States is paradigmatic. For Weber, in the United States, religious life is marked by sectarianism, which contrasts with the institutional style of the established churches in Europe. The main difference is that while in European churches membership is defined by birth and the social position of their members depends on the churches' structures, sect is a voluntary community of individuals based on their religious qualification. Thus, in the US, membership in a reputable church community guarantees the social and business reputation of the individual (Weber 1985).

The American Protestant religious congregation is for Weber the initial and most universal community, embracing all social interests of the individual (Weber 1985). The importance of this 'sects' spirit' goes far beyond the religious sphere. This kind of religious association, which becomes increasingly secular, represents the archetype for associational life (Weber 2002b), giving American democracy its distinct features, which are based on the cultural codes of religious life (Loader and Alexander 1985). For Weber, atomisation is thus not the result of democracy but of bureaucratic rationalism: in America, the internal isolation of the individual is connected with his ability to form social groups (Weber 1985). Sects give American democracy its anti-authoritarian character, its flexible structure and individualistic stamp, as the schema penetrates deeply the social structures (Weber 1985).

The importance of Protestant sects for the development of American democracy is a central argument in favour of the positive relationship between religion and civil society. However, Catholicism remains a more controversial denomination in this regard, especially if we consider its historical relationship with the modern state. The Catholic Church originally sought to control associational life and has thus played an historically complex role in terms of the integration of modern societies. The Catholic Church has historically guided its relationship with the modern state by trying to protect its freedom and has sought to maintain a religious monopoly over a territory (Casanova 2001). This historical idealism of the Catholic Church situates its relationship with the state outside the limits of a civil society (Casanova 2001). This example shows that religious institutions may be intolerant to religious and cultural pluralism, but it is also true that more recently they have also shown to be able to learn to live with it, as Pérez-Díaz suggests (Pérez-Díaz 1997, Chapter 3).

#### The Catholic Church as a Civil Association

For centuries, the Catholic Church has resisted modern processes of secularisation in a variety of social spheres: it has fought capitalism, liberalism, modern science, the modern secular state, democratic revolutions, socialism and sexual revolutions

(Casanova 1996). The main examples of this antimodern fundamentalism are the nationalist Catholicism in Franco's Spain, the concordats with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, from which the Church obtained religious freedom for their members (Casanova 2001). All these cases reveal a particularistic logic that contradicts basic notions of modern human rights, which is confirmed by the Church's public condemnation of these regimes only when they threatened the privileges of Catholic groups (Casanova 2001). However, this Catholic antimodern fundamentalism is practically inexistent in the context of contemporary societal religious movements. Catholicism has played a crucial role in democratic transitions, not only in Latin America but also in other regions since the mid-1970s. This represents an important historical novelty for a Church that in previous processes had either resisted or adopted a lukewarm position towards democracy (Casanova 2001, 1996).

This democratic turn can be observed through two complementary perspectives: the first one is connected to the second Vatican Council and its Declaration of Religious Freedom and the Church's appropriation of the modern discourse of universal human rights and the sacred dignity of the human person (Casanova 2001, 1996). This ideological and theological turn, however, can also be observed in a second perspective that introduces more practical terms, following the analysis of the Church's institutional metamorphosis that Pérez-Díaz developed for the Spanish case.

For Casanova, the recognition of the inalienable right to freedom of conscience, based on the sacred dignity of the human person, means that the Catholic Church becomes a free church. This implies the separation of church and state and the renunciation of an authoritative tradition. In turn, the acceptance of the modern secular age reflects the change from an otherworldly to an inner worldly orientation. The Church's mission from then on included the transformation of the world (Casanova 1996).

In Latin America, the theological paradigmatic turn of the Second Vatican Council and its encyclicals marked the development of Liberation theology (Rowland 2007; Costadoat 2007). This movement appeared soon after the meeting of the region's

bishops at Medellín in 1968, as part of a general effort to reorient Latin American Catholicism in the light of the Vatican II (Levine 2012). Eleven years later, the Conference of Puebla in 1979 reaffirmed the commitment of Medellín and announced "a clear and prophetic preferential and solidary option for the poor" (Damacena and Pedrosa 2002, p. 137). The concept of "sign of the times" was received in Latin America and signified a breaking point with the traditional European theology and an effort to develop a theology that could have as its object the historical features of the region (Costadoat 2007).

If Vatican II was the catalyst, the reality of nineteen-sixties Latin America was the scenario that made Liberation theology possible, with the revolutionary wake of Fidel Castro and the Marxist Dependency theory that traced the underdevelopment of the continent to the development of the First World (Klaiber 1989, p.4). This left-wing movement wanted a renewal of the church and intended to provide a response to its institutional vacancy in the popular urban peripheries (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013; Larraín 2000, Chapter 5). Liberation theology emphasised the primacy of a spiritual praxis as a principle of theological knowledge, thus the need to change unjust social structures (Levine 2012; Costadoat 2007). Using Marxist categories, it constituted a critique of the activity of the traditional church from the viewpoint of the poor (Levine 2012). 'Catholic Base Communities' were formed as part of this church's broad strategy to reach and hold the faithful populace, through more participatory and communal experiences. For Martin, these religious communities also constituted a rival to Pentecostalism, representing the emergence of a form of voluntarist organisation within the Catholic Church itself (Martin 1990, Chapter 5).

Although Liberation Theology in Latin America promoted a politicised Catholicism, Casanova argues that the pluralistic character of the contemporary Church means that it will also have to abandon this model of political mobilisation. This pluralist character of contemporary societies means that every political choice would imply a countermobilisation of dissenting Catholics in the opposite direction. Thus, the church's disestablishment of the state, but also from the political society meant that its public role has to take place on civil society, which is consistent with modern

universalistic principles (Casanova 1996). Contemporary papal pronouncements, based on universal values and using a universalistic language, are not addressed exclusively to Catholics but to humanity as a whole. As a consequence, every position the Church takes will have to be justified through a rational discourse in the public sphere of civil society (Casanova 1996). For Casanova, this democratic and pluralistic turn had dramatic effects on Catholic countries, putting in question the Franco regime in Spain and the authoritarian regimes in Latin America (Casanova 1996).

From the perspective of Pérez Díaz, the example of the Spanish transition to democracy after the civil war and Franco's regime shows how organisations in general, but in particular the church, may be civil or uncivil or can even show degrees of civility. They can also transform themselves from an uncivil to a civil form and vice versa (Pérez-Díaz 2002). In his analysis, he offers the example of Francoist Nationalists who developed a strong sense of internal solidarity of an uncivil kind, which included the Church as a main actor of this socio-political coalition that was based on authority and hierarchy, but also in fraternity and comradeship among equal members. In this order, activities were supposed to be subordinate to the common good, under the leadership of the state and in alliance with the Church. There was no place for liberal democracy, and market economy was subordinated to the authoritarian state. However, as the government took a liberalising path in the belief that the regime was strong enough to cope with some dissent, and also due to internal and external pressure, it had to tolerate the autonomy of the church and Catholic associations. As the state reformed itself, society reacted, pressing for more reforms and increasing the social capital of civil associations. This created a virtuous circle that would lead to Spain's democratic transition (Pérez-Díaz 1993, 2002).

Within this transformation of the social fabric, the church was a main producer of social movements, especially from those that combined political dissent with social critique. The church experienced an internal tension between older clerics and middle-aged and younger clerics. While the older ones supported a Francoist state with a militant religiosity, the younger ones favoured a church that could adapt to the modern world. A progressive church started to develop, with clerics that

encouraged and joined associations of workers, students and farmers, taking the role of advisors or spiritual leaders. Religious associations were thus part of the associative fabric of Spanish society, which increasing richness built a more open and tolerant social morality. For Pérez Díaz, this process of sociocultural change together with a process of political and economic liberalisation made the turn away from uncivil to civil social capital possible. This was crucial for the Spanish transition to democracy (Pérez-Díaz 2002). The transition period was marked by the expression of consensus in a variety of practices, symbols and discourses. The church played the role of intermediary between the different parties involved, after it had apologised for its responsibility in the civil war. This transformation resulted in the formal recognition of religious freedom and pluralism and in the separation of church and state (Pérez-Díaz 2002).

In sum, Casanova and Pérez Díaz present two complementary approaches to the relationship between Catholicism and civil society. From an ideological and empirical perspective, it can be argued that Catholicism has shown a civil potential that places it, together with traditional Protestantism, among the civil public religions in the modern world.

This section has described secularisation theories and their social and institutional consequences. It has been argued that these theories can be understood as an attempt to explain an historically and geographically specific phenomenon, that is, the changes that happened to religion in western Europe since the Reformation (Bruce 2015). The question about other parts of the world is empirical, but in general it has been argued that this pattern of changes can be also found in developed countries such as the USA, Canada or Australia. The comparative analysis will thus be useful to understand the specific pattern of change Latin America and Chile, in particular.

### **Secularisation, Religious Pluralisation and Civil Society in Latin America**

Although the debate about secularisation has not been absent in Latin America, secular attitudes have traditionally been confined to the elite. The secularisation of the masses, which was the principal trend in 1960s Europe, was an unknown process in Latin American countries (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013).

However, the second part of the twentieth century represented for the region a time of profound change in the religious field. This change was marked by the decline of the 400 year monopoly of the Catholic Church and its centrality in the region's cultural identity (Larraín 2000, Chapter 6). It coincided with the emergence of new religious alternatives, mainly Pentecostal or Evangelical Protestants, especially among the popular masses (Parker 1996, Part Four). In this respect, the novelty of the Latin American process of religious change is that Catholicism has been eroded directly by voluntaristic Evangelism, without a previous Protestant Reformation as had been the case in Europe (Garrard-Burnett, Freston, and Dove 2016). Protestantism emerged from within and from the bottom up; it was not significantly stimulated by missionaries or immigrants and there were no national reformists (Garrard-Burnett, Freston, and Dove 2016).

Nevertheless, more than a mere sign of secularisation, the emergence of new religious options has been understood as a rebuttal of the classic theory of secularisation. David Martin, for example, casts doubts on the relationship between modernisation and the secularisation process. He points out that there are many versions of modernity and all of them, except for the western European version, have been shown to be compatible with religion. Although, as noted above, there is evidence of a recent shift in the USA towards secularisation, for Martin there is the western secular exceptionalism and the rest of the world, where the religious impulse flourishes (Martin, 2011).

Latin America is certainly a major example of these 'other modernities'. The discussion about Latin American identity and its relationship with modernity has been of fundamental concern for Latin American sociology since its beginnings. In the

context of the Latin American modernisation theories that argue that the transition from a traditional to a modern pole encounters a cultural resistance in Latin American identity (Germani 1968; Véliz 1965), authors like Pedro Morandé and Cristián Parker criticise this idea of culture as an obstacle for development (Parker 1996; Morandé 1984). For Morandé, Latin American identity is to be found in the cultural patterns that emerged from the encounter between Spanish and Indigenous cultures, characterised by a religious syncretism founded in ritual (Morandé 1984). In this sense, Latin America belongs to a different path to modernity, which he calls a Baroque modernity, constituted before the arrival of the European Enlightenment. Whereas the enlightened model is marked by the written text, baroque modernity finds its foundations in ritual and dramatic representation and is marked by the importance of oral transmission. In this sense, an adequate notion of secularisation has to recognise this particular cultural identity (Morandé 1984). In a similar perspective, Parker argues that popular religion is the nucleus of the Latin American identity, representing an alternative logic to the western rationality (Parker 1996).

The general claim is that in Latin America modernisation was not necessarily accompanied by a secularisation process, implying a weakening of religious manifestations. However, as Beltrán argues, recent figures show that modernisation in Latin America is related to decreasing numbers in the Catholic Church and a pluralisation in the religious field (Beltrán 2012). As with the European case, the faithful are therefore more likely to orient themselves according to their personal preferences, and to depend less on family tradition (Beltrán 2012). Pluralisation brings demands for personal autonomy and, at the same time, implies that the churches have to recruit and persuade in order to retain influence (Levine 2016). For Levine, secularisation is a concept that does not refer exclusively to the disappearance of religion. It has also to do to the emergence of a plurality of options and belongings, and the consequent growing capacity and demand for individual autonomy, which results in a loss of control for church leaders (Levine 2016). Religion in Latin America is increasingly a matter of choice and less an inherited fact, which implies an intergenerational process of religious change. As a consequence, and



although nominal Catholics represent around 70 percent of the region's population, practising Catholics are a clear minority (Hagopian 2008, p.150). According to the Latinobarómetro survey of the year 2015, only around 10% of the Latin-American Catholics considered themselves 'highly practising', while this figure reaches 22% among Evangelicals.

The significant exception to the Latin American religious pattern is Uruguay, the only country where an early European-style secularisation process has taken place. The situation in Uruguay has been explained by its exceptional historical features: it was the last area to be colonised and therefore evangelised, with a minimal ecclesiastical structure that was dismantled during wars of independence and later by the state (Armet 2014). The symbolical power of the state as provider of national unity has also been highlighted as a key factor in the development of a religion of the republic that could displace Catholicism (Geymonat 2005). However, for Armet, the Uruguayan intensive and irreligious secularisation process can mostly be attributed to intentional actions of state managers and anticlerical press who monopolised education and stereotyped the Catholic Church (Armet 2014).

Although pluralisation represented for Bastian a contrasting religious effervescence (Bastian 2008, p.4), religious and cultural diversity as a result of modernisation can also be considered part of the predictions of the secularisation theories (Somma, Bargsted, and Valenzuela 2017, p.120). At the same time, the increase in the proportion of irreligious Latin-Americans seems to be a recent trend, especially in the more developed, urbanised and egalitarian countries like Chile. This is clearly consistent with the secularisation theories and adds evidence to the possibility of linking modernity to religious weakening (Somma et al. 2017, p.120; Freston 2008). Recent data for Chile shows that secularisation is currently taking place with a massive character, because it is affecting not only the elite but also – especially – the younger and lower strata of the population (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013). In sum, religious change in Latin America has been described mainly as a pluralisation process based on the conversion from Catholicism to Pentecostalism, and, in some countries like Uruguay and Chile, as the increase of the non-religious population. For

Somma et al., this process implies a within-cohort change across time, but more importantly a difference across cohorts, which is consistent with the European pattern (Somma, Bargsted, and Valenzuela 2017).

### ***The Background of Popular Religion***

In contrast with the European process of religious change, secularisation and pluralisation in Latin America spread out in a context in which popular religion, understood as that kind of religiosity that constitutes itself outside or in the margins of the religious institutions, historically shows great vitality (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013). The background of popular religion, as will be discussed, includes Pentecostal and Catholic manifestations, and at the same time could reflect the non-institutional religiosity of non-churched believers, of nominals and of those who participate occasionally in religious rituals. Thus, popular religion is not confined to lower classes, operating as a general cultural feature that can also be found within the elites (Thumala Olave 2007).

For Cristián Parker, the concept of popular religion refers to the set of beliefs and practices arising from the dialects between the official and non-official forms of religion; the dialectics between intellectual and the illiterate forms of faith; and the dialectics between the dominant culture and the culture of the lower strata of society (Parker 1998). This kind of religiosity emerges within a symbolical, dramatic and sapiential culture, which represents for Parker a different logic to the European intellectual rationality (Parker 1996). This does not imply a primitive state or an antilogic, but a use of reason that is much more empirical and symbolic than the positivistic model of thinking. For Parker, popular religion presents itself as a religion of life rather than of reason: a religion of ritual and myth, of body and wellbeing (Parker 1996).

Although Roman Catholicism is a centralised religion, with carefully controlled borders, in practice it has been inclusive and adaptive to local cultures and realities (Scheper Hughes 2016). As a result, 'popular Catholicism' refers to a range of

devotional activities and beliefs that constitute the daily practice of lay Catholics, centred on the veneration of the Virgin Mary and various saints as intercessory figures (Scheper Hughes 2016; Gill 1999). The figure of the Virgin was able to replace the sacrificial rites of the Amerindian world, representing a maternal and feminine symbol that was very successful as a figure of mediation between Amerindian and European religion (Valenzuela et al. 2013; Paz 2008; Parker 1996, Chapter 1). The search for healing and the link between salvation and cure is a main feature of popular religion, and Marian devotion was traditionally able to offer this comfort and promises of good health. Devotion to the Virgin and saints is connected to the solution of daily problems and also with moments of crisis (Parker 1996, Chapter 2). Although it has been described as highly individualised, it also includes social manifestations such as religious festivals, public processions and pilgrimages (Scheper Hughes 2016; Gill 1999).

Although popular religion is not exclusively a lower-class phenomenon, Pentecostalism emerges in continuity with this tradition, concentrated on the lower strata of the population. The poor in Latin America were the sector least exposed to institutional Catholicism, thus popular practices were highly generalised (Gill 1999). It is therefore possible that Pentecostalism could advance in the areas where this Catholic expression of popular religion has been weakened, especially as a consequence of the urbanisation process (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013). In this sense, popular Catholicism is closer to Pentecostalism than its institutional version; it promotes non-institutional relations with God and emphasise the mystical aspects of Christianity (Gill 1999).

### ***The Chilean Case***

In the broad context of the western concepts of secularisation and religious change and considering Latin America as a closer background, this research is focused on Chile and its particular pattern of religious change. As discussed earlier, this pattern combines a relatively consolidated process of pluralisation and a more recent

increase in the non-religious population. These specific features distinguish Chile from other Latin American countries, making it a case of particular interest when exploring religious change and modernity.

Overall, the decline of the Catholic Church is the most salient feature of the current religious panorama in Chile. This decline took place after 1970, when religious pluralism started to emerge. This decade represents a central period for the Pentecostal expansion and is also the one which witnessed the advance of Catholic Liberation Theology (Valenzuela et al. 2013; Levine 2012; Martin 2005, Part III).

### The Emergence of Pentecostalism

Stemming from Methodism, the Chilean Pentecostal church was the first one to be established in Latin America. The Methodist Church arrived in Chile in 1878, seeking the adhesion of the middle and upper classes of Chilean society through the establishment of educational institutions, mostly primary schools. The preacher Juan Canut de Bon, with its emotional sermons, was the responsible for the openness of Methodism to the lower classes.<sup>2</sup> However, official Methodists increasingly distanced themselves from these expressions of religious enthusiasm (Beyer and Fontaine 1991).

In 1909 emerged the Pentecostal movement in Chile, as a consequence of the schism within the Methodist Church. In the city of Valparaíso, the pastor Willis Collis Hoover expanded the autochthonous and charismatic character of the Evangelic tradition initiated by the preacher Juan Canut de Bon (Alvarsson 2009; Beyer and Fontaine 1991). Once the Pentecostal movement was consolidated, several internal divisions took place. Perhaps the most important division occurred in 1932 when the Pentecostal Methodist Church separated from the Evangelic Pentecostal Church, from which stemmed several autonomous Pentecostal congregations (Beyer and Fontaine 1991).

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<sup>2</sup> Pentecostals in Chile are commonly named “Canutos”, in reference to Canut de Bon.

From this brief historic account, it becomes clear that the charismatic element is essential in the origins of Chilean Pentecostalism, and since then it has been an important element of its pastoral work. In the Chilean case, the spiritual dimension of the religious experience of the leaders is what defines the opposition and distance from the Methodist Church, which seemed routinised and closer to the middle classes (Bothner 1994).

In theological terms, the Holy Spirit and its action is a central aspect of the Pentecostal religiosity. The name of the movement reflects this importance: Pentecost is the commemoration of the descent of Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, who were blessed with spiritual gifts, such as speaking in tongues, the gift of health and of discernment and prophesy. Pentecostalism also includes a milenaristic element: the Pentecostal world expects the second arrival of God, when the people will be judged, and the Kingdom of God will be installed. In pastoral terms, Pentecostals assume a proselytising attitude, permanently searching for new converts (Lalive d'Epinay 1968, Introduction; Willems 1967).

Conversion is a central aspect of Pentecostalism, which can be included in the tradition of "born-again" Christianity. Within this tradition, conversion requires an individual experience of the Holy Spirit and also that converts "witness". Witnessing means to tell the story of individual conversion to other potential converts, narrative that implies the reinterpretation of this experience in the language of the new faith. In this sense, it is a dialogue and not a monologue (Wightman 2008; Harding 2000; Harding 1987).

In her study of Bolivian Pentecostals, Wightman finds that witnessing implies the practice of giving testimony of one's life story of conversion interpreted through the framework of Pentecostalism, which is an essential part of belonging to a community (Wightman 2008). Conversion and witnessing (or giving testimony) are both part of a same foundational experience, based on a personal and individual experience of transformation that believers are called to share as a way to be transformational agents for others (Mariz 1998). The strong communitarian aspects of Pentecostalism are related with this proselytising attitude.

Consequently, there are important differences between so-called historical or traditional forms of Protestantism and Latin American Pentecostalism. The Protestant religions stemming from Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anglican traditions emphasise the individual aspects of faith and religious life over any community or institutional dimensions. In contrast, the Pentecostal tradition specifies the precedence of the community over the individual; the believer is integrated into a small group of direct, personal relationships of dependency (Lalive d'Épinay 1968, Introduction). Differences can also be observed in terms of class composition. Pentecostal churches, according to historical accounts of their origin and expansion in Latin America and supported by contemporary data, are primarily communities whose members come from the poorest sectors of the population (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013; Beyer and Fontaine 1991; Willems 1967).

The healing character of Pentecostals appears to be central to its success among popular sectors. Pentecostalism is a religion of the spirit and presents itself in the context of an experience of religious ecstasy, which has deep salvific and healing consequences. In the popular Pentecostal perspective, evil is something that comes from outside, and sickness penetrates the believer's body in an uncontrollable way. The relationship between sickness and evil does not present itself under the idea of sin, which would imply a personal responsibility and a call for conversion in the Calvinist sense (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013). The separation between the official and popular Catholicism is an important factor in the advance of Pentecostalism: rational Catholicism accepts the secularisation of sickness, whereas Pentecostalism offers religious solution for healing problems such as addiction (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013).

This healing efficacy is especially oriented to the recovery from alcoholism and drug abuse, which is part of the moral dimension of religiosity that is essential to understanding the Latin American and Chilean Pentecostal phenomenon. Pentecostals are socially stricter than Catholics and they differentiate themselves from their peers and their social environment by their behaviours. The Pentecostal Church represents an institution of moral formation based on the power of

community, and it has shown to be highly effective for the Chilean case, as Bayer and Fontaine indicate (Bayer and Fontaine 1991, Introduction).

Especially relevant in this context is the fact that conversion and the belonging to a closed community of non-drinking persons implies a redefinition of masculinity (Montecino 2002; Brusco 1995). In this sense, the effects of Pentecostalism reveal a cultural feature of Latin American gender relations. The Latin-American machismo describes a masculine behaviour pattern characterised by an exaggerated aggressiveness that in general brings as a consequence a weakness of the conjugal role. This is expressed in the abandonment of women and children and the failure by men to provide for their families (Brusco 1995), with the result of the proliferation of 'huachos', or fatherless children, and the single mothers who raise and provide for them. This absence, however, is combined with sporadic episodes of violence as the main source of male authority (Montecino 2002). This cultural pattern of gender roles is not based on the traditional patriarchal model, which implies on the contrary a present father that exercises his authority through the imposition of order and economic provision.

According to Elizabeth Brusco for the Colombian case and Sonia Montecino in Chile, Pentecostalism has operated a reformation of machismo (Montecino 2002; Brusco 1995). For Brusco, this reformation has promoted female interests by reinserting the logic of marriage as a partnership oriented to the wellbeing of the spouses and their children, thus conversion has to be understood within the effort of women to reform men. The aspirations of men and women coincide in evangelical households as family becomes not only women's but also men's focus in life (Brusco 1995).

In a similar sense, for Montecino Pentecostalism implies a "domestication" of the traditional violent figure of the Latin-American "macho". This transformation means that social life is no longer related to alcohol and friends, but to family and the religious community (Bayer and Fontaine 1991, Introduction). Thus, conversion to Pentecostalism brings as a consequence the establishment of peaceful relations in the domestic realm (Chesnut 1997, Chapter 2). This redefinition of masculinity reinforces the traditional patriarchal gender roles that have been threatened in Latin

America by alcohol and violence, restoring the role of men as providers (Montecino 2002; Chesnut 1997, Chapter 2).

Considering these explanatory elements, the discussion about the origins and causes of the Pentecostal growth in Latin America centres on the 1930s, when the crisis of world capitalism had consequences for the region (Miguez Bonino 1994). There is general agreement on the idea that Pentecostalism is related to internal migrations and the social anomie it created. During this decade, millions of peasants were forced to move from the country to Latin American cities – mining or industrial centres – where unemployment and the general problems of poverty opened the door to protest and socialist movements. While populism was the political attempt to generate social change through an alliance of popular sectors and elites, within the capitalist system, Protestantism tried to define its mission in the context of this political situation (Miguez Bonino 1994).

From this perspective, urbanisation in Latin America did not lead to a process of secularisation in the European sense, contradicting traditional secularisation theories. Although modernisation impacted positively in terms of primary schooling, it also brought conditions of marginalisation to the popular masses, which found in the Pentecostal message of otherworldly salvation and religious revival, represented the meaning and hope they were searching for (Parker 1996, Chapter 4). At the same time, Pentecostalism has shown an enormous efficacy in the cure of the negative consequences of the urbanisation process, especially among the poor (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013; Chesnut 1997; Lalive d'Épinay 1968).

One of the first studies into Latin American Pentecostalism was carried out by Emilio Willems, who compares the cases of Brazil and Chile (Willems 1967). From a Weberian point of view, Willems points out that these new religious communities enabled their members to adapt and integrate themselves to urban modernity, through the promotion of ascetical protestant values (Willems 1967). Willems finds that the largest protestant population lived in the metropolitan, modern and industrialised areas of the region, allowing him to establish a correlation between modernisation and Protestantism. For him, the Pentecostal organisation emphasises



the equality of its members, and operates without the mediation of paternalist elites, like the priest or the landlord. This egalitarian structure operates a symbolic inversion of the dominant social stratified order and offers a personal community that replaces the traditional social relationships. But Pentecostalism for Willems constitutes not only an alternative to the anomie of the marginal classes, it also contributes to the modernisation process, promoting social mobility among its members. Pentecostalism promotes an ascetic morality in the Calvinistic sense, emphasising saving, austerity and effort as vehicles for social mobility and integration (Willems 1967).

David Martin, echoing Willems' work, postulates an optimistic view of the potential modernising force of Pentecostalism, and situates this religious group in continuity with European Protestantism (Martin 1990, 2005, 2011). For him, Pentecostalism would favour the integration of marginalised groups to a modern differentiated society, emphasising ascetic behaviour and control of vices and excess. This pattern of behaviour would promote individual social mobility. Pentecostalism would also have a democratic potential by promoting the formation of new ties among believers who could then challenge the traditional social order (Martin 1990). Martin expects that Latin American Protestantism would produce similar outcomes to its predecessor churches in terms of the Weberian thesis of the emergence of a solid bourgeoisie that could be the base for capitalistic development (Martin 1990). Paul Freston, in turn, suggests that Pentecostalism may imply an economical energy, through the promotion of honesty, sobriety and diligence. For him, however, the classical Protestant work ethic and consumption patterns are not usually present in these groups because of the lack of the theological idea of predestination and vocation and the consequent psychological mechanism described by Weber (Freston 2008). However, these expectations have not found empirical evidence in the Latin American context, where social mobility shows no strong relationship with Pentecostal identification.

Christian Lalive d'Épinay, with his early work in Chile, casts doubt about the egalitarian vocation observed by Willems, stating that Pentecostalism legitimates the

status quo and promotes the evasion of any kind of political commitment. Pentecostalism for Lalive d'Épinay corresponds to a religious response to the anomic character of a transitional society, representing a rebellion of the masses in search of some sort of lost traditional community (Lalive d'Épinay 1968). He interprets the analogy between Pentecostal church structures and the idea of the extended family, with the pastor as the head of the community: this is the symbolic replication of the ideal of the "hacienda", with the landlord as the figurehead of the lost father (Lalive d'Épinay 1968). This political anomie would be traduced in a religious rejection of civic participation. From a Marxist perspective, Lalive d'Épinay suggests that Pentecostal life represents a spiritual refugee for the lower classes, which withdraw them from the social and political world (Lalive d'Épinay 1968).

However, contemporary evidence shows that the situation described by d'Épinay has changed. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, an increasing participation of Latin American evangelical churches in political life took place, not by theological reflection but due to the growing presence of evangelical churches in the region and the increasing importance of Pentecostal leaders (Miguez Bonino 1994).

#### The Growth of Non-religious Population

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the decline of Catholicism and the increased pluralisation of the Chilean religious panorama, explained by the growth of Pentecostalism, are patterns that are recently complemented by an increasing proportion of the population that declares no religion, atheism or agnosticism, a phenomenon that is not concentrated on the upper classes. However, and as will be discussed in the next chapter, not all of this population can be considered to be essentially secular. Conventional religious beliefs, such as God, the Virgin and saints, are held by the majority of these individuals. Non-churched believers thus seem to be part of the Chilean religious landscape, indicating a low institutionalised religiosity that for Mouzelis constitutes a typical characteristic of post-secularism (Mouzelis 2012).

In sum, the decline of the Catholic Church, the emergence of religious pluralism constituted mainly of Pentecostal churches, and the growth of non-religious individuals are the key features of the contemporary religious field in Chile. These trends will have significant consequences, not only in terms of the experience of religious individuals but also in terms of how the religious institutions define their position in the public sphere. The next section will analyse the relationship between religion and civil society in Chile through recent decades, with a view to understanding how the churches are redefining their public role.

### Religion and Civil Society in Chile

The discussion about civil society in Latin America has to take into account the context: the late formation of the state and its general weakness (Centeno 2002). This weakness implies for Centeno that Latin American states can be highly despotic, but with a scarce infrastructure or institutional capacity. Interestingly, this institutional weakness implies an incapacity to implement decisions, which in turn are despotically undertaken without negotiation with civil society (Centeno 2002). In this sense, there is a substantial gap between political elites and institutions and the great mass of the population (Dagnino 2011).

According to Oxhorn, civil society precisely reflects the capacity of self-organisation of disadvantaged groups and their ability to defend their interests and collective priorities in front of other actors, particularly the state. In this sense, the weakness of civil society in Latin America could be explained by the historical problems of inequality and socioeconomic exclusion in the region (Oxhorn 2014).

The state has traditionally operated as a bridge between the elites and the masses, and its central position as a mandatory interlocutor – and even as a dominant player in social movements and organisations – is a central feature of Latin America (Dagnino 2011; Touraine 1989, Third Part). This process of interaction between civil society and the state leads to a particular citizenship model in Latin America: the “citizenship as co-optation”, as described by Oxhorn. This pattern is constituted by a

process of controlled inclusion commanded by the state that reflected and reinforced the inequality structures through the limitation of autonomy of the civil society (Oxhorn 2014, p.272).

In many countries, populist arrangements have tried to guarantee governability by controlling and subordinating social organisations (Dagnino 2011). For Touraine, although this subordination does not reach the levels of totalitarian regimes, it constitutes a limitation for autonomous collective action and results in there being no clear distinction between state and civil society in Latin America. It follows that the state is the main agent for economic development; it organises social demands and even mobilises the working class (Touraine 1989, Third Part). For Dagnino, who presents a wider and more flexible notion of civil society, participatory democracy appears as a proper way in which civil society may be conceived in the Latin American context, contradicting the idea that civil society should necessarily refrain from political power (Dagnino 2011). I will focus on the case of Chile in an attempt to clarify how the notion of civil society has been conceived, especially as a form of opposition to Pinochet's dictatorship.

Although the governments of Frei Montalva (1964-1970) and Allende (1970-1973) are considered periods of intense mobilisation of the popular masses, with a working class movement that emerged linked to left-wing political parties, civil society was restricted by the dominant classes that controlled the state (Oxhorn 2001). Political demands were directed through the state, and there was no distinct organisational dynamic associated with the popular collective action (Oxhorn 1994a). The relative strength of the working class in Chile was a central factor that contributed to the military coup at the origin of dictatorship, when their demands to the state exceeded established limits by the controlled inclusion process (Oxhorn 2001).

The use of the concept of civil society re-emerged in the early 1980s, relating to the analysis of social movements and associations that were created during the authoritarian cycle in several countries (Avritzer 1997). As Pérez Díaz argues in relation to the Spanish case, civil society in Chile emerged during these years as a response to authoritarianism (Pérez-Díaz 2005, Chapter V). These organisations were

able to develop a political movement independently and in opposition to the state, and also to produce means for the satisfaction of vital needs independently from the market (Avritzer 1997). From 1973, increasing numbers of 'pobladores' became involved in popular organisations, intended to address immediate problems, including extreme poverty, lack of state support and human right abuses, representing a collective response to exclusion of popular sectors by the military regime (Oxhorn 1994b).

For Oxhorn, this phenomenon will imply a double paradox: on the one hand, the political significance of popular sectors was actually greater prior to the restoration of democracy; and on the other hand, this was a good thing in terms of the democracy's prospects of succeeding (Oxhorn 1994b). Put differently, as Pérez-Díaz postulates based on the Spanish case, successful transitions are only possible if a civil society predates it or is established in the course of it (Pérez-Díaz 1993).

In Chile, the strong previous democratic tradition and the necessity of new organisations that could replace the political parties and labour unions suppressed by the dictatorship promoted associative behaviour, which was supported by international NGOs and, notoriously, by the Catholic Church (Koppelman 2016, p.16; Pérez-Díaz 2005, Chapter IV).

The Catholic Church's evangelical-pastoral strategy significantly shifted from the 1930s, with a focus on the majority of the poor population and no longer on upper-class groups (B. Smith 1990). This strategy was especially successful after the coup, with a significant increase in mass attendance and participation in religious groups, and also in seminarians (Stewart-Gambino 1992; B. Smith 1990). These profound changes within the Catholic Church played an important role in the growth of civil society in Chile, and contributed significantly to the restoration of democracy (Goldfrank and Rowell 2012, p.29; Ireland 1999, p.111). After the 1968 Bishop's Conference in Medellín, the new Catholic agenda emphasised social reforms and a strong stance against human rights violations by the state. As with Spain, the Catholic Church opted to revise its strategy and renounce its attempts to maintain a monopoly in a context of religious pluralism (Pérez-Díaz 1993, Chapter 3).

During the 1980s, the Church was an essential component of the resurgence of civil society. Christian Base Communities and the Vicariate for Solidarity, supported by the institutional Church, were at the core of the Catholic popular organisation, providing a sanctuary and legal aid for those who were persecuted (Stewart-Gambino 2005; Sigmund 1986). Catholic efforts were thus oriented towards fighting human rights abuses and surviving the rough economic conditions of the period (Stewart-Gambino 2005). The Catholic Church not only helped the development of civil society by providing its structures and resources to a sector that had lost their own spaces for organisation, it also gave a political or civic identity to those men and women who had previously never conceived having a legitimate public role themselves (Stewart-Gambino 2005). Thus, the Chilean Church developed a new relationship with the poor and the working class, but the price for this leadership was a perceived politicisation, which meant the loss of authority among the conservative elite and with right-wing groups (Stewart-Gambino 1992; Thumala Olave 2010).

From 1983 to 1986, popular mobilisations were a central feature of the opposition's strategy for securing a transition to democracy (Oxhorn 1994b). After the military's policies of state retrenchment, the political and economic crisis that many Latin American States faced in the 1980s fostered a series of indigenous movements, which confronted this weakened political authority (Kamrava and O Mora 2000). Although the radical agenda was replaced with the documentation of human rights abuses and the support of collective forms of subsistence, such as soup kitchens in poor settlements, this institutional support provided a foundation for the proliferation of neighbourhood organisations and shantytown movements, which were central to the national protests against the regime that began in 1983 (Jara Ibarra 2016, p.89; Koppelman 2016, p.47; Hipsher 1996, p.273).

The active organisation of civil society, together with an organised political elite, were crucial in the 1988 plebiscite, which brought the Pinochet regime to an end (Jara Ibarra 2016, p.89). However, this strategy brought a climate of violence and uncertainty that risked the consensus necessary to secure an electoral victory. Thus, as soon as a commitment was made to challenge the regime in the 1988 plebiscite,

the political opposition's efforts were reoriented to limit social mobilisation and to demobilise the popular sectors. Political parties recovered the domination of political participation, now with an insistence on moderation, conciliation and pragmatism (Oxhorn 1994b).

The decade of 1990 in Chile was therefore a decade of gradual political change after peaceful elections in a positive economic environment (Patterson 2005, p.14). Political participation has dramatically diminished since, with the return of democracy weakening the main motivation for mobilisation and activism (Cleuren 2007; Kamrava and O Mora 2000). The first governments of the 'Concertación' coalition sought to maintain governability by consciously promoting political deactivation, preserving economic logics and limiting the activities of social movements, combined with poverty reduction programmes (Van der Ree 2011; Silva 2004).

In turn, the Catholic Church and NGOs retreated from the associational sphere. The state expanded the resources provided to poor neighbourhoods, mostly in the form of competitive funds (Koppelman 2016). The shantytown movement that fought for housing solutions during the dictatorship demobilised immediately in order to pursue institutionalised forms of collective action, in favour of conciliation and negotiation (Hipsher 1996, p.273).

For Koppelman, the peculiarity of the Chilean case is that the state used these material resources to control organisations and to transform them into extensions of itself (Koppelman 2016). While during the dictatorship civil society mobilised against the state, during democracy neighbourhood associations are increasingly becoming part of the state because they depend on the resources it provides. This hidden strategy makes it difficult to support an a priori analytical separation between state and civil society in the case of Chilean democracy (Koppelman 2016).

After the referendum of 1988, the demobilisation of civil society was reinforced by changes to Catholicism, driven by the Vatican, which in short led the Chilean Church to retire from the political sphere and to have a renewed focus on moral doctrine. It

started fighting against legalisation of divorce and opposing the state regulation of religious schools, sex education and AIDS campaigns (Hagopian 2008, p.150; Stewart-Gambino 2005, p.134). The 1992 Latin American Bishops Conference embraced Pope John Paul II's new project to evangelise culture and the public sphere, which required the Church to adopt a position on questions of public morality (Hagopian 2008, p.154).

For Hipsher, the case of Chile shows that a context of freedom does not necessarily bring a flourishing of civil associations. On the contrary, the return to democracy brought new strategies of institutionalised participation to support a limited democracy in an attempt to preserve stability. These new strategies were based on the use of proper institutional channels to solve conflicts, avoiding the threat to political elites. Political parties, social leaders and activists agreed on this moderate form of participation, built on the consensual commitment to democracy and on the fear of the return of an authoritarian regime (Hipsher 1996).

Following the return to democracy, political representation was left in the hands of political parties. The Church acquired a position above politics, mostly oriented towards evangelisation in the context of Pentecostal competition (Stewart-Gambino 2005, p.134). This shift in focus resulted in the return of the traditional Catholics and the elites, who were very critical of the politicisation of the Church, which is reflected in the sustained growth of conservative upper-class movements such as Legionarios de Cristo and Opus Dei (Stewart-Gambino 2005, p.133). Although the progressive sector lost influence after redemocratisation, it did not disappear, resulting in a pluralism within the Church. The testimony of truthful closeness to the popular classes and its contribution to the associative life of the country are at the core of the legacy of the dictatorship years (Pérez-Díaz 2005, Chapter IV).

The depoliticisation of the Church implied a universalisation of its message, which is no longer focused on the marginal population (Stewart-Gambino 2005, p.135). The end of the fight against the dictatorship allowed the return of the traditional Church, situated above partisan politics (Stewart-Gambino 2005, p.135), and geared towards maintaining the equilibrium between the diverse positions within the institution and



also to facing the Pentecostal competition (Pérez-Díaz 2005, Chapter IV). Religious pluralism, however, only threatened the monopoly of the Catholic church among lower social strata, and did not constitute a threat to the elite's religious identity, as they identify Pentecostalism with a popular phenomenon (Thumala Olave 2010).

Despite the preponderant role of the Catholic Church in Chilean civil society, recent analyses have predicted that this evolving religious landscape could deepen democratic and associational behaviours in the region, assuming that religious pluralism and democratic pluralism are concomitant phenomena (Hagopian 2008). The repression of social and political organisations produced a shift in favour of the churches, especially in the popular sectors, as they were the only place that offered socialisation, expression and protection (Gooren 2010, p.371; Fediakova 2004, p.256).

In this context, not only Catholics groups but also Pentecostals experienced a transformation during these years. While progressive Catholicism was developing a radical commitment to the popular classes, many of these poor people were diverting to Protestant Churches, which were offering more equal conditions and a simpler moral language, closer to the liberal economy (Pérez-Díaz 2005, Chapter IV). For Pérez-Díaz, Pentecostalism was able to provide an emotional sense to modernity, in contrast with the sometimes confusing rational language from progressive Catholics (Pérez-Díaz 2005, Chapter IV). Chilean Pentecostalism thus experienced a substantial growth in popularity after the military coup (Gooren 2010, p.371), related to the high numbers of pastors dedicated to expanding the message, in contrast to the Catholic priests (Pérez-Díaz 2005, Chapter IV).

The Pentecostal Church had a more controversial political position than its Catholic counterpart during these years. A significant event was the celebration of the Te Deum service of the government in 1974. When the Catholic Church refused to participate, the 'Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal' presented itself as an alternative and for years afterwards this annual service was celebrated in this church (Alvarsson 2009). With a Catholic Church antagonistic to Pinochet's government, the military leaders searched for alternative sponsorship, resulting in the Pentecostals finding

themselves acknowledged by the state for the first time (Martin 1995). But as an example of opposition to Pinochet, Alvarsson mentions that the 'Misión Iglesia Pentecostal' clashed violently with the new government, and many of its members were exiled, imprisoned or murdered (Alvarsson 2009).

Pentecostalism can be considered a self-organised movement of the urban poor, producing groups that can be included among the associations of civil society (Gooren 2010). In this context, Pentecostalism has been described as a "school for civil society": Pentecostal churches are indigenous institutions, created and maintained by ordinary people, and their pastors are not dependent on any outside hierarchy. This feature distinguishes Pentecostalism from Catholicism, where religious communities are always led from above (Berger 2005, p.8). These churches thus create an autonomous space for people who otherwise lack such space, marked by strong solidarity and support, in a context of social change which destroyed traditional sources of communal life (Berger 2005, p.8).

However, it has been argued that members of strict churches, such as evangelical Protestants, are less likely to be involved in activities outside their church, especially because they are asked to make significant investments of time and energy into religious activities of their own congregations, which additionally promotes a separation from the world (Campbell 2004, p.158). The potential of incivility appears when bonding social capital creates a strong internal community at the expense of the possibility to create links to the outside world (Miller 2012; Pérez-Díaz 2005, Chapter V). In contrast, Campbell's study shows that this same religious fervency, which may withdraw members of strict churches from civic involvement, can at the same time represent an impetus for political mobilisation (Campbell 2004). Campbell's argument is that when a conflict with the secular society emerges, evangelical Protestants can be motivated to political protest when their beliefs are threatened. Typical examples of this kind of political mobilisation are campaigns against same-sex marriage and abortion (Campbell 2004).

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined two main aspects that constitute the broad focus of this research. On the one hand, I presented the central features of the secularisation theories developed for the description of the religious pattern in modern western countries, casting doubts on the causal relationship between material prosperity and the decline of religion and inserting the Latin American and the Chilean case into this discussion. On the other hand, I introduced discussion about the relationship between religion and the public sphere, including a theoretical analysis of the concept of civil society and its relationship with religion, and also an historical account of this relationship in the case of Chile.

I have defined secularisation from the standpoint of social differentiation theory, which is flexible enough to consider 'other modernities' like the Latin American, and at the same time it does not predict the inevitable disappearance of religion in modern societies. At an individual and structural level, I have described secularisation as a double process. On the one hand, it implies the increase of the irreligious population, and on the other hand, a pluralisation process, which promotes choice as the foundation for religiosity in modern countries. Both dimensions are related, but the fundament and direction of this relationship is still a controversial and thus empirical matter. In this context, the discussion about the consequences of a plural religious field in religious participation is still open, and the Chilean case could be an interesting place to provide evidence.

In turn, I have defined civil society as a normative concept, which includes those 'civil' associations and collective actions that take place outside the direct control of the state, the market and the family. I have argued that 'civility' means 'democratically oriented', thus compatible with human rights and freedom. According to this, not every associational structure is constitutive of civil society, as some organisations can have antidemocratic purposes. In this context, I introduced the problem of the circumstances that allow us to argue that religious institutions in Chile are part of civil society. If it is considered that the notion of civil society was initially used in relation to social movements designed to fight against Pinochet's dictatorship, the Catholic

Church was without doubt an essential part of this associational fabric that allowed a successful transition to democracy. This progressive turn of Chilean Catholicism can be understood within the changes promoted by the Second Vatican Council and the Church's appropriation of the modern discourse of universal human rights and the sacred dignity of the human person, which gave Catholic discourse and practice a more democratic and civil character. However, the cost of this mobilisation against the military regime was politicisation, which, as Casanova warned, implied a countermobilisation of right wing, elites, and traditional Catholics. Thus, in order to gain a proper space in civil society, the Church had to detach itself from political society and return to the universalistic principles. The cost of this operation was demobilisation. Pentecostalism, in turn, gained many adherents among the poorest sectors of the population at a time when progressive Catholicism was developing a radical commitment to the popular classes. As a self-organised movement of the urban poor, Pentecostal groups could be included among the associations of civil society, as indigenous institutions created and maintained by ordinary people. However, the potential of incivility appears when bonding ties create a strong internal community that develops a public discourse based on a particularistic morality that does not recognise pluralism as a civic virtue.

This theoretical and historical account defines the general frame in which this research was conducted. In the following chapters I will analyse in depth how religious life in a particular site is related to a national process of religious change and also to western sociological perspectives on religion and modernity. But in order to correctly present these findings, first it is necessary to explain and describe the methodological approach used in this research, as well as the specific methodologies and the issues that I found in my position as a researcher. The next chapter will be dedicated to this discussion.

## **Chapter 2. Methodology and Research Issues**

In chapter 1, I presented the main theoretical perspectives and historical accounts that will be at the centre of the next sections of this thesis. This chapter, in turn, will be dedicated to providing a detailed explanation of the methodological aspects that gave shape to this investigation.

I will present the research design, including the problem and main objectives, the theoretical and empirical dimensions and the research rationale. In the methodology section I will detail the empirical approach and the specific methods that I used in my fieldwork, as well as a brief description of the research site. Finally, I present the ethical definitions and my own positionality as a researcher.

### **Research Design**

#### **Research Problem and Main Objective**

The pattern of the Chilean religious panorama, which can be described as a declining Catholicism as a result of a process of pluralisation and secularisation, transforms the country in an interesting case to explore the contemporary consequences of religious change. In this sense, the figures and magnitudes are central to present the problem that this research will try to address, but we firmly believe that quantitative data are not self-explanatory (Martin 2014, p.465).

This research is oriented to understanding and interpreting how these changes are experienced at an individual and also at an institutional level, based on and in contrast to the relevant literature on the western process of secularisation and on Latin American religious identity. I expected that religious practices and beliefs were being redefined in this increasingly secular and diverse environment, and that the Churches were also changing the way they relate to this more plural society.

Assuming a comparative perspective, this research is oriented to the following general questions:

- To understanding how Chile's particular religious identity has been affected by social differentiation and modernisation.
- To exploring how secularisation and religious pluralisation is experienced among the participants in two churches in the city centre of Santiago de Chile.
- To observe how religious institutions are assuming their public role in civil society.

In order to grasp this phenomenon, I conducted an explorative qualitative case study focused on the main locations in which communal life takes place, where the everyday life consequences of religious change may be observed: the church and the neighbourhood. These locations were the cultural and spatial context of my study, and also the common space of these churches, which made possible the comparison between Evangelical Protestant and Catholics.

### **Research Themes**

This research, although is based on the existent literature and uses existing theoretical concepts to interpret the findings, has a theoretical analysis as outcome and not as starting point. As a result, the research themes that organise the narrative of this study are based both on existing literature and also on empirical findings. These themes, that emerged from my research, incorporate a dual perspective that includes individual practices and institutional adaptation, based on the idea that religious processes affect and are affected by both the individual and institutional spheres. These themes are the following:

- Intergenerational religiosity;
- Religious morality; and
- Institutional adaptation.

### ***Intergenerational religiosity***

The new generation of church members is a main focus of this research. Religious change was especially visible and explicit in the voices of the younger members of the communities or – in the case of the Chapel – in the absence of younger members. More specifically, I observed how religious transmission is managed among church members, under the idea that it is becoming harder to socialise the new generations in the religion of their parents. Among this generation in both communities, I observed how the process of individualisation and privatisation, and the idea of religion as a choice is perceived and experienced. At the same time, I considered how the churches react to these challenges.

### ***Religious morality***

One of the main aspects that I expected and found to be controversial in the context of a society that is experiencing contemporary patterns of religious change is individual morality. In this sense, this research considered how religious-based morality is exercised, interpreted and experienced among religious individuals in contemporary Chile, and also how religious-based moral teachings are applied to the rest of the society. The public position of the churches is also included in this dimension, as is detailed in the next dimension.

### ***Institutional adaptation***

To observe how the institutions were reacting to Chile's changing religious environment was one of the focuses of this research. The churches are facing social and organisational changes that reflect the necessity of adaptation and legitimation. In a differentiated society, the place that religious institutions assume in the public sphere and how they relate to political power are critical aspects that this research considered. At the same time, I analysed how leadership is conceived in a context where the ability to attract new members and maintain the existent becomes critical.

## Research Rationale

This study contributes to the literature on religious change in developing countries in general, and in Latin America and Chile in particular. However, it can also be considered to be a contribution to the wider discussion about religion and modernity. Although there is important literature about Latin American popular religiosity and about the emergence of Pentecostalism in the region, this research assumes a wider perspective. In the following chapters, I will try to understand the process of religious change, how it is affecting the way in which religious life is experienced and also how the institutions are reacting to these new conditions. Following David Martin, I believe that religion cannot be analysed in isolation, as it is inserted in a specific political, historical and social context (Martin 2014). This research thus considers religious institutions and their relationships with the structures of power, whilst also considering individuals as embedded in a specific culture and society, which I believe is reflected in my informants experiences (Martin 2014).

With this in mind, I decided to conduct an in-depth case study which, following Mitchell, can be described as the documentation of a phenomenon focusing on a single actor or a single set of actors engaged in a sequence of activities over a period of time, with the purpose of drawing theoretical conclusions. As Mitchell argues, this choice is based on the conviction that the rich detail that emerges from this in-depth observation offers optimum conditions to illuminate those aspects that remain opaque for a more quantitative approach (Mitchell 1983).

The research is a case study based on Chile as single case. Chile is interesting because of its particular religious pattern, which includes not only a plural field marked by the success of Pentecostalism, but also a recent process of secularisation. I argue that these characteristics transform Chile into what Flyvbjerg calls a critical case, in the sense that, among the Latin American countries, it constitutes a relatively modernised country that could be providing evidence for secularisation theory (Flyvbjerg 2006). However, as I argue in chapter 1, I firmly believe that this trend has its own particular features, related to Latin American identity and culture.



In this national context, I chose Santiago as the particular city for this research. Santiago, as the capital of a highly centralised country offers a rich perspective for the phenomenon we are observing. The choice of a modernised urban environment could favour the observation of the religious trend that transforms Chile into a relevant case, given that Santiago reflects this national trend in its religious field.

In turn, the municipality of Estación Central represents Santiago as a city that is experiencing urban and social transformations, which is precisely the kind of environment I am trying to grasp. Moreover, this municipality has great symbolic and empirical importance as the place where Pentecostalism has its central base, thus representing a great place for the observation of religious pluralism and diversity.

In this context, I conducted a comparative analysis between two different religions and institutions, oriented to grasping how religion is experienced among different beliefs and practices. As Geertz argues in his comparison between two versions of Islam, my focus is two churches that are very similar yet very different at the same time (Geertz 1971). They are different because they represent two distinct denominations that constitute the plural religious landscape of contemporary Chile. In this sense, they are interested in differentiating themselves from each other, highlighting their identity and lifestyle particularities. This differentiating effort is especially clear among Pentecostals, who have traditionally built their identity on the contrast with Catholicism through the mechanism of conversion. However, the two churches are also very similar, starting with the fact that they are both Christian and share a common local setting, which confronts them with similar challenges emerging from a changing society. As Geertz describes it, both religious communities make reciprocal comments about each other (Geertz 1971, Chapter I).

Following this logic, the selection of the specific churches was based on their location in this central middle-class<sup>3</sup> municipality, where I could observe the changing environment which provides the main background to this research. Given this

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<sup>3</sup> Middle class in Chile is not the same as in the UK. In this case, I am referring to individuals belonging to the the third and fourth income quintiles, with an monthly income per head of around U\$180 to U\$510 (source: CASEN survey 2015).

criterion, access to the temple of Zelada was offered by Carlos, my key Pentecostal informant. Afterwards, I was able to make contact and gain access to the closest Catholic Church, which was the Del Carmen Chapel.

## **Methodology**

Based on a single case, but also with a comparative approach, this study is oriented to qualitative exploration, analysis, interpretation and understanding on the consequences of religious and social change among practising Catholics and Evangelicals in two churches in the centre of Santiago de Chile. With an inductive logic, this main objective includes two analytical levels: the first one is the individual everyday experience of their members, and the second the institutional reactions observed through members' perspectives. In this context, and taking into consideration the limitations of the empirical observations that I will be able to produce for this study, this new framework is intended to complement and to add complexity to the existing definitions of religious change, secularisation and pluralisation in the context of Latin American religiosity.

The choice of a qualitative case study was made whilst recognising that predictive and universal theories are not to be found within the field of study of human societies. I therefore opted to pursue a context-dependent knowledge based on narratives that could capture the complexities and contradictions of life (Flyvbjerg 2006). The richness of this research is thus not related to the formulation of predictive or generalisable propositions, but to the interpretative power of intense qualitative work (Flyvbjerg 2006).

This study has a comparative objective, including Evangelical and Catholic groups sharing a common local context. This comparison will allow me to understand how the two main religions in Chile react to contemporary challenges, what they have in common and in what aspects they differ. This facilitates discussion on the classical visions of Catholicism and Protestantism, and how they are reflected within the cultural particularities of the Latin American context.

Considering that there is no previous research on this topic with a similar theoretical perspective, this study has an exploratory objective. This means that there are no contrastable hypotheses to test, but there is an aim to build, through inductive empirical analysis, an analytical framework to understand the phenomenon. In this sense, my research perspective is inspired by the “Grounded Theory” approach, in terms of which the basic intention is to discover theories rather than verify them (Uhan, Malnar, and Kurdija 2013, p.643).

The “Grounded Theory” demands that the researcher is not constrained by specific theoretical ideas when interpreting its findings, and expects the concepts to emerge from the data as relevant abstractions about what is happening in the field (Pulla 2014; Mckinnon et al. 2007). This orientation implies that the data collection and analysis are linked in a circular process, where initial analysis is used to enrich the previous empirical work and vice-versa, following the classical perspective of Weber and the most recent work of Geertz (Pulla 2014; Weber 2002a; Geertz 1973).

However, I opted to maintain a flexible orientation in order not to overemphasise established methodologies and give priority to substantive findings, as the generic inductive approach postulates (Liu 2016). Analytic induction implies observation of cases in order to say something general about them; developing concepts, ideas or theories (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, Chapter 15). Following these guidelines, the research findings emerged from the more frequent and important themes from the data, maintaining a theoretical flexibility in relation to the topics to be selected for the narrative (Liu 2016).

## **Methods**

As discussed, this study followed a qualitative comparative methodological approach, based on an inductive logic and inspired by the “Grounded Theory”. At the same time, I used ethnography as the main method of my fieldwork. Ethnography, as Hammersley and Atkinson describe it, is: 1) people’s actions and discourses studied in everyday contexts rather than under conditions created by the researcher; 2) data

collected from a range of sources, mainly participant observations and informal chats; 3) relatively 'unstructured' data collection; 4) focused on a few cases to facilitate an in-depth study; and 5) interpretative analysis of data, looking for the meaning, functions and consequences of human acts (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, p.3).

This ethnographical approach should, however, be distinguished from the traditional anthropological ethnography. As O'Dell and Willim describe it, traditional ethnography implies a long-lasting presence of one to two years at a distant research site and operates as an ultimate "rit de passage" for anthropologists (O'Dell and Willim 2015). In this case, as a Chilean, I was relatively familiar with the research site and was able to be a visitor over a shorter period of time, with an understanding of ethnography as "the art of the possible" (O'Dell and Willim 2015, p. 92). However, ethnographical interviews and observation allowed me to give a central role to the data, namely the accounts of the informants' participation and their interpretations of their everyday world, in order to explain and make sense of the meaning of the observed phenomena (Uhan, Malnar, and Kurdija 2013).

The focus of this study was Evangelical Protestant and Catholic religious individuals and communities; the churches in their institutional dimension; and the neighbourhood where these religious groups operate. With this in mind, I observed active religious Catholic and Evangelical individuals. 'Active religiosity' is defined as the regular involvement in a religious group, meaning attendance at religious services and the regular interaction with other members in the context of religious-motivated meetings.

A main feature of this study is that the research findings and their meanings will be closely related to the specific location and circumstances in which the research was conducted, and will therefore be analysed in a contextual perspective (Marvasti 2004, Chapter 3). This means that I am aware that the respondents' discourses depend on circumstantial factors that have to be included in the interpretation. 'Circumstances' include my presence and work as a researcher, which creates a specific reality that constitute and shape my findings.

The respondents were selected according to this main criterion, using a snowball strategy and also a purposive logic based on the initial findings. In practice, this meant that the first interviews were established with the help of my key informant in each church and afterwards I tried to reach the younger members of the congregations, explicitly asking my informants to provide access to the youth.

In order to capture the everyday routines of the participants of both religious communities, the interpretations and meanings of their religious and secular activities and perceptions, and taking into account the time limitations of the fieldwork, this study used a variety of complementary research tools:

1. Unstructured ethnographic interviews;
2. Participant and non-participant observation; and
3. Secondary data analysis.

1. This research used unstructured interviews as its main method for data collection. These interviews were oriented to understanding and to interpreting the practices, interpretations and culture lying behind religious-involved individuals in contemporary Santiago de Chile (Spradley 1979). Thus, they were conducted in the everyday context of the informants, which could be their home, church, neighbourhood, workplace, study location or similar. The specific conditions under which these interviews took place were not defined by me as the researcher but depended on the specific circumstances and preferences of the interviewees. These were, in this sense, ethnographic interviews, guided by the specific circumstances of the field (Marvasti 2004, Chapter 3). In terms of the topics of the interviews, there were some recurrent initial questions that were used to break the ice and generate conversation, generally inquiring on the interviewees' daily routines and religious practices, always trying to privilege the narration of the informant (Guber 2001; Spradley 1979).

As its name implies, this type of interview allows plenty of flexibility and interaction between the researcher and the respondent, with no predefined answers and privileging a conversational style (Marvasti 2004, Chapter 3). Given that I presented

myself as a researcher to my informants, in many cases I found that they were expecting a guided and structured conversation. Instead, I tried from the beginning to show that I was open to listening to what they had to say, creating a more informal atmosphere in which they could feel comfortable.

Whilst the interviews were conducted with an effort to maintain an open mind to unexpected answers and with the exercise of a bracketing of presuppositions, with curiosity and sensitivity (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, Chapter 9), on many occasions I felt frustrated after the interviews because I felt that the interviewees did not fulfilled my expectations. I remember two cases in particular: one in which a working woman – the leader of a worker's union – did not express a strong political commitment outside of her work; and another in which a young medical student was not especially critical about her church. But in the process, I understood that this frustration was my problem and I made an effort to abandon my prejudices and be open to finding the richness of the unexpected. As Marvasti argues, keeping this unstructured approach has the potential to offer a multi-perspective understanding of the topic; revealing multiple interpretations or attitudes about it (Marvasti 2004, Chapter 3).

In a similar sense, the fact that the interviews were in-depth meant that they allowed me to gain access to the deeper self of the interviewees: to understand their point of view and gain an empathetic approach to its narration, unfolding the meaning of their experiences prior only to scientific explanations (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, Chapter 9; Marvasti 2004, Chapter 3). As I discovered, I also gained access to personal preconceptions.

I view an interview as a social event, where at least two persons (I also interviewed two people at a time) observe themselves in a specific context (Silverman 1993, Chapter 4). It is a daily life conversation but, at the same time, a professional conversation. This means that is oriented to constructing knowledge based on the interaction and interchange of views. The type of knowledge obtained in this research is produced and socially constructed; actively created through language, narrative, human relations and context (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, Chapter 1). I was aware that the narrative that I obtained from the conversations was neither the

interviewees', nor mine; but a conjoined product. My questions reflected my background as a researcher and as an individual, while my informants' answers and reactions revealed not only their experiences and perceptions, but also the relationship that emerged from the situation itself.

2. The ethnographic interview allowed me to introduce elements of observation, because the latent circumstances of the interview were also interesting, and the analysis included not only the discursive aspect of the conversation but also the practices surrounding it. However, there were practices and situations that took place outside the margins of our conversation, which were also interesting for my research. Thus, complementary to the interviews, I used non-participant observation to understand the general routines and religious-related activities of the members of the communities under research. I also participated in religious services and religious meetings, always being transparent with respect to my objectives and my role as a researcher. This active participation allowed me to gain a direct experience of religious involvement and, at the same time, to observe the situation from within (Spradley 1980).

3. A third method consisted of the collection of secondary data from different sources, including those produced by the churches, such as magazines, hymnbooks, liturgical resources and web pages, and also external accounts, such as press articles. These documents were useful to understand the official and non-official discourses of the churches, on the one hand, and on the other to observe the public opinion in relation to them.

### **The Field**

This research's fieldwork took place between early October 2014 and late February 2015. As a first step, I had to gain access to a Pentecostal Church that fulfilled the methodological requirements of this research. I started with Pentecostals because they were the most unfamiliar religious group for me, raised in a Catholic culture and environment. Carlos, one of my father-in-law's co-workers, was from the beginning

very willing to help me and proud to show me his church. He provided access and can to the church and can be considered my gatekeeper (Marvasti 2004, p.46). Carlos advised me that the right (and only) way to get full access to the church's members was to follow the regular route in, through the department of public relations. After he managed to get institutional access, he had to ask for the Bishop's approval. After this permission was granted, we started to look for a specific neighbourhood for my fieldwork. Carlos suggested Zelada because he personally knew Marcos, the head preacher, and also because the neighbourhood has good connectivity. For me, Zelada seemed an interesting research location: close to the Evangelical Cathedral and with a middle-class population.

Carlos introduced me to Marcos, who in turn introduced me to the rest of the preachers. Everybody seemed happy to help me. I understood that for them my research was an opportunity to show themselves to the world and to make the church proud. It was clear to me from my first visit that my position as a researcher would be influenced by this "official" approach to the church. From day one I was invited to sit close to the pulpit, usually reserved for the preachers' wives, and my role was mentioned during the service.

Marcos was a highly cultured man, who went to university as an adult and works both at a major Bank and as a math teacher at a professional institute. For me, his sermons were by far the most interesting and coherent of all the preachers at Zelada. He gave me a warm welcome and introduced me to his wife, Dorita, who was 'in charge' of me during my research in Zelada. Her first task was to take me to the subway station after the services, which ended after 9 p.m., by which time it was dark. Although it is not a dangerous neighbourhood, they took it upon themselves to keep me safe. During the first few weeks, Dorita was my main point of contact and helped me to coordinate interviews and activities.

My first interview was with Mr. and Mrs. Lemunao-Quilio. What I did not know until after the interview was that they were at the head of the oldest and largest family of the Church. Their house was situated very close to the church and they had lived in the neighbourhood for more than 50 years. They had been married for more than 60



years and had seven children, each one of them belonging to the Church. They came from very poor origins, with very low education and a Mapuche ancestry (which still is an indication of social vulnerability). Both moved from the countryside as adolescents and had a history of social mobility. Today, they are proud of living in a decent house and of the fact that all their children have a good standard of living.

The following days and interviews gave me the impression that I was struggling to grasp the social effects of religiosity beyond the classical religious speech. Soon I realised that many interviewees, especially the older ones, were using their interviews for proselytising purposes. Hoping to get a different perspective, I asked Dorita to introduce me to the younger members of the community. This was a crucial moment for my fieldwork, as the following chapters will show.

After some initial weeks focused on the Pentecostal community, I decided that it was time to approach the Catholic Church. Walking around the neighbourhood, I came to a small grocery shop and I asked the attendant for the closest Catholic church, which – it transpired – was only a few blocks away. The conversation was productive: the attendant was actually the shop owner; a man in his sixties, who confessed being a Catholic ‘in his own way’ (believing, but not participating). He talked about his deceased wife, who used to accuse him of not being a ‘true’ Catholic. After this encounter I went to Del Carmen Chapel; a small and modest building. It was closed, but I found a notice saying that there would be services every evening for the Virgin’s month that was currently taking place.

The next day, after the Catholic service, I approached a lady who seemed to be in charge of the ceremony. She was Elena, a woman in her seventies, who helped me to access the rest of the community, starting with Norberto, the deacon and head of Del Carmen Chapel. I managed to speak to almost all of the active members of the community and also attend their weekly meetings. However, the only occasions on which younger people participated were the first communion catechism and the baptism preparations for parents, which I also was able to attend.

The first stage of my fieldwork ended in March 2015. Over that 6 months, I had held 29 interviews with 32 interviewees; attended 7 weekly meetings at the Catholic Chapel with between five and eight participants; attended 18 religious services, including Sunday Mass, Mary's month special services, Sunday School and Sunday and Weekdays services; and had 9 informal meetings with Carlos, my gatekeeper, and his family, with preachers, community members and the Evangelical bishop.

Most of the interviews were carried out at the evangelical temple or the Catholic Church, some at the informants' homes or workplaces and a few at a public coffee shop. Each lasted more than an hour and most of them lasted more than one and a half hours. A few lasted two hours or longer.

The second stage of my research took place between April and June 2016, after the transcription and initial analysis of the data collected in the first stage. This second stage was mainly dedicated to attending Baptism preparations and Catechism meetings, each one consisting of four sessions with between eight and 12 participants, hoping to find the new generations of Catholics that were not regular attendants in Del Carmen.

Altogether, the fieldwork involved 39 informants: 18 male and 21 females; 12 of whom were between 18 and 25 years old; nine of whom were between 26 and 40 years old; 11 were aged 56 to 70; and seven were older than 70 years old. In terms of occupations, 11 were students; 10 were professionals; 8 were housewives; 6 were workers; and 4 were retired. These profiles were determined after the fieldwork was conducted and were not criteria used to select the informants.

### **Transcription and Analysis**

The interviews, meetings and some services were recorded and transcribed. The transcription process itself was not only a technical exercise, but a useful exercise in interpretation: I was able to return to the field with a different perspective (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, Chapter 10). I had produced field-notes after each observation, documenting relevant conversations that were not part of an interview,

interesting interactions between those involved in the field (including myself) and general aspects emerging from the participant observation. A sufficient number of field observations were reached according to a criterion of saturation, meaning that no new themes were emerging and at the same time that these categories were sufficiently developed (Corbin and Strauss 2012).

At this point, I decided not to use the available software packages for qualitative analysis research. This option was based on the practical fact that the amount of material was manageable using only a text processor, but most importantly on the idea that to establish a more or less rigid conceptual framework could impose unnecessary restrictions on the findings. I preferred to analyse the data by frequently returning to the full narratives and the contexts from which they emerged.

In sum, transcription, analysis and writing were not separate processes but a whole that formed part of the process of knowledge production, which forms the basis of this research (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, Chapter 10). The field material, including transcriptions and field-notes, was coded and analysed simultaneously, rather than being based on any specific preconceived theoretical framework, maintaining a comparative perspective between the two religious groups.

Once the themes were identified, I selected the data to be presented in the final text. These quotations were chosen from the recorded interviews according to a criterion of representativeness of the specific topics to be analysed, whilst also trying to incorporate the perceptions of as many informants as possible.

### **Ethics and Positionality**

Ethical aspects were considered before, during and after the fieldwork. At the first stage – the formulation of the research proposal – I conducted the self-audit checklist for level 1 ethical review of the University of Edinburgh, where I found no potential risks to participants or to me as researcher and no conflicts of interest. Then, during the fieldwork, all participants were informed about the research goals and intentions, and their right to be withdrawn from the study at any point, although no one asked

for this. I sought consent to record the interviews, which was given in all cases, under the guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality.

These ethical guidelines were followed in the context of a reflective research process. The research process was reflective in two dimensions: first, I tried to be aware of my own position as a researcher, which means to be considerate of my particular position within the context of the research and how this affects my observation; and secondly, I considered that my presence, as interviewer and observer, had an impact on participants' behaviour. Reflexivity, in this sense, implied an exercise through which I brought myself to the centre and made visible that a value-neutral, objective and unbiased research is not possible (Miled 2017). Thus, during my research experience I was aware of who I was in terms of nationality, class, gender and religiosity and how these and other categories influenced both my work and my informants' discourses and behaviour. I understood that the situated knowledge I intended to produce was also shaped by my own background.

Accordingly, my approach was conscious of my Chilean origin, my upper middle-class background and my Catholic upbringing and how it could affect my observations and interactions. I became aware of my initial expectations about my informants' responses according to my preconceived notions about being a Chilean Catholic or a Pentecostal, which stem from cultural prejudices that were certainly confronted with the complexities of reality.

In terms of the effect of my position on my informants, I noticed that my reception as a researcher differed between the two churches. In Zelada, everybody seemed happy to help me; for them my research was an opportunity to show themselves to the world, which made them proud. The fact that I am highly educated and came from a foreign university was especially encouraging for those members who held directive positions at the church. There were also relevant differences between generations: while the older members perceived me as a foreigner, from a different social class and background, I could perceive that among the younger members that distance faded significantly. My position as a postgraduate student from an upper-class background (which is evident in Chile, where my pale skin and blonde hair

colour, together with a foreign name reveals a social background) generated more empathy among young Evangelicals than I had expected, which revealed a process of educational mobility that will be at the centre of this research's findings.

An additional issue appeared when I started my fieldwork at the Methodist Pentecostal Church. The strategic position of Carlos, my key contact with the Church, implied that my involvement was formal, with official access granted by the bishop himself. It was already clear to me on my first visit that my position as a researcher would be influenced by this 'official' approach to the church. Aware of this, I tried to show my independence during the interviews and gain the confidence especially of those who I perceived as more critical of the institution.

I soon realised I was having problems grasping the social effects of religiosity beyond the classical religious speech, as many interviewees, especially the older ones, used the interview to proselyte. They spoke to me as a potential convert and not as a researcher, which made me uncomfortable at the beginning. I understood that evangelisation is part of the essence of Pentecostalism, however I observed that for me, and probably for the people of my social and cultural background, this kind of intrusion into one's private life did not feel appropriate. I was aware that it triggered my prejudice against Pentecostal religion as a religion of lower-class culture.

In Del Carmen, in contrast, my presence was mostly conceived as an opportunity to discuss their crises and to gain an outsider's perspective. Unlike Evangelicals, they did not see me as an 'other' in religious terms (they assumed I had a Catholic background), but as a social sciences professional who could guide them. In some cases, however, I could note the sense of distance in terms of social class, yet I did not experience it to be a barrier. In my presence, they were able to say things they had not said before and they were all very interested in my opinion about the Chapel and its problems.

Taken together, the consequences of my positionality made me aware that the narratives that I obtained from the conversations and the results of my observations were neither the informants, nor mine, but a conjoined product. My questions

reflected my background as a researcher and as a person, while my informants' answers and reactions revealed not only their experiences and perceptions, but also the relationship that emerged from the situation itself.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter was oriented to provide detail about the methodological aspects of my research, including the research problem and objectives; the research approach and rationale, as well as the specific methods I used during my fieldwork. Additionally, it described the ethical and positionality issues arising from the field.

I described the research as an explorative qualitative case study, which with a comparative perspective, is intended to understand and interpret how religious change is experienced among religiously-involved individuals, and how the institutions are also reacting to this environment.

Given this exploratory perspective, I explained that I did not use contrastable hypotheses to test. Instead of this, I tried to develop, following a Grounded Theory approach, a theoretical framework to understand the phenomenon. For this purpose, I used unstructured ethnographic interviews as a principal method, which was complemented with participant and non-participant observation and secondary data analysis.

In the next chapter, I will situate my research in a local context using quantitative and qualitative information. In the one hand, I will inform with recent quantitative data how secularisation in Chile has brought with it a diversification in religious identification, not only because it promotes the appearance of several denominations, but also because identification becomes a flexible category. On the other, I will characterise the neighbourhood and churches with information obtained in the field. Taken together, this information will be the context in which this research took place, where nominals, religious occasionals and non-churched believers are shaping the plural society in which the churches operate.

### **Chapter 3. The Research Scene**

The following Chapter contextualises and describes the location of my research, including Chile, Santiago, the municipality of Estación Central and the ‘Población’ Zelada: the specific site of Del Carmen Chapel and the ‘Clase’ Zelada Temple.<sup>4</sup> In order to offer an appropriate background to the next chapters of this thesis, the following sections have a descriptive orientation. In the first one, I present a more detailed perspective of the country’s religious landscape, including data about Catholics and Evangelicals, and also about the segment of non-religious people. The next section, in turn, is dedicated to introducing my perspective of Santiago and especially its city centre, where we find the municipality of Estación Central and the neighbourhood of Zelada. I then introduce the institutional aspects of the Chilean First Methodist and Pentecostal Church and the Chilean Catholic Church, which will be essential in order to understand local practices and challenges. Finally, within this context, I will present some empirical findings on the two religious communities included in this research, specifically the routines and religious lives of its members.

#### **Chile’s Religious Landscape**

Chile, with a population of around 17 million, provides the national context for this research. As discussed in chapter 1, the country is an interesting case in terms of religious change in the Latin-American context. As Somma et al. have recently shown, based on data of Latinobarómetro survey, only in Chile and Nicaragua the decline of Catholicism can be explained both by a sustained process of pluralisation, based on the growth of Pentecostal churches and by a recent secularisation process, especially among the youngest segment of the population (Somma et al. 2016). In turn, Garrard-Burnett et al. include Chile, together with Argentina and Uruguay, in a zone of religious and nonreligious pluralism, given that, according to the last Pew survey,

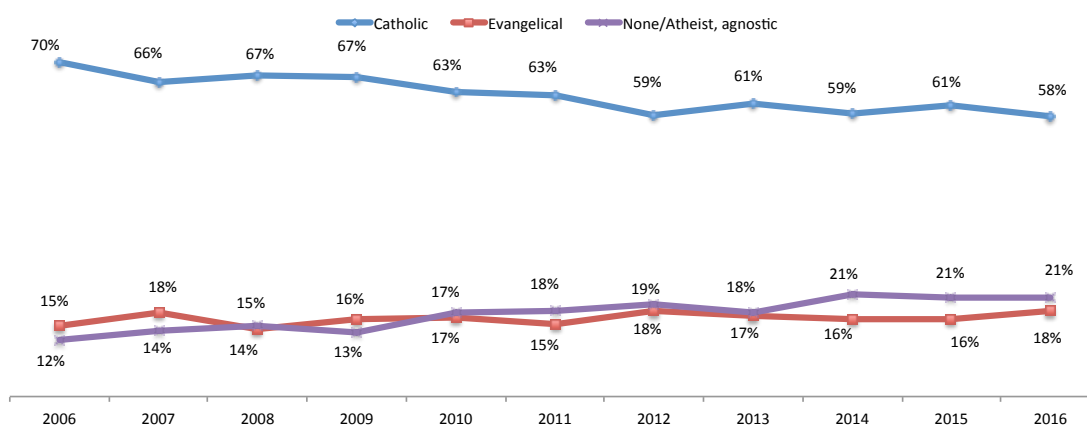
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<sup>4</sup> I opted to maintain the Spanish words for Población and Clase. Población refers to a popular neighbourhood with a particular identity. In turn, Clase is the word used in the Methodist Pentecostal Church to refer to the spatial divisions of temples.

these are the countries that give least importance to religion in life, compared to the rest of Latin America (Garrard-Burnett, Freston, and Dove 2016). This pattern of combined religious pluralisation and recent increase in the non-religious population transforms Chile into a relevant site for exploring religious change and modernity in a non-European context.

Although the decline of the Catholic Church is a salient feature of the pattern of religious change, Catholicism remains by and large as the principal denomination in the country. In 1960, 89% of the population identified as being Catholic. During the Censal period (1970-1992), the Catholic population decreased by 15% and in the following years this decrease accelerated: during the period 1992 to 2002, the Catholic population was reduced by 9%; and in the next period by 10 percentage points (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013). However, according to the Bicentenario Survey, during the years 2006-2017 the proportion of Catholics has maintained stable around 60% (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and GFK Adimark 2017).

**Chart 1: Religious Identification in Chile 2006-2016**



Source: Bicentenario Survey

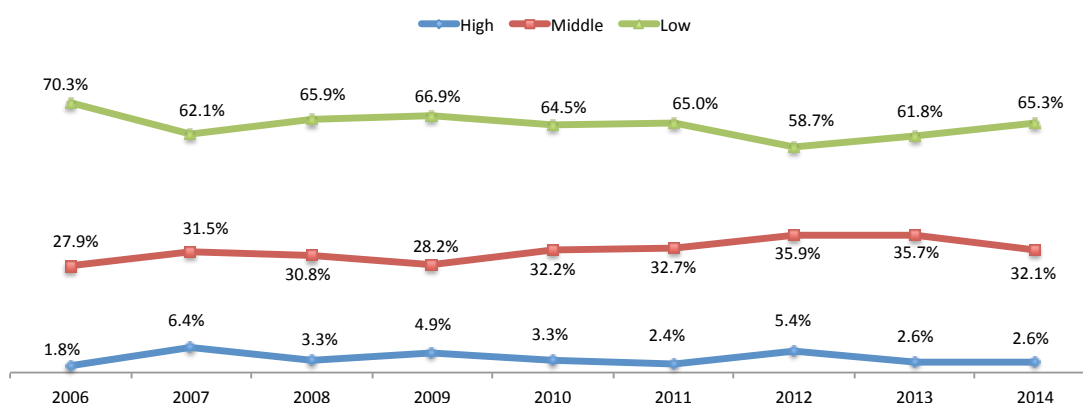
Regardless of the persistent presence of Catholicism, the population's devotion to the official religion has been and is still quite thin in Latin America (Gill 1999). For Gill,



this is related to the traditional weakness of the Church's institutional framework, especially in rural areas, where popular religion became the main form of religious practice (Gill 1999). In contemporary Chile, religious attendance is extremely low among Catholics, with around a 10% declaring that they attend religious services once a week or more, compared to 43% of Evangelicals (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and GFK Adimark 2017). These figures demonstrate that most Chilean Catholics are "occasionalists" or "nominals" that attend Church only on special occasions, if at all. The same survey shows that more than a third of Catholics do not consider themselves part of the Church. Although higher than church attendance, this figure also implies a non-institutional Catholic identity, based more on religious beliefs and culture than in an institutional commitment.

According to Censal data, in 1920 Evangelicals represented only 1% of the Chilean population (Fontaine Talavera 2002, p.16). The data show a small growth in this denomination during the 1960s, from 5.7% in 1960 to 6.2% in 1970, but the so-called 'evangelical boom' took place between 1970 and 1992, when the Protestant population doubled to 13%. This growth became more moderate in the following decades, and has been stabilised to around 17%, according to the Bicentenario survey (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and GFK Adimark 2017).

Pentecostalism has been identified as a religion of the poor, almost exclusively present among the more disadvantaged and less educated strata of the population. Censal data show that in 1992 and in 2002 the educational level of Pentecostals was clearly lower than of the total population. Although there have been some improvement in the socioeconomic level in the last decade, as shown in chart 3, it is clear that the Pentecostal expansion during the last fifty years has taken place in the popular classes (Valenzuela, Bargsted, and Somma 2013). However, as will be discussed in the following chapters, the national process of economic and educational mobility has also included the Evangelical population, challenging the traditional position of Pentecostalism as a religion of the poor.

**Chart 2: Socioeconomic level among Evangelicals in Chile, 2006-2014**

Source: Bicentenario Survey

The Catholic decline and the growth of Pentecostalism are tendencies that emerge in the context of a more recent process of religious disaffection, expressed by the increasing proportion of the population that declares no religion or to be atheist or agnostic. According to the Bicentenario survey, this proportion increased from 12% in 2006 to 21% in 2016 (Chart 1). This trend is especially marked among young Chileans: in 2015, 26% of those aged 18-24 and 29% of those aged 25-34 declared not to have a religion or to be atheists or agnostics, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Religious Identification in Chile by Age, in 2015**

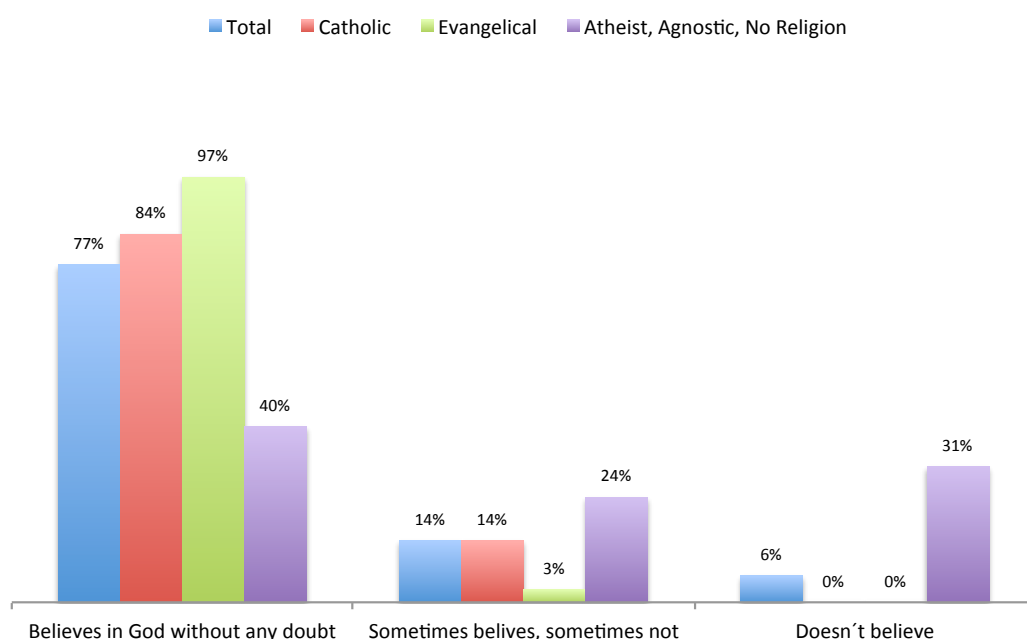
	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 and more	TOTAL
Catholic	58%	52%	61%	64%	68%	61%
Evangelical	13%	17%	17%	16%	17%	16%
Other religion	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%	2%
None, Atheist, Agnostic	26%	29%	19%	17%	11%	21%

Source: Bicentenario Survey

However, it is interesting to look deeper into the religious beliefs from this segment with no religious affiliation. As we can observe in Chart 3, the belief in God among the Chilean population is extremely high, even among people with no religion. This

result indicates that the group of non-religious people is not homogeneous, and that a majority of those who declare not to have a specific denomination hold in fact religious beliefs. Thus, non-churched believers seem to be part of the Chilean religious landscape, indicating a low institutionalised religiosity that can be related to a traditional pattern of popular religiosity, but also to a process of modernisation of the religious practice.

**Chart 3: Belief in God by religious identification in Chile, year 2017**



Source: Bicentenario Survey

This general pattern of Chilean religiosity is reflected in the particular context of this research, the country's capital, Santiago, that concentrates Chilean population and economic activity, and thus represents the country's main urban area.

### **The Location: Santiago, Estación Central, Zelada**

This research's specific location, within the national context of Chile, is the country's capital city, Santiago. According to the results of the 2017 Census, metropolitan

Santiago has a population of 7,036,792 inhabitants. The city is divided into 32 communes and is characterised by a high level of socio-economical segregation at municipal level. High income households are concentrated in eastern Santiago, while poorer families inhabit the south and west parts of the city (Romero et al. 2012, p.77).

Chile is a highly centralised country, and Santiago reflects this configuration. The city contains almost one third of the national population and is the indisputable financial and industrial centre and concentrates the public and private modernising efforts.

In my view, Santiago, as the material and symbolical centre of the country, represents the best location in which to observe how Chile is changing. Although the city's pattern of religiosity does not differ significantly from the national figures, I recognise that this choice of a highly urbanised research site will mean that the results will not be applicable to other more rural or less urban contexts.



Photo: Alobos Life (Flick).

Western Santiago on a summer evening. The Costanera Tower in Providencia is the highest Building in Latin America and the icon of the contemporary and modern city of Santiago.

The fieldwork for this research made me return to Santiago – my home for most of my childhood, youth and adult life – after three years of living as a student in Edinburgh. During the five months of my first field trip, I stayed in a flat in

Providencia, which had the advantage of being a few blocks from the subway station. The subway is something 'Santiaguinos' are proud of: although crowded, it is the cleanest, fastest and most efficient way to travel around the city. The trip from Providencia to Zelada takes approximately 40 minutes.



Photo: Ariel Cruz

Santiago subway. Inaugurated in 1975, currently it includes 5 lines and 118 stations and there are prospects to extend it.

The city centre, in turn, has a more mixed population in terms of social class, especially the municipality of Santiago, but also Estación Central, the research location. With a population of 130,394 inhabitants, according to the 2002 Census, Estación Central has a majority of middle-class households (per head monthly income from around \$180 USD to \$510 USD) and very few belonging to the upper income quintile. As its name shows, it is home to the Central Train Station and also the Bus Station, which is related to a privileged connectivity and also to an intense commercial activity. Additionally, the commune has an important cultural heritage, which includes historical buildings such as the Central Train Station and also the Evangelical Cathedral.



Photo: ImaginaSantiago

Santiago Central Station, historical building that is the site of the country's main train station. It connects trains with the subway and with interurban buses.

I chose Estación Central because it represents the symbolical centre of religious diversity, especially for the Evangelical community. The Cathedral is iconic for the members of the Evangelical Church. It is a large building, situated on the main avenue from Santiago's city centre, not far from the central Bus Station and very close to the Central Train Station. It is here that the first ecumenical Te Deum took place in 1973 (just after the military coup). The Cathedral symbolises the growth and importance of Pentecostalism in Chilean society, as Evangelical leaders often mention.



Photo: La Tercera

The construction of the Cathedral started in 1967, and the last stage was completed in 2011. Its imposing presence symbolises the increasing social prominence of the Methodist Pentecostal Church. In 2013, the building was declared National Historic Monument.

But together with historical buildings and high connectivity, Estación Central also is a municipality with increasing urban tensions, that makes this place even more interesting in sociological terms. The explosive construction of ‘mega’ buildings or ‘vertical ghettos’ among traditional neighbourhoods has been controversial for its inhabitants and also among urban planners and architects. This new development entails a huge increase in the number of people and cars that the neighbourhood has to manage, and also represents a dramatic impact in visual terms.

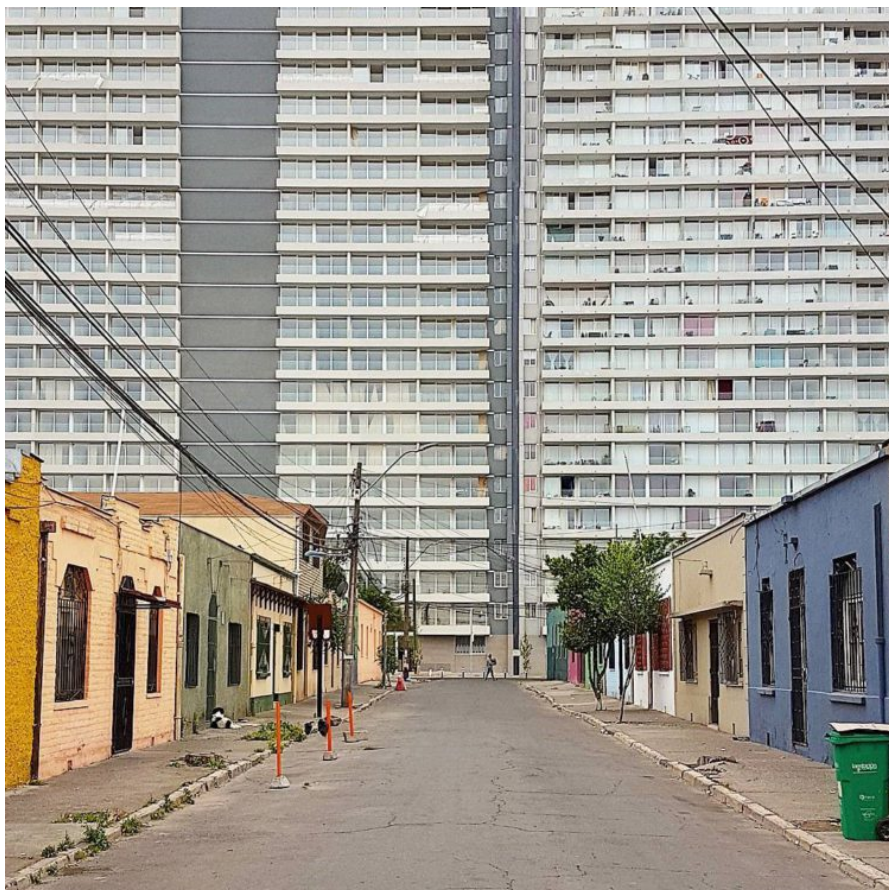


Photo: El Ciudadano

The construction of “Mega” buildings has change Estación Central in the last 5 years.

The Población Zelada is also experiencing these kinds of transformations. It is a mixed developing middle-lower class neighbourhood, highly connected to educational, health, commercial and transport services (buses, subway and train) and close to the Evangelical Cathedral. The neighbourhood presents a mixture of old houses (some of them seem poor and others have a middle-class appearance) and new high block apartments’ small grocery, vegetable and butchers’ shops’; a gas station; and many garages and car repair stores. It is clearly a developing neighbourhood, with several on-going real estate projects, consisting mainly of modern middle-class flats. This transitional feature characterises Zelada and provides an interesting research site for religious change.





Photo: Maureen Neckelmann

The Población Zelada on a Summer afternoon. This street represents the traditional residential appearance of the neighbourhood.



Photo: Maureen Neckelmann

A few blocks from the subway station, new residential flats are being built, transforming the appearance and composition of the neighbourhood.

Zelada's Pentecostal temple looks very similar to the Cathedral, on a smaller scale. The indoor area is spacious, and the altar is decorated with a large naïve painting of a biblical scene: Jesus fishing with two apostles ("Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men", Matthew 4:19).



Photo: Maureen Neckelmann

Zelada's Pentecostal temple follows the Cathedral's architectural lines, with an imposing facade.



Photo: Maureen Neckelmann

The temple's altar.



Photo: Maureen Neckelmann

The temple's altar from the main door.

It is common among Zelada's members to travel long distances to get to the Church. Many of them live in other city communes and travel to Zelada for different reasons: Zelada is their 'spiritual cradle'; the first church they visited; their family's Church; or they have a specific position within the Church. However, there is also mobility between Churches, for example many members came to Zelada because it is near to their new house or because they received a 'divine sign'. There is also a group of members that live in the neighbourhood and have always attended Zelada.

The Del Carmen Catholic chapel is located a few blocks from Zelada's temple. Much smaller than its Evangelical neighbour, it is a one-floor building, situated in spacious land with a sport field and a house for the family of the man in charge of the chapel's security. The chapel depends on the parish 'Nuestra Señora del Buen Consejo', located about seven blocks away, in the area of the city called Quinta Normal.



Photo: Maureen Neckelmann  
Del Carmen Chapel.

In contrast with Evangelicals, all of my Catholic informants lived close to the Chapel. Most interviewees had lived in the neighbourhood for many decades and had developed a strong local identity. In general, neighbours know and trust each other, and there is a feeling of solidarity. Elena, for example, has lived all her adult life in Zelada, where she feels protected and supported as an elderly woman.

*I have been living in this neighbourhood for 49 years... I arrived here when I got married, because my husband lived here. This is a beloved neighbourhood, modest and everything, but it is our neighbourhood and we love it very much...*

*... because this is a neighbourhood, at least the block where I live, of elderly people, where we know each other for many years. We always wave at each other, always very kind, and when there are difficulties, there we are, everyone... (Elena, 70).*

For the Catholic community members, the neighbourhood has changed dramatically over recent years. Elena, who was the first person I talked to the first time I went to the Chapel, introduced me to Polo, a man in his seventies with a long story in Zelada and in the Chapel. Polito, as the community members call him, pointed out that many garages and a big gas station had recently opened, meaning that the neighbourhood was not essentially residential anymore. However, the newest innovation was the construction of high-rise buildings, which attract young working families, interested in the brand-new apartments located in a well-connected area.

Although the settlement of Zelada is according to my informants mostly composed of elderly people, these developments are transforming the neighbourhood. A new generation distinct to the traditional inhabitants is arriving, representing an opportunity to renew the Church. The transition itself has brought difficulties to the peaceful neighbourhood, especially the construction sites and the increased number of vehicles without appropriate parking spaces. María Inés is another community member who has life in Zelada for a long time; in her case, since she was a girl. Having raised her children in her parents' house and taken care of her father until he recently died at 105 years old, she now lives by herself in the same house. For her, these new developments will change her place dramatically.

*Look, this building in Ecuador Street hides the sun from my house. Now it's nothing, but in the winter... dark. And now that they are building a new one on the other side we will be left in darkness. There are very few parking spaces; our streets will be full*  
(María Inés, 69).

Overall, local life is marked by transition, to which the communities are trying to adapt themselves. However, to understand the institutional practices that are reflected in both churches, we have to present a brief description of the organisational structures of the Chilean First Methodist Pentecostal Church and the Chilean Catholic Church, and how these structures are intended to influence national and local life at a societal level.

### **The Institutions: the First Methodist Pentecostal Church of Chile and the Chilean Catholic Church**

After the death of the Evangelical bishop Javier Vásquez in 2003, Bernardo Cartes was elected as his successor. Eduardo Durán was designated as the main pastor of the Evangelical Cathedral. However, following internal conflicts, these leaders decided to split their doctrines in 2007; a process that led to the formation of three different denominations: the Methodist Pentecostal Church of Public Law, the Methodist Pentecostal Church of Private Law and the First Evangelical Methodist Church of Chile. The First Methodist Pentecostal Church has as its see the Evangelical Cathedral or Jotabeche 40 (the address of one of its entrances), with more than 65 dependant temples across Santiago.

The head of the First Pentecostal Methodist Church of Chile is still Bishop Eduardo Durán Castro, also called the Governing Pastor, who is highly respected and admired among the community. At the end of every service at the Cathedral, there is a long line of people wishing to salute, thank or talk to the Bishop, who responds to everyone. I stood in line with Carlos, my key contact in the Church, in order to introduce myself and ask for permission for my research. On this occasion, I observed the bishop giving blessings, offering advice and even reprimanding the faithful. The

Bishop seemed happy with my proposal, and Carlos, who is a directive member, was proud to show me his closeness with him.

The bishop and the official deacon's board constitute the church's internal government. The directive body is constituted of the Sunday school teachers, from which are elected the local preachers and chiefs of departments, body and services. There are no formal criteria for the access to directive positions within the church; this is conceived as a 'mystery' or as God's calling. Additionally, there is a head preacher in every class or local church, who generally conducts the Sunday afternoon service, and there are assistant preachers for the rest of the week.

The teachers are key elements of the church's organisation, and anyone can become one if they have sufficient experience within the community. Sunday school takes place every Sunday morning. During this session, small groups of about 10 people are formed according to age and marital status (adult men, adult women, young men, young women and children). Every group has a teacher from the same age group (except children), who read and interpret a specific biblical passage in everyday life terms. These teachers prepare the day before in a massive class given by the bishop at the Cathedral.

The history of the Chilean Catholic Church is obviously much longer, dating back to the Spanish Conquest that started in 1540. Catholicism was from then the official religion of the country until its religious monopoly ended with the separation of Church and State, determined by the Chilean Republic Political Constitution of 1925.

Since the Conquest, education has been an essential element in the relationship between the Church and Chilean society. The first Chilean University was established by the Dominican congregation with the name Saint Thomas Aquinas. The challenges brought by secular reforms and the consequent growth of secular state education motivated the development of Catholic private schools and of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile in 1888. During the twentieth century, Catholic congregation and movements founded private and public schools across the country.

Charity is also an important organisational link between the Church and society. There are important organisations dedicated to assisting the poorest sector of society, such as the 'Hogar de Cristo', founded by Saint Alberto Hurtado. Other charities provide homes for the elderly and for vulnerable and orphan children, communal kitchens, etc. There are also Catholic charities engaged in educational and social programs oriented to the development of the country.

The territorial organisation of the Catholic Church in Chile includes 28 ecclesial jurisdictions, which more or less coincide with the civil territorial division of the country. Each of these jurisdictions is led by a Bishop or Archbishop. In turn, the jurisdictions are included in 5 ecclesial provinces, each one with an Archbishop. Bishops and Archbishops are members of the Chilean Episcopal Conference.

The archdiocese of Santiago is organised into 214 parishes, with 237 diocesan priests and 361 permanent deacons. Additionally, it includes 7 territorial vicariates. Del Carmen chapel is within the Parish Nuestra Señora del Buen Consejo. In Del Carmen, the conflicts with the Catholic Church's hierarchy are evident. There is not a direct and clear line of communication between the chapel and the parish or the vicariate. In general, there is the idea that the priest is always the one in command, so every time someone has a new idea or project, the deacon should discuss it directly with the parish priest, who is not always available.

At a symbolical level, the institutional crisis of the Chilean Catholic Church, as in other parts of the world, is related to the revelation of sexual scandals and paedophilia. Confronted with this, my interviewees recognised that this situation has damaged the Catholic community. However, in general they believe that faith in God should not be weakened by human mistakes, and that when this happens it is a sign of lack of faith.

The community has a particular and traumatic history regarding this topic. More than 10 years ago, a big sexual scandal involving child sexual exploitation broke out in Chilean society. One of the more scandalous dimensions of the case was the allegations made by a young girl, who said that high-profile politicians had sexual



intercourse with her and other minors in the context of a network of child abuse. The accusations were supported by a priest. After it was demonstrated to be false, she was sentenced to jail for false testimony and the priest for instigation. At that time, this priest was the parish priest of Del Carmen community, who is remembered with mixed emotions. Patricia was a member during those years, and she seemed to have an open wound when speaking about the priest.

*He was a good priest and everything, so what happened was disappointing to us, because we believed in him (Patricia, 52).*

As I could observe, the Del Carmen community is suffering the consequences of an organisational and institutional crisis, as well as from internal problems. The interviewees initially cited the advanced age of the community members and to their associated health problems as the reason for the low attendance at the special services offered in the context of Mary's Month between November and December. However, the lack of a new generation soon came across as the central issue and as the main concern within the community.

In general, young people and children approach the church when they want to prepare themselves for first communion, confirmation, marriage or want to baptise their children. The main sacraments keep much of their importance among Catholics, but once the sacrament is celebrated, the participants do not stay as active members of the Church. In addition to this, the parishes and chapels are facing another problem: most of the children are taking their first communion at schools, so the chances of attracting a new generation of members are even lower. Patricia and Rosa are among those members that are deeply worried about the future of the Church. For both of them the difficulties that the chapel faces in order to attract newer generations is a problem that the church must face. The risk of extinction is real to them.

*Children aren't coming, we think that this is not a problem at the level of this community, but it is happening in all communities, because the children are doing the first communion at school... thus, they don't prepare themselves in the*

*neighbourhoods, they took away from us that right. And there was a time when they took it from the schools precisely in order to promote contact between children in their communities, but they returned to the older system. And that worries me; there is no youth (Patricia, 52).*

*What has affected us deeply is that we are fewer and fewer every day. I told my husband at a certain point, hey, the community will be over, it is extinguishing (Rosa, 54)*

However, there is hope. The community expects that the construction of new buildings in the neighbourhood will bring new members to the community. Members hope for new ideas and leaderships that could save the community from extinction. Only then will the older members be able to rest. Both Rosa and Patricia seem tired of being in charge of the Chapel in this discouraging context, so they hope for a change.

*We want people with new ideas, because now we are like a 'poor circus', we all do everything. There are things that are being done, but always by the same people, there is a lack of new ideas, people with a renovated air, willing to do things, and maybe we can continue, but doing what they say, with new ideas (Rosa, 54)*

*We are hopeful that people will come, new people, so it will be. And when new people come, we'll be able to retire (Patricia, 52).*

Financially, both Catholics and Pentecostals depend mainly on members' donations and on their own capacity to generate resources. For Evangelicals, the idea that the church depends on small contributions of low-income people is central. It is very likely that members give a tithe (10% of their salary) or even more, depending on their possibilities. Additionally, everyone gives money during the two offerings that take place twice in every service, when women in uniforms (called public relations officers) collect the money saying, 'God bless the happy donors'. Another marginal but highly symbolic fundraising method is the selling of homemade bread at the end of the services, which in the Cathedral and in Zelada is baked within the building, at

the cafe area, where you can also buy cakes, sandwiches and drinks. The cafe is managed and served by volunteers, who take turns on a weekly rota.

Among young members, such as Fizabel and Daniela, the idea that the church is supported exclusively by its members is repeated with insistence and pride, evidencing that this is a message promoted by the church's leaders.

*This church is self-supported, it doesn't receive help from the state. The offering, those 100 'pesitos' given by the brother pay for the lights and the water (Fizabel, 21).*

*This church was built just by selling bread (Daniela, 19).*

The biggest part of the work done in the church is voluntary or symbolically paid, with the notorious exception of the bishop, who is part of the church's expenses. There is neither public information about the amount of his salary nor transparency of the church's finances. However, there seems to be plenty of trust on the resources management, at least among the community.

The Catholic Chapel is facing changes in the way church income is administrated. As of 2013, the chapel is no longer financially autonomous. This means that the money they collect has to be sent monthly to the parish, which is in charge of financial administration. The members of the community, especially the treasurer, Elena, oppose this innovation, which has resulted in the Chapel being in debt to the main basic services suppliers. They want to return to the former system, when they managed their own resources, obtained from money collection during the services, other donations and the money coming from the renting of the Chapel's sports field. But again, to communicate these demands appears to be complicated because the parish priest is rarely available. In contrast with Pentecostals, there does not seem to be great confidence in how the resources are managed, especially in terms of an efficient administration. Del Carmen community members are openly critical of this aspect.

Overall, the relationships that the churches maintain with their local communities are clearly an aspect in which both organisations differ. While the Methodist Pentecostal

Church seems to give great importance to its local presence, establishing permanent occasions of communication and common rituals, the Catholic institutional ties with the Chapel are weak and conflictive, which will be reflected in the following chapters of this thesis. In the meantime, the following section will detail the religious and non-religious life in the neighbourhood, with a view to understanding the everyday routines of my informants and their families.

## **Religious Life at Zelada**

### **The Chapel**

Despite the low levels of church attendance among Chilean Catholics, the Del Carmen Chapel is almost full for Sunday mass, mostly with elderly women and middle age couples. However, the core of the community – those who are engaged in additional activities – is much smaller. The community faces what they call ‘Catholic’s lack of commitment’: although many people participate in the Sunday mass, participation in other activities is low.

For my Catholic interviewees, who constitute the active heart of the Chapel’s community, religious participation is central to their activities and is of huge importance. The active members of Del Carmen community are involved in several activities and take a share of the responsibility for the maintenance and administration of the Chapel. They attend a weekly meeting, run by the deacon, where the main issues and activities are discussed. They plan the Sunday mass and special services; the collection and administration of money; the provision of communion to the sick; the preparations for marriages and baptisms; and the catechesis for first communions and confirmations. There are also extra-religious activities, such as arts and crafts workshops and charitable activities, however, these activities were less successful during the last months of my stay, mostly due to illness of those in charge (who are very old) and to summer holidays.

Yet their history of religious participation has not always been so stable. Many of the older members of the community had a highly religious childhood and youth, but

went through a phase of low participation as young adults, mainly because of parenting duties and increasing personal workloads.

For Del Carmen Chapel's members, the community is a principal – and in some cases the only – source of sociability and associativity. They consider themselves to be friends, mainly because they have known each other for many years. They take care of each other and they share their beliefs and priorities in life. The Chapel is their meeting point, where they feel comfortable. For some members, however, there are other important sources of social life, such as family, friends and associations, where sharing the same religiosity is not a requirement. Elena, who possibly had the most associative activities outside the church out of all of the members of the community that I met, enjoys participating in recreational and sport activities offered by the town council, where she meets people who share her passion for an active life. She is less interested in other kinds of groups, where personal life is more involved, because in her view these are normally places for gossip.

*I have other groups where I go, I don't know if you know Las Rejas, where the Church of Santa Isabel de Hungría is located, near there is a sport camp, which has a swimming pool, it has everything. In fact, the swimming pool season starts now, where I, as a senior, can go... I go there to dance. On Monday, we went on a trip, all day long. And I also share with those people. I like those kinds of groups, hi, how are you, all friends, I make my class and leave. I don't like mother's associations and those things... (Elena, 70)*

In comparison, María Inés has a more complex relationship with social life. Since her father died, she has lived by herself and finds it difficult to engage with people outside the church, including her sons, who do not visit her regularly. However, she attends a group for rheumatic patients at a local hospital, where she can share experiences related with her illness.

*There is a centre where people meet... when it started, I went a couple of times, but I didn't like the people. Because I don't like to go there to lose my time, I prefer to stay at home. Because here, when we come to courses, we learn something. So, to*

*receive something, ok, but to socialise, I don't have time. I do belong, due to my illness, to a league from the Hospital San Juan de Dios, the Ocular League, I have belonged to it for 14 years, and there are only rheumatic patients (María Inés, 69).*

Local life in the neighbourhood is marked by religious diversity. Although the majority of my Catholic interviewees declared respect for Evangelicals, long-standing prejudices were still apparent, especially suspicions about their finances. When I was looking for a Catholic Church to be the site of my research, I asked a shopkeeper of a small local store about the churches in the neighbourhood. During this conversation, the shopkeeper, who looked to be in his fifties, confessed to be a Catholic 'his own way', which means that he holds Catholic beliefs but does not actively participate. As a Catholic, he sees Evangelicals as 'others'; as a closed community and also as unfair competition for his business. The fact that they open cafeterias within the temples is for him a practice that goes against Jesus' teachings. He is suspicious about the cars they use to get to services, which are 'all brand new and expensive' and 'not like those found in the neighbourhood'. This suspicion, based on visible objects like cars, is common to some members of Del Carmen Chapel. However, for religiously-involved people like Elena, who is conscious of the challenges of contemporary churches, there is the positive idea that Evangelicals have been very successful in attracting people, which is something the Catholics admire.

*They make big efforts to attract people. They go out on the streets; they go door-to-door even when you don't pay attention to them and don't want to open the door.*

*Sometimes I open the door, because I say, we are all in God's way (Elena, 70)*

Church members' families are also religiously diverse. It was very common for my Catholic informants to have non-religious or non-practising members within their close families, especially the younger generations, but in some cases also partners. Iván, who joined his wife Purísima in religious practice a few years ago, recognises that to find a couple working together for a church is rare. For example, Elena's husband belongs to the freemasonry. Although they had a Catholic wedding, each one follows their own convictions and they respect each other's beliefs. In this sense,

Elena feels that although her husband does not practise Catholicism, he is a man of faith just like her.

During my fieldwork, I found two Catholic couples that practise their religion as partners. In both cases, they told me that the support from the other is essential for them. Both Iván and Purísima, and Rosa and Martín declared that in difficult times, when religious participation is found to be onerous for one of them, the other has encouraged them not to give it up.

*There are times when you feel weak, many times we have been about to “tirar la toalla” (throw away the towel), up to here we get, but sometimes is one who is like that and the other is cheering up, sometimes... and so we continue (Rosa, 52).*

Almost all of the community members' children have abandoned religious practice, with the only exception of Patricia's daughter, a young professional who attends Sunday mass with some regularity. However, parents in general do not judge their children's decision not to actively participate, considering instead that Catholic roots and inspiration are still present in their children's lives. For Elena, the fact that her children made the common sacraments is a sign of this commitment. In turn, Polo hopes that the Catholic faith is still present among his children, even though they do not attend mass. For Rosa, their children have a social sensibility that expresses their Catholic morality.

*When they were younger they did (participate), but they grew up and not anymore... but all of them have maintained their Catholic roots, because they are married, they got married in the Church, their daughters have taken the first communion, have been confirmed, all of that (Elena, 70).*

Three of my Catholic informants have assumed the role of caregiver for a family member in their adult life. Patricia cared for her bed-ridden mother-in-law for five years, until she passed away four months prior to our interview. This was for Patricia a fulfilling role, and by the time of the interview she was still mourning and trying to build a new routine. María Inés cared for her father, who had been bed-ridden for a year and died a year before our interview, when he was 105 years old. For María Inés,

this was also a big loss, and as a divorced woman, admitted to feeling rather lonely afterwards. Elena's situation was different. She and her husband share in the care of their 9-month-old great-grandson, the son of their granddaughter, who is living with them until she finishes her studies. In contrast with Patricia and María Inés, this situation is not ideal for Elena, who has been forced to change her scheduled routine, restricting some of her various and valued leisure activities. Interestingly, these kinds of family obligations are described without a specific religious meaning and assumed in all these cases as an unavoidable load.

Although among Catholics, in contrast with Evangelicals, poverty is not common, it is also the case that the members of the community of Del Carmen are experiencing intergenerational social mobility. They are all hard-working people, who have managed to pay for their children's university studies. A paradigmatic example is Felipe, Iván's and Purísima's son. I visited the couple in their home, which was very close to the Chapel. Although Felipe no longer lived with them, having moved with some colleagues to a more affluent neighbourhood, his leading role in the family was central theme of our conversation. Neither Iván nor Puri (as her husband calls her) have a higher education degree, but Felipe was a good student and he managed to obtain a scholarship to study engineering at a prestigious university. However, the first year for Felipe was difficult: he did not have the same level of mathematical knowledge as his privately schooled classmates, and he lost his scholarship. This was devastating for the family, especially for Iván, who was desperate to find the money to keep paying the fees. Felipe decided to start again and chose a different subject. He asked for a loan and with it obtained a degree in Architecture. His parents were incredibly proud. They understand that their son now belongs to another social class: he has high-class friends and lives in a high-class neighbourhood.

### **The Temple**

Religious services at Clase Zelada are carried out on Monday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday evenings. The services are organised around biblical readings and preaching,



and feature plenty of hymns accompanied by musical instruments and choral singing. The songs are part of the Methodist Pentecostal hymnbook; simple melodies that refer without exception to a change of life and the salvation of the lost. To attend religious services on Sunday afternoon is for Pentecostals in Zelada a requirement if they are to be a true Christian, and for many of them it is also their duty to attend during the week whenever it is possible to do so.

The intense religious practice means that not everybody attends all services. Although there are meetings almost every day of the week, the level of attendance is much lower on weekdays than on Sundays. In general, church members declare that they attend whenever it is possible. The only accepted and explicit reason for not attending is related to studies or work. As a consequence, free or leisure time is scarce, but people do not generally complain about it. María is a good example of a person who has dedicated her life to the church and who is entirely habituated to attending all meetings. As an elderly woman, she finds that the meetings are a place for socialising and offers an activity that saves her from boredom.

*You know what? When we don't have meetings we find ourselves, I don't know, bored (María, 82).*

The weekend is generally dedicated to the Church. For example, Carlos attends every Saturday afternoon at the massive class at the Cathedral; on Sunday mornings he goes to Sunday school with his family; and on Sunday afternoons he returns to the Church for a meeting with the youth team before the service at 7 pm. Services are not the only activity for the most engaged church members. Coni, in turn, is part of the children's orchestra. As a music teacher and composition student, every Saturday afternoon Coni runs the orchestra's rehearsals and she also translates traditional hymns into musical scores. For young people, Church activities usually replace the weekend's typical leisure activities.

The Holy Spirit and its manifestation are a central part of Pentecostal services, as I could observe in Zelada. The specific forms of its manifestation are commonly cries of praise and spontaneous sobs. Less frequent manifestations I observed were

dances, performed exclusively by women, that are experienced as a gift from God. I was very surprised when María, who is a shy and quiet woman, started to dance, pray and sob spontaneously during a weekday meeting. Later, she explained to me the deep sense of dancing.

*To me, this gift was given when I was very new in the Gospel, because when we came in there were young women dancing, and some of them holding hands, but with their eyes closed, and they danced and danced, and that I... it has to be God's work, I thought, it has to be God's work, I believed in that moment, the Lord had mercy and gave me this gift of dancing... (María, 82).*

Several interviews included long accounts of experiencing of the Holy Spirit, understood as the demonstration of the transformational power of God; as a main episode of the process of conversion. Baptism is a classic initial form for this phenomenon. Pedro, María's husband and the patriarch from the numerous Lemunao family, told me his religious story as a succession of mystical experiences that constituted his religious testimony. Among the older generations, this kind of discourse will be very common, revealing the importance of testimony as a way to approach non-Evangelicals like myself.

*And this man ended his prayers, I was quiet, listening to him, and that same spirit that was praying passed to me, and I start to ask for forgiveness, mercy, and I felt for the first time the Holy Spirit, the power of God in me, and I started to cry. This is why I am such a cry-baby when I talk about these things. Then, when I was asking for forgiveness, a stream of water falls over me... of water, from the head to the feet, and I was crying, crying. I look at myself, there is no water... I'm going crazy, what is happening... but I went out so light, so well. Then I received the Holy Spirit, I was baptised that day by the Lord, with water. From that day I serve the Lord with my wife (Pedro, 76).*

The healing power of Pentecostalism is still a central topic in these individual stories, and can refer to the person himself or to a close relative. Physical sickness and religious healing are very common, especially among the older generations. The

anointment of a sick person is a regular practice during services, where a sick person comes close to pulpit and the preacher raises his hand, praying for recovery. However, modern medicine is not rejected. María, for example, explains her trust in modern medicine in religious terms: God chose some people to practise medicine.

*You have to go to the doctor anyway, take the kids anyway, because many times faith is not enough, and God left doctors, midwives, everything, so you have to go anyway. My Bishop Javier, who is in Lord's arms, said: you go before your time because you are dumb, because you don't see a doctor (María, 82).*

In turn, mental illness, such as depression, is more common among young people, yet in this case religious meaning and the community are central elements in the recovery process. Daniela, for example, remembers her deep depression and later recovery with religious significance, giving high importance to her closeness to God and the community.

*I fell into a very strong depression, and that depression grew little by little... () And in the second year of secondary came the blow, very hard. At that time, anything made me cry and I started to do anything, in fact... this is kind of hard for me... in fact I ended cutting myself sometimes, in fact I have some scars here (shows her arm), and I took medicines in order to say no, I don't want anymore... () Without the Lord I couldn't have risen from that. Secondly a girl from here, she is playing the guitar, she is my best friend. She always asked me what is happening with you and I told her everything (Daniela, 19).*

For Evangelicals, sociability and friendship are highly marked by the intensity of religious activities. However, relationships between members are more likely to be described as 'familiar' than 'friendly'. Priscila, for example, feels that the community is a second family. The 'brothers' and 'sisters' from the Church are unconditional, although not always personal and close, relationships. Luis, for example, does not seem to trust a regular friendship, where interest may be at the base of the relationship. On the contrary, church members offer him a higher sense of solidarity.

For Mirian, a medical student, the community is where she can be herself without the fear of being judged for her beliefs.

*It's a part of my life, it's my family, besides of the family you form in your home, here within the Church you find family (Priscila, 30).*

*Here, within the Gospel, we are a family, a family in faith, which sometimes is even more than a carnal family, a spiritual family. This is the difference. We, my sisters, my brothers, are a spiritual family; we take care of each other. If one of us is sick, we send a brother to visit him, to take him a word of faith, of hope, that God will take care of him. But a friend is a friend as long as I have money, if money it's gone, the friend leaves you alone (Luis, 57).*

*The sensation is really pleasant sensation, because is like only people who share your beliefs and you can be there without fear to what people may say (Mirian, 23).*

However, there is also a dark side to this close and small group, and judgement is not absent. As many of their members recognise, there is a strong tendency to judge others, which is rejected as a bad habit that has to be eradicated, like Constanza told me.

*Typically, someone makes a mistake and that goes against what they teach us, and then judgement, judgement, judgement. And I think this is wrong, I try not to do it, because you can't judge another person, but they do it (Constanza, 23).*

In some cases, mostly among middle age members, there is not enough time, and social life is reduced to time spend with family and church. In extreme cases, the individual can be isolated even from family relationships, especially when someone has a highly demanding position at the church and does not want to lose it. In these cases, the dark side of social capital can be observed, when the status gained within the church – which normally is much higher than their status in secular work or family life – operates as an isolator from non-Church relationships, and the Church represents the only source of motivation and social relationships. Claudio, who is a theologian and a pastor, and who has an interesting combination of an academic

perspective of Pentecostalism and a pastoral vocation, understands this phenomenon of the compensation of status among some of the church members.

*The Church gives you some status.... At work I'm a labourer, but at church I'm a preacher. I manage 200 people, 300 people, but at work I'm the last in the line. So there are people who compare, who see that the church gives them certain status, authority, power, and this will produce that the person stays there against all odds, he won't let go (Claudio, 37).*

In general, Clase Zelada's members express a desire to maintain good relations with neighbours. The main aspect of this relationship is respect. Evangelicals feel that they are respected within the neighbourhood because they put great effort in showing good behaviour and decency, and they are always willing to help others through the word of God.

Although for most of my informants "true Catholics" are not essentially different to "true Evangelicals", the common opinion is that the Catholic mass is a ritual without efficacy, due to the distance between the priest and the people and the lack of emotional aspects. On the contrary, Evangelical religious services are considered effective, in terms of the feeling of the real presence of God. In this sense, God is not an idea but an experience. María compares her experience as a Catholic – a religion that she abandoned 60 years ago – with the efficacy of Pentecostal religious experience.

*I came in and out feeling the same, I never felt the Lord, they thought they were from God, but I never felt what I feel now, God's presence (María, 82).*

The devotion of saints and the use of religious images are commonly referred to as a Catholic 'religious mistake', something that María remembers from her school years.

*I was in school, and I saw many images and I said: so many Gods, a beautiful one and an ugly one, this can't be right (María, 82)*

Evangelical families are much more religiously homogeneous than their Catholic counterparts. The strength of the conjugal bond, as Brusco describes it for the case of Guatemala, is expressed in the sense that marriage is conceived as a calling.

According to Brusco, this reveals that religiosity for Evangelicals is central to family life and offers stability in the marital relationship (Brusco 1995). Marital homogamy is therefore common within members of the Church, and the success of marriage is often attributed to God's blessing and teachings. Both Luis and María Teresa describe their marriages as "a gift from God". In María Teresa's case, the narrative about her relationship is wholly oriented by religious significance. After a bad relationship experience, her husband appeared as a religious sign that she followed.

*I've always understood that when you get married as God says, you have a great blessing, and that blessing is in my home, in my wife, in my life (Luis, 57).*

*Then I understood that it was the Lord who gave him to me, because until today, these days, I have to thank God for what I have with him (María Teresa, 60).*

There is also a prevalence of religious homogamy among younger couples, probably due to the significant amount of time that young members spend at the Church or doing related activities. This homogamy is evidently, however implicitly, incentivised within the Church as a way to preserve the religious particularities of evangelical conjugality. However, this is also related to the Evangelical lifestyle, which can be difficult to share for someone who is not involved in the Church.

Religious diversity among partners and within families is thus very uncommon. The strength of conjugality and the nuclear family means that wider familiar bonds are weaker when there is not a shared religiosity. Religious diversity thus tends to be found within the extended familial circle: grandparents, uncles and cousins. These non-Evangelical relatives can operate as link with the 'world', which can be difficult and can cause familiar breakups, although is also possible to maintain close relationships. Daniela has a mixed extended family, where her uncles are not Christian. This has brought conflict, but they managed to overcome the religious differences and now she can enjoy both worlds.

*I go to the movies, because there is a part of my family that is not Christian, on my mother's side. On my father's side, they are Christians, but on my mother's side they won't. And for example, my uncles tell me, let's go to the movies, ok, let's go, let's*

*go camping, ok, let's go, they take me out, but they know that they can't touch Sunday.*

*At the beginning there were problems because we were in the Church. In fact, I wanted to attend an English Institute to learn more, and my uncle told me ok, I pay for you, but with the condition that you left the Church. I said no. () So my uncle... it was the only time he told me that, then he realised that it was a mistake and asked me to forgive him... (Daniela, 19).*

In the context of family relations, but also at an institutional level, gender differences appear as an important topic among Evangelicals. My female informants recognised without much resentment that the Church is a sexist institution, even in comparison with other Pentecostal churches. The 'Dorcas' meeting is a major example of that. 'Dorca' is the name for women in a religious context. The name comes from a biblical figure that represents a woman "who with her needle embroidered her name ineffaceably into the beneficence of the world". Only women attend this meeting, and for that reason the pulpit cannot be used, as it is reserved for male preachers. In general, female members are used to this rule but there is no agreement on the reason for behind it.

This distinctive organisation and gender separation reveals the predominance and transversal legitimacy of traditional patriarchal gender roles among Evangelicals, which is especially evident in the discourses and practices of the older members. The male role as provider appears to be confirmed as a cultural mark of Pentecostalism. However, the important presence of working women, fully engaged in the labour market, shows a pattern that is adapting to a more educated female population and to a more egalitarian standard. In this context, Luis represents a traditional pole among the community. He openly recognises that he did not allow his wife to work. In contrast, María Teresa has worked all her life, yet recognises that in order to be able to work, she needed the support of her husband. María Teresa represents a transitory step to a version of femininity that is abandoning this traditional model, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

*I work, and sorry for the expression, as a Chinese for my family, and I haven't got any vacations, I had to work to feed my family, because my wife didn't work, because I didn't allowed her to, not because I didn't want her to work, but because I said first come the kids. I work as a Chinese, but she has to take care of them (Luis, 56).*

*It's hard, because you have to coordinate everything.... You have to coordinate the house, being a wife, a mom, to accomplish with the husband... this is why I say that God rewarded me with the man he gave me. Because we both have worked all our life and he has been with me in every situation (María Teresa, 60).*

Poverty, in turn, is a generalised element of everyone's past in the Evangelical community, as an experience for the oldest or as family history for the youngest. In some cases, we are talking about extreme misery, which is described as a godless experience. Pedro and María are the paradigmatic examples of this kind of story, especially Pedro, who had a very extreme experience of poverty when he was young.

*I said I'm so poor... I thought that, because we were poor, I had no shoes, I didn't have good clothes, so I thought, I said, how can I know that there is a God, do you get me? How can I know that there is a God to believe in, so much suffering, why it has to be like this? (Pedro, 76).*

Overall, this initial description of Zelada's religious life offers certain interpretative themes that will be developed in the following chapters, where I will analyse how religious life in this specific neighbourhood is related to a national process of religious change and also to western sociological perspectives on religion and modernity.



## **Chapter 4. Evangelical Traditional Practices and the New Generation**

The first chapters of this thesis have developed a comprehensive description and analysis of the context from which the findings I will present in the following three chapters emerge. The first of these substantive chapters focuses on one of the main dimensions of this research: the intergenerational transmission of religion and the challenges that arise from this phenomenon in the Chilean context.

I will focus on the new generation of Evangelicals, considering how traditional religious practices are being transformed when this new generation does not share the same material and cultural conditions as their parents and grandparents, and how these transformations present individual and organisational challenges and reactions. As discussed in Chapter 1, conservative religions are in general better at retaining the new generations, which was evidenced in Zelada. However, this does not mean that modern processes of individualisation and cultural change do not affect younger members' approach to religion, as will be explored in this chapter. At the same time, as discussed earlier, social and educational mobility is a relevant phenomenon in religious terms, as it impacts upon preferences and lifestyles which in turn affects how young Evangelicals approach their religious life and choices.

In the first section of this chapter I will introduce the context and the challenges to religious life. I will then describe and analyse the two main dimensions of these challenges: traditional recruitment strategies are no longer suitable for this new generation, and the consequences this has in terms of their religious and secular identities and how they present themselves to the others; and traditional material discourse, which no longer makes sense for young people whose religiosity is directed at overcoming deprivation, yet fulfils a spiritual need.

### **Evangelical Practices in a New Context**

The background of structural and cultural change is reflected in how religiously-involved young people experience their religiosity. The environment in which traditional evangelical practices are being developed and transformed by the new

generation of native Pentecostals is marked by two major tendencies. On the one hand, there has been a recent process of secularisation and, on the other, there has been an increase in the levels of economic and social development, marked especially by a massive process of educational mobility. Both processes are particularly affecting the younger generation of Chileans. This was evident from my research, notably the way in which Zelada's younger members are challenging the traditional practices of their Church.

As was discussed in chapter 3, this recent secularisation process is especially evident in the increasing proportion of young people that declare no religion or identify as atheist or agnostic. At the same time, the economic and social transformations that have marked Chilean society during the last 20 years would indicate that at least 70% of the current undergraduate students are part of the first generation of their family to have had access to higher education (Fediakova 2014). I observed that young Evangelicals in Zelada were protagonists of these changes, in the sense that they were able to access to higher education and were presented with a much more secular society than their predecessors.

Against that background, in this chapter I discuss the theories that correlate material and existential security leads with the weakening of religious manifestations (Norris and Inglehart 2004). I also discuss the status and rational choice theories that postulate a negative correlation between conservative Protestantism and upward social and educational mobility, interpreting religious preferences as forms of cultural consumption akin to other cultural choices (Demerath 1961; Stark and Finke 2000; Sherkat and Wilson 1995).

I will argue that the classic understanding of Chilean Pentecostalism as a religion that attracts the poorest and most vulnerable populations no longer reflects the new composition of the Chilean Methodist Pentecostal Church. In a context of a national process of democratisation, the new generation of Evangelicals are becoming more integrated into Chile's social life and have begun to insert themselves into more educated circles. This new generation of Evangelicals, who have a different social or worldly status to their parents (Lindhardt 2012), are presented with traditional

religious practices that do not correspond to the current features of their everyday lives. The evangelical religious subculture, marked by narratives of poverty, sickness and conversion and with the street as its main public stage, is now being challenged by a generation reaching a higher socioeconomic and cultural background than their parents and grandparents. I thus argue that traditional practices, associated with a low education and marginality, are no longer suitable for young Evangelicals, who are transforming their approach to religious life and practice and, at the same time, promoting changes at the institutional level. In this sense, I agree with the idea that changes in social status are a central aspect of religious choices, and that material security challenges religious adherence. However, in this chapter I will argue that transformation and adaptation are processes that contradict the expectation of switching to more liberal denominations or of the abandonment of religious practice.

Following this perspective, this chapter aims to explore how young Evangelicals problematise and adapt the traditional Evangelical religiosity to this new social context. The emergence of this new generation, whose life experiences and religious trajectories radically differ from the previous generation's, confronts the churches with complex challenges of adaptation and innovation (Lindhardt 2012), but at the same time demands an adaptation at the level of the everyday practices of their members. These successful university students or young professionals belong at the same time to a secular youth culture and to the religious culture of their parents or congregation (Lindhardt 2012). In this context, I argue that in their effort to adapt themselves to the modern secular society, the new generation of Evangelicals is trying to appear "as normal as possible" in front of their non-Evangelical peers. This transformation is also reflected in an institution that has to evolve to fulfil the requirements of an established Church in the context of a modern-day society.

In particular, this chapter includes two major practical dimensions that emerged as controversial according to the findings of my fieldwork. The first one, which is related to a formal discussion regarding the question of how traditional practices are being reformulated, revolves around recruitment strategies. The testimony of conversion, which has been at the core of the attempt to religiously transform the other, is at

least being adapted among native Evangelicals. This testimony has traditionally included a conversion narrative that is not part of the religious experience of a generation that has been born and raised as Evangelical. Accordingly, street preaching is especially problematic because of its powerful symbolic status and its simultaneous apparent inefficacy in the new context. When the testimony of conversion becomes weaker among native Pentecostals and, at the same time, street preaching seems to be losing its former importance, the mandate to spread the Gospel becomes problematic, and the demand for new methods increases.

The second topic that this chapter will address is the content of religious practices. Closely related to educational mobility, the demand for a different approach to religiosity emerges. Traditional emotional preaching, based on the promise of salvation from worldly miseries, healing and prosperity, oriented to an audience with a low level of education and delivered by a preacher with poor theological knowledge, does not seem to be adequate for the congregation's new composition. The search for a religious message that corresponds to a higher educational status and the demand for more prepared leaders is common among an audience that requires new tools to understand, express and expand its own religious identity.

### **The Problem of Recruitment**

In the context of the explicit mandate to spread the Gospel that is part of Evangelical identity, expressed in a conversion that entails witnessing, recruitment strategies are problematic for native Pentecostals. In general, the fact that they have been born as Pentecostals makes them struggle to develop a personal testimony that could work as the core of evangelisation discourse, as it is in the case of converts. At the same time, street preaching, the traditional form to communicating this message of conversion, seems to be a controversial cultural symbol in the context of educational and social mobility.

The religious obligation to evangelise is an intrinsic part of Pentecostalism, which has traditionally been a religion of converts. In the particular case of the Chilean

Methodist Pentecostal Church, this mandate is based on the prophecy attributed to the Bishop Manuel Umaña that states that Chile will be a Christian country.<sup>5</sup> In my conversations with middle aged or older members of the Church, there was always a testimony of conversion, which I soon identified as an 'evangelisation tool'. The idea of evangelisation tool refers to a narrative intended to show God's power of transformation, oriented to me as a potential convert. Every interview I did with old or middle-aged members contained at some point a reference to the moment when God would bless me or when I would find Jesus. These founding discourses for the older generations are narrations of healing and mobility in the context of pervasive poverty. Conversion appears as a personal experience of salvation from worldly miseries, and at the same time as an invitation to me as a non-Evangelical other to join them. Carlos, my key contact with the Church, when I confessed to him that I felt a little uncomfortable during my first interviews because the interviewees were trying to evangelise me, told me:

*I think that it's intrinsic to the Evangelical, intrinsic. If you are there is inevitable that they try to evangelise you... I would be surprised if you tell me that they didn't, because it's really a part... there are people who don't understand... let's see, the Evangelical fully understands that the Jesus Christ's main mandate is to go around the world and preach the gospel to every person, and the person that doesn't understand that is because he hasn't accepted Christ... (Carlos, 45).*

Carlos' conception of evangelisation explains the context in which the interviews with older members were conducted and why they saw me as a potential convert very well. This is why it is particularly interesting that this kind of 'conversion discourse' practically disappears among the middle aged and younger members of the congregation. This reflects a dramatic change in the way Pentecostals are relating to the non-Evangelical world, which is not a hostile place that requires conversion of sinners, but the place where they want to be totally inserted as normal citizens.

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<sup>5</sup> Manuel Umaña was the Bishop of the Methodist Pentecostal Church of Chile from 1950 to 1964.

### Coming Out as an Evangelical

The first step for young Pentecostals that are trying to be fully integrated in Chilean society is to recognise their religiosity in front of their non-Evangelical peers, which can be problematic. Appearing before others is, following Goffman, an essential aspect of young individuals' identity, thus they will make a great effort to control the impression they give others (Goffman 1959, p. 13).

In Goffman's terms, face-to-face interaction will offer the possibility of influencing the others by one's actions, thus these encounters will be of key importance to the individual's social status (Goffman 1959, p. 46). The fear of rejection and stigmatisation and also the lack of specific tools to talk about their religiosity in non-Evangelical circles are the common concerns that explain why young Pentecostals prefer to keep their religiosity as an implicit feature, that can be revealed only when certain conditions are satisfied. It can thus be postulated that young Evangelicals are careful in terms of their performance in front of certain audiences, as this performance will influence the way in which they are considered (Goffman 1959).

Coming out as an Evangelical in front of the audiences that compose the school, the university or the workplace is most of the time an event that is expected to happen spontaneously, under the assumption that a true Christian will stand out as someone special. This means that religion is maintained in the background of the presentation of the self, in the sense that the free exposition of this dimension is reserved to those spaces where the secular audience is absent. Two of my interviewees, Daniela and Paulette, experienced their religious identities being discovered by their classmates. Daniela, who had just started studying civil engineering at a private University, told her classmates that she was Evangelical only when someone noticed it:

*Yes, the first time was because a classmate told me, you are different, and I replied, that's because I'm an Evangelical, and then they understood. And then everybody knew that I'm an Evangelical (Daniela, 19).*

Similarly, Paulette, told me that her high school peers noticed something different about her, which she relates to the common idea that Evangelicals do not fully belong to this world.

*At the beginning maybe it's like... we are in the world, but we are not from the world. They didn't notice it, but over time, they always say, there's something different about you. And over time, they find out that I'm an Evangelical (Paulette, 18).*

In this sense, the preferred ways to present their own religion to others is through an insistence on high moral standards and by setting an example, which reflects a common conviction among Evangelicals: that their religiosity is visible in their behaviour, thus does not require to be explicitly presented. For young Pentecostals, this is where they can find the narrative they lack: this behaviour operates as a form of ethical testimony, which is not exactly narrated but exercised by being an example. This is the way in which Nicole solves her necessity to talk about her religiosity with her peers and also the mandate to preach, which appear to be two indistinguishable activities. She works as an accountant at a public hospital.

*At the end I preach with facts. I'm not one of those who say hi, I'm Nicole, I'm an Evangelical, no. In fact, the topic of religion comes out in a more intimate occasion, or when I use a special language, I don't know, I say, no, I have a meeting, and then they ask, and this is how I get into the topic. At least I always have been taught that you don't have to say, you have to demonstrate (Nicole, 26).*

There seems to be some kind of pride associated with Evangelical religiosity and how it produces high ethical standards that allows its translation into a secular language. This is a feature that Chilean Evangelicals use to differentiate themselves from Catholics, who in general hold looser ethical standards. However, the specific reference to religious identification is still maintained as a background dimension. Many of my informants recognised that they had avoided at some point in their lives talking about their religiosity in non-church related social circles. For example, when Nicole remembers her school years, she recognises that she was afraid to talk about

her religiosity. Similarly, for Jorge, who studied law at the secular University of Chile, religion was a private affair during his years at law school, which even meant that he stopped his religious practice. In both cases, they remember these times with some regret.

*At school, I couldn't say that I was an Evangelical... in fact, I experienced one stage when I didn't say I was Evangelical, because I knew I would be bullied. I had classmates who discussed about religion; it was a problem to talk to them. I feel that I was a coward in that time, now I analyse it, I never said anything, I never participated in any controversy (Nicole, 26).*

*I was kind of a lone ranger at the University, and I think I somehow gave in... I stopped going to Church... but the conviction was stronger, but I kept it private. Few people found out I was a Christian... (Jorge, 29).*

This kind of behaviour is related to an effort to overcome some typical prejudices against Evangelicals. For example, for Claudio, a dentist who recently started to work, it is really important to avoid the image of Evangelicals being fanatical and closed-minded. However, at the time of the interview only a few of his colleagues knew about his religion.

*I thought, the day they know that I'm a Christian they won't believe me, that I'm an Evangelical. I haven't found the chance, the opportunity to say it, but the day will come when they will realise it and they will be surprised (Claudio, 26).*

In sum, to come out as an Evangelical, which could be considered as the first step in order to be able to spread the Gospel, is not a straightforward task for the younger members of the Church. Although they maintain that their religiosity brings good social outcomes in terms of the moral status they enjoy in their secular circles, in general they prefer to keep their religiosity in the background of their secular life, limited to intimate interactions and audiences. This reveals that Pentecostalism is still an attribute that contains the risk of social and cultural stigmatisation. However, the stigma is not only related to social status, but also – and perhaps more importantly –



to moral standards: religious fanaticism and incivility are essential elements of the social stigma that young Evangelicals are trying to avoid.

### **The Absence of a Testimony of Conversion**

If coming out as an Evangelical is the first step to evangelisation, the second could be described as the development of a 'personal testimony'. Traditionally, this personal testimony has been based on a narration of conversion and has been the fundamental topic of Evangelical preaching.

As discussed in Chapter 1, conversion occurs when believers are "born again" and open themselves to receive the Holy Spirit. But it also requires the individuals to testify their experience to other potential converts (Wightman 2008). This narration describes religious adherence in terms of a life changing conversion experience (Lehmann 2013, p.655): the foundational personal encounter with God, which is carefully constructed as a way of presentation to others of an example of God's work. As Wightman finds in her ethnographical work in Bolivia, testimonies are stories that tell how faith helped the teller to get through difficult times and take especially the form of conversion narratives that show how suffering has been overcome. Experiences of suffering become thus meaningful (Wightman 2008). Giving testimony and preaching are for Harding the two main situations in which believers speak the Gospel. While preaching occurs in the formal context of a religious meeting and requires the speaker to be anointed, to give testimony is more informal and often occurs in the course of a conversation (Harding 1987). Tales of healing and mobility are commonly at the centre of these testimonies, where poverty, misery and vice are usually at the origin. In this sense, giving testimony is about real and discontinuous change (Webster 2013, Chapter 4), and it serves as evidence of the Gospel's efficacy in the faithfuls' lives. Marcos, the head preacher in Zelada, explained to me how this narration works and why is it so effective as a proselytising tool.

*It is a lived experience that pervades through all the society. There are people here, you have heard about them, who had very complicated lives, and suddenly they changed, in neighbourhoods that were complicated too, and they respect Evangelicals... I've run churches in problematic neighbourhoods and people respect Evangelicals, because people change, actually change, change from the inside, from the inside to the outside, they change their habits, their way of being (Marcos, 45).*

Giving testimony of this change thus corresponds to the core of the Pentecostal religiosity, which is assumed in an unproblematic way among the older generations, as María explained to me.

*The gospel is... you serve the Lord through testimony; every Christian has a testimony (María, 82).*

As Lehmann explains, conversion-led movements are part of a type of religiosity that works on the basis of belief and not heritage (Lehmann 2013, p.655). Thus, for native Evangelicals, this foundation has to be reformulated. When there is not an actual conversion and no deprived or vicious past, as it is the case among the majority of native Evangelicals, this classical structure has to be reformulated, especially when poverty and vice are important elements of stigmatisation. It is evident that the classic contents of preaching are incompatible with young Evangelicals' religious and worldly experience. This gives rise to the following question: when there is no visible change, how does religion spread?

In these cases, what I found in general was a narrative construction about an initial encounter with God, which takes place in adolescence, when more or less critical episodes of doubt are common. In accordance with Lindhardt and his study about young Pentecostals in Chile, the majority of the Church's young members have developed a personal narrative related to their acceptance of God in adulthood after a period of departure or distance from the path of the Lord and a period of participation in the secular youth world (Lindhardt 2012). Nevertheless, it is questionable whether this effort to construct a personal narrative achieves a similar capacity as an evangelisation tool. These stories do not seem to have the same

powerful significance not the same internal and external effectivity as the traditional conversion narratives. Their capacity to produce identification and to transform the other seems to be limited, especially when these others are immersed in a secularising and more affluent society.

### **The Obsolescence of Street Preaching**

I have described how the difficulties of a generation that aspires to be fully integrated in a secularising society, but at the same time is trying to maintain its Pentecostal identity, are reflected in its struggles to demonstrate religiosity in non-Evangelical circles and to construct a personal testimony, thus struggles to fulfil the religious mandate to spread the Gospel. More specifically, a traditional practice that is challenged by this generation is street preaching.

Street preaching represents a core element of Evangelical popular identity and its expression. The stage for Pentecostal preaching is the street, which for Guerrero was the only place where Evangelicals have traditionally been able to make their religiosity visible to the rest of society. This activity is an inclusive practice, in the sense that it does not require specific abilities or knowledge in order to take part: the only requirement for preaching is to have been touched by the Holy Spirit and to have a testimony to share (Guerrero 2012, p. 17). It is always a collective phenomenon: it is done by groups and is oriented to a mass audience, which represents the outside world (Guerrero 2012). Street preaching is a classical popular image of Pentecostal religiosity among the general population.

In Zelada, street preaching is a central activity, especially during the summer months: Zelada's members meet at a preaching point every week from November until April. Even María at her advanced age finds preaching as a religious obligation.

*In the Winter is like we have vacations, we don't go out to preach, but the moment will come, and we will have to go to the preaching, as we call it, to the preaching point, and we have to go, work for the Lord, because the bible says: go preach the Gospel all around the world, is God's mandate (María, 85).*

There is no question among the older members about how effective street preaching is as an evangelisation tool. I discussed this topic extensively with Claudio, who is a pastor from the Methodist Evangelical Church, but also a theologian. We met at the Evangelical Theological Institute, where he teaches. He explained to me that Pentecostal identity was born on the streets, thus the practice of street preaching is one which will be maintained against all odds, regardless of its efficiency. Assuming a theological perspective, Claudio explained to me the importance of this practice in terms of identity and also its current ineffectivity.

*Pentecostal identity was born on the street; this is something that will be maintained against all odds, regardless if it produces results or not, because this is the identity that needs to be maintained within the Pentecostal world. But the truth is that if you ask, the large majority of people coming lately to the church has been invited, for example, I invite my co-worker... this is what is called preaching person to person (Claudio, 37).*

This perspective is shared by Guerrero, who argues that street preaching is the manner in which Evangelicals have been made visible to the rest of society, and that they have been somehow reduced to this label (Guerrero 2012). The typical image of Evangelicals for the rest of society is of these testimonies of conversion being narrated orally, usually with musical instruments and electric amplification, in the streets. The public associates this with poverty, marginality and religious fundamentalism; prejudices that contemporary Evangelicals are trying to overcome in their everyday lives.

This popular imaginary explains why street preaching has become controversial as the main mass evangelisation strategy for young Evangelicals. It is not surprising that among the younger generations street preaching is losing strength not only due to its lack of efficacy, but also as a cultural symbol and as the way to be presented to others. Constanza, for example, studies musical composition at a private institute, where she is surrounded by a social circle of upper class and secular friends and classmates. For her, street preaching is an old-fashioned practice that conveys an inaccurate image

of young Evangelicals. She is convinced that is their responsibility to change this classic image.

*... it's useful for society to see that we are not the ones that are on the streets... because being Evangelical is like being poor, it comes from very low classes, and shows us like other type of people... (Constanza, 23).*

But beyond the cultural stigma associated with street preaching, this traditional religious practice is also losing its former efficacy as a way to spread the evangelical message. As Constanza pointed, the classic methods are not suitable to approach her social circle, a situation that for her includes Chilean society as a whole. This perception is shared by Jorge, but he recognises that street preaching is not a practice that can be eliminated but could benefit from being complemented by more contemporary resources. Carlos, who does not belong to the younger generation but holds a directive position in charge of the Church's youth, also recognises that street preaching is maintained on traditional grounds but is no longer suitable for a younger audience.

*If I want to share my faith with my university classmates I can't get there like my mom does, or like the grandparents you interviewed, I can't, because it is another reality, the country has changed a lot (Constanza, 23).*

*I think that the methods we are using... the form of the message is not effective. The way we preach doesn't... I don't ask for its derogation... we, the Evangelicals, we live in a sort of war in order to get to other people... and to win a war we have to fight on different fronts, and one of these fronts is street preaching, but we have to diversify... for example, talking to people, offering social assistance, counselling... (Jorge, 29)*

*Today, mass street preaching, which is part of our Church and was born together with our Church, its important, it will be maintained, but nowadays to get to the people it is hard with mass preaching (Carlos, 45).*

To sum up, using the distinction between form and content, I argue that recruitment strategies are not only problematic because they lack contents, which is reflected in

a generation that struggles to develop a testimony, but also because of the obsolescence of the traditional mass form of religious expansion. Street preaching has lost its appeal for a generation that is aspiring towards overcoming the image of Evangelicals as poor people who use the streets as the stage on which to share their fundamentalist religious message. At the same time, the efficacy of this practice is also questioned when the intended audience has changed dramatically, from the lowest segments of society to the middle or high classes, which are currently the younger members' peers.

### **The Search for New Strategies**

In the context of a crisis of content of the religious message and of the obsolescence of the methods of evangelisation, the search for new recruitment strategies is a central issue for the future of the Church. As has been discussed in this chapter, young Evangelicals are in general not clear about the best way to approach their peers with a religious message. While some of them think that being a good Christian is enough to prompt the attention of their peers, thus spreading the evangelical message through an ethical example, others are more conscious of the necessity of preaching, but they are not clear about when, where or to whom. As Carlos observed in his work with the youth, young members do not know how to talk about their religiosity in their non-church circles.

*Preaching person to person is hard for young members.*

*It's hard for them to talk to you outside the Church, at the university, is hard for them to preach. They want to, they have a Christian behaviour, but it's hard for them to talk about it (Carlos, 45).*

When I discussed this topic with specific members who have developed their own views on it, like Carlos, it became evident that they see the need to search for new ways to expand their teachings. This is, however, problematic in a context of desire to attract new members from the middle and upper classes.

*I think that the main challenges with the youth, which is something that we are incorporating today, is to work with them in a different kind of evangelisation (Carlos, 45).*

The case of the Temple of Providencia is especially interesting in this context. With good connectivity; exclusive stores and restaurants; offices, schools, universities and also residential areas: Providencia is a vibrant municipality that borders with Santiago's city centre. A few years ago, the theologian and Pastor José Peña obtained the bishop's authorisation to open an autonomous temple in this part of the city, aiming to attract middle and upper-class members. For Claudio, who is also engaged in this project, it was obvious that street preaching was not a viable means to spread the gospel. However, there is still no clarity about the best method to attract people from this wealthy neighbourhood, showing that Pentecostalism has a limited space for growth among the elites, where the Catholic culture is still an important element of identity and social distinction (Thumala Olave 2007).

*In Providencia it's forbidden to make noise in the street, the council ordinance does not allow it. You can't play music, anything... this method is useless here, so we are discussing how to deliver the message in an original way. For example, distributing leaflets, conducting a person-to-person conversation. Some people will accept you, other won't, it's really a new experience, it's just starting here. But it's not a permanent practice (Claudio, 37).*

In general, my informants took the view that the future will probably be marked by an evangelisation strategy based on preaching person to person, which appears apt when looking to approach a highly educated audience. As Claudio argued, the personal contact is the key in these new contexts. Jorge, who is himself a sympathiser of the Providencia's project, goes beyond the strategy. He thinks that the content of this person-to-person message should also be one that highlights free will and not the imposition of ethical mandates.

*It's more effective, because the person inserts himself in one of the Church's groups and the person that invited him is his contact, so if he likes the environment, he will stay... (Claudio, 37).*

*I think transmission should be person to person, and always arguing that the message... God... gives us the capacity of choosing, I think that the Church can't use God and tell them what to do, God gives the capacity of choosing. And in that sense, that can be symbolic or not, He gave an option, the option to choose, and thus now with the Evangelical Church... you can choose your path (Jorge, 29).*

In turn, Carlos and Marcos, both middle-aged members of the Church who have regular contact with young people, are convinced that the new generation has to develop evangelisation skills in order to fulfil the mandate to preach and expand their religion.

*I would like young people to have the capacity to start a conversation from a Christian point of view. Not to wait until somebody comes to me, because he saw me as a different person, and then I start to talk. No, without invading, without being annoying, but yes, we are having a conversation, and I start this conversation (Carlos, 45).*

*I say to my daughters, you have a mission to preach to persons, God will put you in the precise place to talk to them about your experience of the Gospel between equals, or at least similar, more or less on the same level, and God has allowed us to educate you for that... (Marcos, 50).*

Overall, the Church is in a process of searching for new methods of evangelisation that are appropriate for a new and more educated generation, which is searching for inclusion in a more affluent and secularising environment. However, there is no clarity about which of these new methods could be successful or how to develop conversational abilities of those young members, who are the people that will ultimately be responsible for the Church's future. These findings indicate that the theories that establish a negative correlation between evangelical or conservative Protestantism and social status are right in their definition of a limited capacity of



Pentecostalism to gain access to the Chilean upper class (Alcaino and Mackenna 2017). However, it is also the case that the efforts of adaptation are challenging these limits.

The next section will discuss how the content of the religious message is also being challenged. Young members agree that, in order to satisfy their own questions and to be able to approach a more educated audience, the teachings should be focused on a spiritual search, oriented to people who are searching for meaning and not for compensation. In this sense, prosperity and material security appear as main drivers of religious transformation, as religious demands start to specialise and to be concentrated on meaning and not religious responses to material needs.

### **The Demand for Religious Knowledge**

Pentecostal religiosity has traditionally been characterised by its popular orientation, which is reflected in a message that is based on an emotional discourse of salvation from worldly miseries. From this perspective, Zelada shares some elements with the Prosperity Gospel, which considers that the domains of wealth and health are places for divine influence, rewards or punishment (Schieman and Jung 2012, p. 740). Also known as Faith Gospel or Health and Wealth Gospel, its central message is that God wants believers to be rich, healthy and successful. Typically, these kind of churches ask believers to contribute with material goods, which are considered seeds that carry the promise of an increased harvest (Haynes 2012, p.4). In Zelada, this message is explicit when donations are collected during the services: "God bless the cheerful donor". From a deprivation-compensation perspective, this religiosity is more prevalent among poor and deprived populations, as it provides a form of compensation for a miserable existence (Schieman and Jung 2012). This relationship is also predicted by the secular resources hypothesis, which states that education and income provide individuals with resources that make them rely on their own capacities to achieve health and wealth (Schieman and Jung 2012, p. 742; Norris and Inglehart 2004). However, it is also attributed to the consequences of late capitalism

in developing countries (Haynes 2012, p.4) and to a “spirit of modern consumerism” in its American version, encouraging Christians to store up treasures on earth, representing a religious version of the American Dream (Munday 2017, p. 341). These perspectives read the prosperity gospel as a super-structural epiphenomenon derived from the capitalist hegemony, which according to Haynes obscures the religious phenomenon (Haynes 2012, p.5). Following this argument, what I could observe in Zelada is that the elements of material preaching are not becoming the centre of Pentecostal religiosity, which can be explained in part by a secular resources hypothesis, but also by a reestablishment of the other-worldly focus of traditional Protestantism (Garrard-Burnett 2013, p.24). In this sense, religiosity responds not only to material and status conditions, but also to spiritual and other-worldly needs that explain its continuity and permanence, as well as its capacity for change and adaptation.

Although elements of material preaching can be found in religious discourses, hymns and members’ testimonies, the other-worldly focus is a source of tension between these two faces of Pentecostalism, where the message of encouragement – to ask God for a better life – is losing strength. Zelada is an interesting case precisely because it shows the collapse of the scheme of prosperity in a context of social and educational mobility, but not with the expected result of a switching or abandonment of religiosity.

The material message in Zelada is presented in simple terms and without intellectual sophistication: its origins can be found in an audience that traditionally had a low educational level and was needing material assistance. However, this feature of the classic Evangelical preaching is also related to religious leaders who have themselves low levels of formal preparation.

This commonality reflects the fact that the preachers or pastors and their followers share a common socio-cultural background, which also implies that any member can be a potential leader. This has been suggested as being one of the reasons why Pentecostalism has been successful in popular contexts. However, this classical feature is controversial within a new generation that has had access to higher

educational levels and thus do not share the traditional popular background of their leaders. These young members are not drawn by this popular origin of their pastors, simply because they don't identify with them. On the contrary, they notice an educational gap.

A demand for a different approach to religion is therefore emerging among those members that do not feel interpreted by the classical emotional preaching. In general, young Pentecostals are expecting a sermon that is not merely geared towards animating followers and relieving them of suffering, but also aimed at teaching them about the foundations and ethics of Christianity. This religious knowledge appears for young members as an essential evangelisation tool, which would enable them to offer up solid objective religious arguments to their educated peers. The demand for complexity and for prepared leaders is common among an audience that requires tools to understand, express and expand its own religiosity.

### **More Meat, less Milk**

The highly educated new generation of Evangelicals is challenging the traditional approach to religious knowledge and experience. Constanza, for example, expresses this challenge as a demand for knowledge.

*I would like to get closer to the intellectuality of religion, learn more about why I'm believing in this. (Constanza, 23).*

Like Constanza, young Pentecostals in general are searching for intellectual depth and for a rational study of the bible. Carlos, who is in charge of the Youth department, fully understands this as an institutional deficiency.

*This is what we are looking for, because it is indeed a deficiency. Of course, because for the Evangelical 40 years ago it's okay, but the youth today are much more curious, are much more interested. Let's see, the bible says this, I accept it, but why? Why is it like this? What does this mean? Now, this is what we are searching for, our main challenge with the youth (Carlos, 45).*

As Lindhart found in his study, the theological aspect of Christianity is not systematically encouraged in Pentecostal culture, where the mainstream tendency is still marked by lots of singing and praying (Lindhardt 2012, p. 494). This is clearly reflected in what Constanza describes:

*Look, during the youth meeting, you should go, I don't like to go, because all they do is singing, singing and singing, like for three hours. They project in a screen the songs, and I don't know, I don't like to sing, I would like them to teach me from the bible (Constanza, 23).*

The search for strong religious arguments to confront educated non-Evangelical peers appears as an essential evangelisation tool, which would enable young Pentecostals to talk about religion in secular contexts. To be able to give solid objective religious arguments is for them a requirement in a context of an educated interlocutor, who will not be attracted by the classical testimony of conversion, but by a more spiritual approach to religiosity, as Constanza argues.

*As I said, I can't come with my faith to my friends like something subjective, I have to have some rationality (Constanza, 23).*

From a similar perspective, Jorge told me an anecdote about his years in law school, where secularism and rationalism were the features of the mainstream culture. In this context, he felt the need to employ more robust religious arguments.

*During my first year of college, I confronted my generation's best student, he told me, God, I don't know, is falser than a 1000 pesos coin... and I said no, because... and I started to give biblical arguments, and I realised that it is almost an authority argument, I can't argue that, how can I argue... (Jorge, 29).*

Nevertheless, religious arguments that go beyond a testimony of conversion are not the only aspects that young followers think they are lacking. There is also a need for spiritual guidance, not only understood as encouragement, but also as ethical teachings. This means that the development of religiously shaped spirituality offers young Evangelicals a means to learn how to behave as a true Christian, even if this teaching could be hard to follow in some cases. Juan Ignacio reflects on this search,

recognising that he probably will not obtain such a religious formation because of institutional priorities.

*...More spiritual I would say. I think... it's not that it's wrong, the word for encouragement is in the Bible, and that's fine, the Gospel... but I think that there is also more, Paul's letters that state how to be a good Christian, I like that. But here, they know that new people are arriving, you can't preach such things, because it's too hard... (Juan Ignacio, 22).*

Following Juan Ignacio's perspective, the feeling that most of the Church's members are not prepared for a tougher version of religiosity is common among the younger generation. However, the softer version that is usually presented during meetings and services does not seem to be enough for these members that are anxious for a more profound religiosity. As Juan Ignacio points out, the sermons are usually like milk for babies, while what he expects is meat.

*As we usually say, there's a word that is like milk for the brothers, like a baby, and while they grow you can give them better food, meat... I would like more of that... (Juan Ignacio, 22).*

In general, there is a strong and growing interest among Evangelical youth in developing a deeper approach to Christianity. This phenomenon is related to a population that has achieved certain levels of welfare and education, and the simple and direct message of salvation from worldly miseries is no longer consistent with their social and cultural status.

The search for a more complex or transcendent message corresponds with the social development that Chilean society has experienced during recent decades, which can be characterised, at least in some segments, as a post-material society (Inglehart 1990). This means that the transcendental message is oriented to people that, having satisfied their material needs, are expecting religion to provide meaning. As Jorge points out, the need for a more complex message that is suited to a more educated audience is a priority for the younger segment of the Church, which is orienting its religiosity to a spiritual dimension.

*If you pay attention to the subjects of the messages, these are, you have problems today, tomorrow you won't. This for a person, for example myself, and may God set me free from an economic crisis... for a person that has a successful career, or is successful in her studies, is not useful. This message of hope doesn't makes much sense. And here I think that the Church has little capacity of adaptation, to realise that it has new members, that the group is more heterogeneous, that it's different, you have professionals, successful people, and also the idea that you have to reach a different kind of people.*

*We have to make the message more spiritual... this message is not oriented to economic success, but to spiritual peace... what we are looking for is God's love, God wants to have a relationship with you, He sent Christ to die for you, and He is inviting you to reconcile with him. This is the message we should send, a message of God's love, a much more transcendent message (Jorge, 29).*

It thus becomes clear that young Evangelicals are demanding a religious message that responds to their social and cultural status. It follows that the educational differential between them and their leaders is a critical aspect to consider, as is discussed in the next section.

### **The Educational Gap**

The main obstacle to the development of a more appropriate message for the Evangelical youth seems to be the educational gap between preachers and their younger followers, in a context of educational mobility. As Cleary and Sepúlveda suggested more than twenty years ago, the lack of formal theological training of its leaders is one of the main institutional weaknesses of Chilean Pentecostalism, which is revealed when the social composition of the Churches started to change (Cleary and Sepúlveda 1997, p.111).

During my fieldwork, I attended several services. Most of them were disappointing in the sense that I was expecting charismatic preachers, who would contrast with unenthusiastic Catholic priests. This expectation was based on literature about

Pentecostalism and its strong charismatic power; depending not on the intellectual quality of the message but on the ability of the preacher to perform. However, with few exceptions, I did not find these qualities in Zelada. Yet even the exceptions did not present a strong emotional speech, distinguishing themselves instead through a deeper interpretation of a biblical passages. My experience appears to be echoed by the young members, who are noticing that in general they have a higher cultural level than their preachers or pastors, as Constanza notices.

*I would like the brothers to be more cultured; they are very uncultured (Constanza, 23).*

This generational gap presents Zelada as an interesting case in terms of the observation of the legitimacy of charismatic leadership in the context of a Church that is experiencing a process of routinisation. This means that the charismatic elements of leadership, which have been a foundation of traditional Pentecostalism, are no longer enough for a generation that is demanding a more formal type of legitimacy, based on religious knowledge and not only charisma. This situation puts strains on the Church's structure, with the tension between the Holy Spirit's inspiration and the formal preparation of their leaders. This tension is reflected in what Carlos defines as the major challenge of the church regarding their youth.

*I would say that this is one of the major challenges with the youth. To have more prepared preachers, prepared to face a society that nowadays is much more demanding in terms of information. Now, and never setting that aside, and understanding, because the Evangelical will never quit understanding that you can be well prepared, but you will need the Holy Spirit. You can be very prepared, have the scientific arguments to explain something, or the theological arguments to explain something, but you need the Holy Spirit, both things are not separated. Today we have the Holy Spirit, we have it, we are conscious about that, but we lack preparation (Carlos, 45).*

Thus, while the spontaneity and sincerity from Evangelical leaders are valuable qualities in the religious community, as they are interpreted as signs of the Holy Spirit

inspiration, the lack of formal theological preparation is problematic for a new generation that is demanding religious knowledge. The tension between inspiration and preparation challenges the traditionally charismatic approach to leadership among Pentecostals, who are searching for routinised ways to legitimate these positions. I will address this topic in greater depth in the next chapter.

## **Conclusion**

In the context of an accelerated process of secularisation and of an increase in the levels of economic and social development, Chilean native Pentecostals are challenging traditional evangelical practices. Although I could observe a community that retains its new generations, these young members try to adapt the inherited practices to their particular individualities, status and secular context, showing that successful transmission does not mean that religious practices remain unaltered in times of social and cultural change. Young Evangelicals, who have access to higher education and are facing a much more secular society than their predecessors, are no longer interpreted by the classical version of Chilean Pentecostalism, as a religion that attracts the poorest and most vulnerable populations.

This chapter considered the ways in which young evangelicals are problematising and adapting certain practices to a new social context and how the Church is reacting to these challenges. This new generation is trying to fully include itself in modern secular society, and in this effort appearing “as normal as possible” in front of their non-Evangelical peers seems like the best strategy in order to maintain religiosity and, at the same time, be integrated in modern Chilean culture.

Traditional recruitment strategies and the classical emotional approach to religiosity are the two main aspects that were analysed from this perspective. On the one hand, the lack of an appropriate testimony among native Evangelicals and the obsolescence of street preaching put strains on the religious obligation to spread the Gospel. On the other hand, the search for knowledge about the foundations and ethics of Christianity and for prepared leaders challenges the popular charismatic approach to



religiosity.

To spread the Gospel through all Chilean society is a pillar for the Pentecostal Methodist Church. Their members experience this mandate as a prophecy, which states that Chile will be a Christian country. In this context, while the older members of the Church have an elaborated testimony of conversion that serves as a powerful evangelisation tool and they use street preaching as the main method to circulate this message of effective change, the situation is more complex among young native Pentecostals. This new generation does not have a proper experience of conversion, and street preaching seems to be an inappropriate cultural symbol for highly educated peers.

These difficulties express themselves at different levels. Although for young members Evangelical religiosity produces a higher ethical behaviour that is noticeable to others, in general they prefer to keep their religiosity as an implicit feature; as a way to avoid stigmatisation and to be fully inserted as a 'normal' member of the society. In this sense, evangelisation is a traditional practice that is experiencing a controversial present, with a new generation that has no clarity about how to show its religiosity to others.

The fact that 'coming out' as an Evangelical in secular circles is a complex task for the younger members indicates that the fear of rejection and stigmatisation are obstacles to evangelisation. Young Evangelicals have adapted this demand to their need of full inclusion: the insistence on high moral standards and providing an example is established as the preferred way to introduce religion to others; as an effort to avoid the stigma of poverty, lack of culture and fanaticism. In a similar sense, street preaching seems to be controversial as the main mass evangelisation strategy for a generation that is seeking to overcome the image of Evangelicals as the poor people who use the streets as the stage for their fundamentalist religious message. To be fully inserted as a 'normal' member of the society seems to be a core aspiration for the new generation of Evangelicals, who agree that acting "as normal as possible" is an effective way to present themselves to others, and that being a "good person" should be enough as a religious testimony, as Constanza effectively expresses.

*I do not speak always about my religion, I try to live it as normal as possible. There are people within the church who don't agree with this, who think that you should always say that you are an Evangelical... (Constanza, 23).*

Similarly, the highly educated new generation of Evangelicals is also challenging the traditional approach to religious knowledge and experience in their search for a deeper religious message and a systematic study of the Bible. Young Evangelicals think they are prepared for a tougher version of religiosity and to overcome the classical emphasis on material reward and healing. Their search for formally prepared leaders shows the legitimacy crisis of charismatic leadership in the context of a Church that is experiencing a process of routinisation, expressing the tension between Holy Spirit inspiration and the formal preparation of their leaders.

I have postulated that the traditional emotional Pentecostal message, oriented to a popular audience by leaders with basic formal theological training is inappropriate for a new generation that has experienced significant levels of educational mobility. Young Pentecostals are demanding a deeper approach to Christian theology and ethics, as a way to understand and expand their religiosity. The youth is challenging the classical Evangelical religiosity, where the theological aspect is not encouraged. They are looking for a deeper and stronger version of religion – or in their own words, for “less milk and more meat” – that can overcome the classic material preaching, oriented to relieve the formerly deprived congregation from worldly miseries.

The educational gap between leaders and followers shows the limits of charismatic leadership for a church that is evolving in a routinised institution, which needs formal sources of legitimation. There is a tension between inspiration and preparation as sources of legitimation of religious leadership or, in a more general perspective, a tension between tradition and modernity.

These findings add complexity to recent empirical evidence that supports status theories in the Chilean context. Alcaíno and Mackenna find that intergenerational religious transmission and conversion to Pentecostal religions are negatively associated with individual's improved status, suggesting that Evangelical religiosity is

limited to lower social strata (Alcaino and Mackenna 2017). My argument recognises that Pentecostalism is challenged by status improvement, but adds that economic and educational mobility transforms the way in which young Evangelicals understand and practise their religiosity, not necessarily leading to the abandonment of their religious identity and lifestyle. Although the possibility of switching to more liberal denominations and even apostasy is not out of the question, it is also the case that transformation and adaptation should be considered as relevant elements of religious change. Evangelical Christianity is not necessarily retreating but adapting and changing; religion remains as an interesting sphere to observe the transformations driven by modernity.

In conclusion, the social and educational mobility of young Pentecostals gives rise to important challenges for a religion that has to adapt itself to an increasingly secularised and modern society. This new generation faces the religious culture of their parents, but at the same time the secular modernity in which they are equally inserted. They have developed strategies to maintain their participation in both worlds; their efforts of adaptation include the young members' everyday practices, but also the Church that is experiencing the consequences of being an established institution in the context of a modern society. The following chapter is dedicated to this institutional perspective.

## **Chapter 5. Leadership Challenges of the Churches: losing Charisma and the Routinisation Crisis**

In Chapter 4, I argued that the new generation of Evangelicals is challenging the traditional approach to religious practice, knowledge and experience in the search for full inclusion in contemporary Chilean society. More specifically, I postulated that the search for a deep understanding of religious teachings expresses a crisis of the traditional charismatic legitimacy of leadership in the context of a Church that is experiencing a process of routinisation.

This chapter aims to analyse how both Pentecostals and Catholics are dealing in different ways with leadership challenges emerging from a changing environment. In this sense, the research location – a neighbourhood that is in transition to an upper-middle class composition – is reflective of the Chilean process of social and educational mobility, which brings challenges to the way in which leadership is conceived and also able to attract and maintain members.

For the purpose of this chapter, I will use the Weberian theory of charisma, which appears as a privileged framework in which to analyse the two different trajectories that I observed during my fieldwork. Following Kärkkäinen, I will show how the historical emphasis of the Catholic Church on the role of hierarchy and the sacramental structure, and the focus of Pentecostalism on the experience of charismatic inspiration have important consequences for the contemporary challenges facing both Churches (Kärkkäinen 2001).

I will discuss that charisma and institution are not exclusive terms, and that both Catholics and Evangelicals are looking for strategies to balance charismatic leadership and structural authority in the context of an institutionalised religion. I will describe how the Pentecostal Methodist Church is increasingly introducing bureaucratic practices to the institution, especially oriented to a changing environment where organisational structures and norms are an essential mechanism of legitimation. In this context, the institution is also struggling to maintain a charismatic legitimacy, which they conceive as part of their religious identity. On the other hand, Catholics

appear to be fighting against disenchantment in a context of a shortage of priests, who are the main carriers of religious charisma. At the same time, however, the role of Catholic laypeople as vehicles of personal leadership is still a controversial aspect for an institution founded within the margins of the charisma of the office.

To present this analysis, first I will introduce the context in which both institutions are interpreting their leadership challenges. For Catholics, this includes the everyday difficulties of a community that fears its own extinction due to a near-to-non-existent generational replacement and weak institutional support. The Evangelical Church, in contrast, is focusing its efforts on acquiring and maintaining social and political recognition as an established religious institution.

In both cases, these struggles imply that leadership is being tested and questioned. I will briefly present Max Weber's theory of charisma, specifically oriented to the objectives of this research. The focus will be on the problem of the process of routinisation of genuine charisma, through which the charismatic leadership becomes depersonalised and institutionalised, and how contemporary forms of charismatic leadership can be found within the margins of institutionalised religion. This framework will allow me to interpret the similar or contrasting aspect of the two churches: on the one hand, a Catholic church that is searching for charismatic leadership in the context of a shortage of priests and an increasing importance of laypeople within the institution, and that at the same time is struggling with personal forms of charismatic leadership. On the other hand, a Pentecostal Church that is still experiencing the consequences of the process of routinisation of charisma, which leads to constant tensions between a charismatic identity and institutionalisation forces.

### **Context: The Churches and their contemporary Leadership Challenges**

The context in which both churches observe and react to the challenges of these new times differs considerably. As it will be discussed below, the Catholic chapel finds itself surrounded by an environment interpreted as difficult to understand and

attract. In this sense, they accuse Catholics' of a lack of commitment, based on religious apathy and on a low religious participation and on religious apathy, which are features of the new middle-class inhabitants of the neighbourhood. In turn, Pentecostals, on their path to institutionalisation, reveal controversial approaches to political power, as a result of a traumatic past linked to Pinochet's legacy. The new generation represents the hope for future leaders that will allow a full inclusion in Chilean society.

### **Catholic Lack of Commitment and the Problem of the 'Middle Class Apathy'**

The community of Del Carmen is facing what they call "Catholics' lack of commitment": although many people attend Sunday mass and take the main sacraments, engagement in other activities is rare. The main explanations given by the interviewees for this are related to contemporary middle-class individualistic lifestyle, mixed with a sense of self-sufficiency which rejects religion as a spiritual need, and an increasing lack of confidence in the Church's hierarchy. Patricia, Rosa and Elena are three highly committed members of Del Carmen Chapel. The three of them consider themselves to be welcoming to new members, but they agree that thus is not enough to make people join. The reasons they cite are diverse: for Patricia it is guided by a fear of compromise; for Elena it could be related to the Church's crisis of sexual scandals.

*People have come here, very good people, people who have come to mass. People who come every Sunday, and there was a time when they were invited to come, a leaflet was given to invite them to meetings, but they got scared, people get scared of commitment, because of work or something else... (Patricia, 52).*

*We make invitations, but people... people are lazy. For example, here, for the Carmen's week, we make evening activities, so all people can come. And no one comes, only the same people that always come. People don't come, and we do invite them. However, they like to come to mass (Rosa, 54).*

*I don't know, I think that people are like... disappointed. Sometimes the things you heard about the priests... I say to them, look, not everyone is the same, and besides you do things for God, not for the priest, that is a man, a man (Elena, 70).*

But beyond the possible explanations, the background for this lack of commitment is what the community itself understands as 'middle-class apathy'. Middle-class and young people represent a major challenge for the Catholic Church. As hard working and individually oriented people with a heavy economic load, combined with low access to the state's social welfare, middle-class families are especially vulnerable. Their situation implies high levels of stress and little free time to spare and in the context of this fragile and demanding lifestyle, religion does not appear to be among their priorities. At the same time, the Church's leaders recognise that they do not know how to approach them.

This sense of distance from the middle classes is related to specific features of Chilean Catholicism. On the one hand, upper classes have a strong cultural attachment with Catholicism, which is expressed in a stronger practice and religious identity (Thumala Olave 2007). On the other hand, the closeness of Catholicism and the popular classes has historic roots that are still present. The Catholic Church, in this context, seem to encounter greater difficulties when approaching emerging middle classes.

As deacon, Norberto can be considered the leader of Del Carmen Chapel. When I met him, Norberto was 80 years old, and his poor health was a concern for the whole community. Although I never got an exact understanding of the nature of his illness, his congregation mentioned that something was not right with his heart, which is why he had not been able to confront the challenges facing the Chapel with the necessary strength. In addition to his own health problems, Norberto's wife was also very sick, so the expectations about his leadership possibilities were very low. Norberto's perception of the Chapel and the Catholic Church in general, and also about his own leadership, can be described as pessimistic. For him, the Catholic Church is strong in lower-class neighbourhoods, where the Jesuits, for example, with their humble and intimate style of religiosity, have managed to capture the faithful. In these places, in

Norberto's opinion, there is enthusiasm and solidarity, and also a more effective and dynamic leadership; attributes that are not to be found in Zelada.

*The people who come to live in these apartments... we shouldn't dream that a lot of them will come to the chapel, because they are used to live like it's me, the apartment and nothing else. I see that in my neighbourhood, which is in front of this one. We have everything at home, we don't need anyone.... People are like that, individualistic; people are not willing to cooperate.*

*This is what you can see in peripheral neighbourhoods, is different there, the Church from Las Rejas to the lower sector is another world, they have a different conception of the Church, it's incredible. Their work is much more dynamic than ours. Of course, they also have younger priests that move people.*

*There is a new parish on Paradero 10, a new building, and the young people sing, they don't dance, but they move, and also the priest, they move around. The priest moves around the neighbourhood, they go out, the guys go out in groups. Why, because people have to help. Look, father, there, and they go there, they go to help. This is much more important than the mass. Here, we can do a nice mass, well, and?*  
(Norberto, 80).

This critical and pessimistic perspective is not exclusive to Norberto. For Patricia and María Inés, for example, the hopelessness regarding to the new generations is also based on a nostalgic perception of the past that in most cases goes back to the years before the Coup. The dictatorship years appear as a time of social lockdown, when community life was suffocated by fear and social participation in general was seen as a potential anti-Pinochet act.

*There was a lot of youth in that time, 1967, we were like 40 in the youth pastoral. And we participated, we had a chorus of young men and women. But then, I only came to mass, and I started to resume everything in the 1990's (Patricia, 52).*

*And in 1973, then everything turned off, everything was over, groups of people, in that time, everybody stopped attending, and we were all so young, I was 14... It was a beautiful time, but then everything was over. I stopped coming for a long time, a*



*long time. My mother no, no, don't go, my brother was older, and he participated in a club, and she didn't let him go either, because of the fear, because it could... so she didn't allow us to continue. Community life was over here in the Chapel, we came only to the mass (María Inés, 69).*

Clearly, the lack of a replacement generation is a constant concern for Del Carmen's members. As a mainstream religion, Catholicism is building bridges to the secular, but in this process is losing its ability provide for a generational replacement that comes from within church-going families. Thus, the young generation of emerging middle-class people that is starting to change the composition of the neighbourhood is a group that represents hope for the future, but at the same times appears as highly inaccessible to the type of leadership emerging from the chapel. The fear of extinction is therefore always present, as well as the unspecific demand for change.

### **Overcoming Marginality and dictatorial Stigma: Pentecostalism in the Search for political and social Recognition**

Carlos was one of my main informants within the Methodist Pentecostal Church. From the beginning of our relationship it was clear to me that he belonged to the Church's elite: it was reflected in his closeness with the bishop and in his deep understanding of the current political orientation of the movement. For him, the political apathy that was attributed to early Chilean Pentecostalism (Lalive d'Epina 1968) was left behind, and the Evangelical community's current efforts are oriented to the formation of leaders that could represent their interests in the realms of power and decision making.

A powerful symbol of this political inclusion is the Evangelical Cathedral, where the first ecumenical Te Deum took place in 1973. This religious service is still the central religious-political event for the Church and its members, when the main political figures of the country, including the President, attend the Cathedral. However, its importance is not only social and political, it also has a singular religious significance.

The way in which Marcos, the head preacher of Zelada, describes the importance of the place reflects this strong symbolic and political meaning.

*There we celebrate the country's biggest service of Evangelical liturgy from times that were very complicated, and that additionally has become a tradition, because this service is no other than the crystallisation of a prophecy, which is something that feed us every day, which is that, the Bishop Manuel Umaña Salinas said in a time when the church was very small and poor, very poor, so poor that they classified themselves as 'super poor', he said here there will be a Te Deum just like at the Catholic Cathedral, and the president will be seated there and showed the place where the president sits now. And the Church was in Jotabeche, very small, and ambassadors will come, and ministers will come, parliament members, when there wasn't even a councillor in the Church. So, my generation has seen this, the growth and the fulfilment of that prophecy... and here there will be a Cathedral that will have access from the four sides, it has already three. One entrance from Obispo Umaña, Jotabeche and the Alameda, we have only one left... (Marcos, 45).*

The Te Deum is a controversial ritual due to its origins, when Pinochet not only included Pentecostals in Chile's official religious panorama, but also transformed them into protagonists, as a clear response to Catholic opposition to the regime. The first approach from the Evangelical Church to politics is thus problematic. In this regard, the perspective of Claudio is interesting. He is a distinct case among my informants due to his 'double militancy': he is a committed pastor of the Church but at the same time he is a sociologist and theologian, who can assume an observer's position when required. I met him through Dorita, who took some theology classes with him at the Evangelical Institute of Theology and was very enthusiastic about what I could learn from him. As Claudio told me, the military regime was when the Methodist Pentecostal Church became involved in politics, and this has had important consequences.

*With the military regime the Church became politicised, we supported the government, and this church is now considered right-wing (Claudio, 37).*

In this context, the support of the dictatorship is still a controversial topic among church members. According to Claudio, there is a Pinochetist discourse going around the Church despite the recognition of the dictatorship's violation of human rights, which for Claudio means the church owes a debt to the popular classes.

*There are still people who are very Pinochetist, people who think that he saved the country and that he dignified the Evangelicals, this is more or less the discourse. So, in fact, the church said nothing against the issue of human rights violations. In one of the Te Deums, when everybody was asking for forgiveness about what happened during the dictatorship, the Church also asked for forgiveness. But it wasn't an historical motivation within the Church to ask for forgiveness for staying silent (Claudio, 37).*

Despite this approach, there seems to be a gap between the hierarchy's political interest and that of the normal members of the Church, who still feel disconnected from politics. Evangelicals perceive themselves as more or less separated from "the world" (the concept used to refer to non-Christian others and secular society). In this sense, an Evangelical will always be fighting against the temptations of the world, politics included. It is thus unlikely for Evangelicals to show a major political interest or commitment. For Jorge, for example, the connection between the Church and the spheres of power and the search for political recognition is harmful.

*It's negative, because it connects the church with power, and so you start to make compromises... we provide a message of hope, a kingdom that is not from this world. We don't come from the spheres of power to impose a point of view, that's not right (Jorge, 29).*

Expectations based on generational replacement are especially high. The arrival of a new generation of leaders that could take part in politics is a common hope among the church members and directors, which is offered by the new generation of Pentecostals that are reaching an unprecedented level of education and income. For Marcos, this is precisely what the bishop Umaña has prophesied, revealing that this social phenomenon has a strong religious interpretation for Evangelicals. In this same

sense, political involvement appears for some young members as a requirement of modern times.

*The world in which we live... in narrative terms, we live in the world of prophecy. Thus, our bishop Eduardo has prophesised that our youth, from there will come the big... personalities in all fields of society, music, poetry, entrepreneurship, academics... is something that we are already watching, not with the speed that we expect, but we are watching. I see a different country in 2020, with much more... a country in order, overcoming the issue of inequality for example, and we have to contribute there... (Marcos, 45).*

*I think that at some point it has to be... because the important work we do is always to ask God, pray for the country, for Him to conduct the authorities, because even if you don't like it, you have to live in this country, so I don't think that you can do everything from the side-lines, someone has to be there, as a governor, major, minister, president, because if you don't you only have an opinion and we have to be more active (Edith, 26).*

In sum, the challenges presented reveal the conditions in which leadership is demanded in order to secure a new generation in the case of the Catholic community, and also how institutionalisation brings controversy in the case of Pentecostals. In the next section I will take a closer look at how charisma is an essential concept to the understanding of both processes.

### **Charisma and Routinisation: Catholics and Pentecostals between Leadership and Institutionalisation**

In a Weberian sense, charisma is primarily the personal quality of an extraordinary leader that endowed him with supernatural or at least exceptional powers (Weber 1968, p. 48). However, charisma is not merely a psychological feature. Departing from this individual perspective, Weber describes charisma as a form of authority that depends upon the recognition of a group of followers, who will demand extraordinary abilities as source of legitimation (Weber 1968, p.40). In turn,

according to Weber, the charismatic phenomenon presents itself in extraordinary social circumstances and operates as a creative revolutionary force in history (Weber 1968). In this sense, the Weberian approach is fundamentally sociological (Swatos 1981, p.124).

From a religious standpoint, it is especially relevant that the charismatic phenomenon presents itself as derived from supernatural forces, as a “gift of grace” (Miyahara 1983, p.373; Bensman and Givant 1975, p.571). In this model, the relationship between the leader and her/his followers is direct, without mediating institutions, organisations or doctrines, and the charismatic authority does not depend on an office or statutes (Bensman and Givant 1975, p.572).

This concept of “genuine charisma”, based on strictly personal relationships and distant from routine structures, is a transitory and intermittent phenomenon, existing only briefly before being transformed into more stable forms (Swatos 1981, p.124; Sharot 1980, p.326). Thus, to analyse the problem of transformation of charisma, as Schluchter calls it, is to allow one to obtain a sociologically adequate version of the problem (Schluchter 1989, Chapter XI).

At some point, the charismatic leader or group needs to assure the succession of leadership and the continuity of the organisation. This situation leads to the development of an institutional framework (Eisenstadt 1968, p.19). For Eisenstadt, this is the first step to the process of routinisation, through which the charismatic leadership becomes depersonalised and institutionalised (Miyahara 1983; Eisenstadt 1968).

As a consequence, office charisma emerges when original charisma is transferred through a specific ritual, such as the ordination of a priest. The early Christian Church is an example of this (Schluchter 1989). In this case, as Schluchter notes, we can properly speak about a process of depersonalisation (Schluchter 1989). Hereditary charisma, in turn, emerges when the original charisma is transferred through blood, for example within a monarchy (Miyahara 1983, p.372).

In this context, although the distinctive elements of genuine or pure charisma will

necessarily disappear, modern and contemporary forms of charismatic leadership can be found within the margins of institutionalised religion, where the gift of grace may be nevertheless acquirable (Sharot 1980, p.327). However, these charismatic figures must be distinguished from the genuine charismatic leader and its revolutionary impact (Swatos 1981, p.124). In these routinised cases, charisma is not disruptive; it maintains and conserves social institutions by legitimising them (Shils 1965, p.200). In the following sections I will discuss how the phenomenon of charismatic leadership is a common issue among the religious communities observed. Firstly, I will analyse the process of routinisation in the case of the Methodist Pentecostal Church, and then I will consider how Catholics deal with the lack of priests and thus lack of charismatic leadership. These two versions of the problem will reveal that ultimately there is a delicate balance between charisma and routine, and both churches are dealing with this challenge.

### **Beyond Charisma: Pentecostalism from a social Movement to an institutionalised Religion.**

In general, Latin American Pentecostal Churches were founded by charismatic leaders which managed to attract devoted followers (Gudorf 2008, p.55). The Chilean case is not an exception. Chilean Pentecostalism, in its origins, has been defined as a charismatically legitimised movement, oriented to the poorest sectors of the society, which were looking for inclusion in a context of high inequality (Fediakova 2012, p. 29; Orellana 2008, Chapter 4). Pentecostalism has been traditionally inclined to criticise the Catholic Church for being too structured and rigid, and interpreted as an obstacle to the free work of the spirit (Kärkkäinen 2001, 108). For Kärkkäinen there is a theological reason for the slow investment of Pentecostals in structural resources: the millenarist orientation of Pentecostalism, which puts the emphasis on the second coming of Christ and the end of the world (Kärkkäinen 2001, p.108).

However, in spite of this low-structured identity, this movement evolved in an institutional religion consolidated in Chilean society (L. Orellana 2008). As Orellana

postulates, the movement started this routinisation process around 1932, when a major schism took place within the Methodist Pentecostal Church from which the Pentecostal Evangelical Church was formed. For Orellana, this new version of Chilean Pentecostalism followed a traditional form of government, while the Methodist Evangelical Church maintained a charismatic model. With this transformation, the road to institutionalisation was already in motion (L. Orellana 2008). In his analysis of the recent transformations of the Methodist Pentecostal Church, the theologian and pastor Claudio Colombo follows Fediakova's thesis about Chilean Pentecostalism.

*The Pentecostal Church is not a movement anymore, it has been institutionalised, thus, what it did before has been transformed into a form of cultural participation or cultural inclusion. This is not my thesis, it's Fediakova's, because the point is that the evangelical world in the last 20 years has been trying to claim the right to be treated not as a second-class citizen, but as part of the middle or high strata (Claudio, 37).*

The process of bureaucratisation did not, however, lead to the destruction of charismatic elements, which coexist with institutional features in many contemporary forms of Pentecostalism (Gudorf 2008, p.55). These two forces can complement each other, but there are also tensions, which can lead to new divisions (L. Orellana 2008). These schismatic tendencies could reveal that the charisma of the office is still too weak in the context of Pentecostal churches, leaving room for a personal charisma that challenges the institutional stability.

My informant Claudio Colombo notes that the original charismatic Pentecostal preaching, based on otherworldly hope and meaning, has been adopted by neo-Pentecostal movements. They have maintained the highly charismatic orientation and thus have been able to attract the lowest sectors of society. However, dynamic forms of charisma are still present in traditional Pentecostal Churches, meaning that charisma can move from one member to another and several members can be recognised as charismatic leaders at the same time (Sharot 1980, p.333). For example, in Zelada there are several charismatic leaders, including the Bishop, Marcos, the main preacher, but also other figures such as Pastor Peña, who is especially recognised among younger members.

In this section, I will describe and analyse how charismatic and institutional elements coexist within the Methodist Evangelical Church according to the narratives of my informants in Zelada.

As a first approximation, it was noticed that while there is an administrative structure, the positions in Zelada are charismatically legitimised: there is no professional bureaucracy; and the rules for progress in the Church's hierarchy are not formally stipulated. The Bishop selects preachers through divine inspiration and not by specific qualifications. This mysterious access to hierarchical positions reaffirms the notion that access to knowledge, truth and power is open to any believer through the Holy Spirit, and that anyone who is touched by the spirit can preach the word of God (Sharot 1980, p.333). In turn, the offer of a position is conceived as a calling, which means that although there are no economic incentives to accept it, it has implications for one's cultural, social and political status within the church. The exception, in terms of remuneration, is the Bishop, who receives a form of salary obtained from the tithe and donations. Pedro's narration of his access to a director position is a good example of this particular conception of hierarchy.

*Me: How did you get into that position (Preacher)?*

*Pedro: I don't know, it's a mystery... I think it's God blessings, nothing more, it comes to the older members.... Look, when I was sick the Bishop visited me in the hospital and told me, this sickness will not end up in death, it's for blessing. I said amen, and I felt in my heart that this was coming. I forgot about it, it was 5 or 6 years ago, because I was appointed in December this year, last year. My wife was at the hospital, I was with my daughter here, at her house, and then I received a call that I had to be at the cathedral at 4 o'clock. And when I arrived, there was the pastor, he talked to me and told me, I've called you to ask you to be "mi oficial". The Lord honours you as an "oficial" (Pedro, 76).*

It is interesting that, while the structure of power is charismatically legitimised, the figure of the Bishop shows signs of what I will call personal detachment. This idea reflects the fact that as it is becoming an increasingly institutionalised position, the



personal charisma of the Bishop is starting to lose its importance. The Bishop, considered to be the only Pastor of the Methodist Evangelical Church, has delegated personal charisma to the specific temple's main preachers, who are in charge of establishing personal bonds with the followers. One of the few exceptions to this is Providencia, which has a pastor as its head, and thus does not depend on the Bishop. It is important to highlight that the predominance of personal relationships is a cultural feature of Latin American culture, thus an essential component of a popular religiosity that is in the heart of Pentecostal manifestations (Parker 1998, 1996). In this context, it is very interesting to observe that a specific feature of the Methodist Pentecostal Church is that the pastor is becoming detached from personal relationships, as Claudio explains:

*The Pastor here, according to the Church's standards, is highly impersonal. This means that the pastor... that he doesn't know your name, that he doesn't know where you come from or who you are, unless you are from the Cathedral's group, or you belong to a very old family of the church, then he may remember you. So, the role of the preacher makes up for that vision. He is the one that has to have contact with the people... (Claudio, 37).*

The Bishop does not necessarily have a personal relationship with his followers, based on their required presence, because there is a structure that mediates it: a clear indication of a routinised institution. But, at the same time, the preacher is in charge of building personal face-to-face relationships with followers, keeping the charismatic and personal element alive.

However, there are also institutional restrictions on the bond between preacher and followers. Preachers are periodically transferred from one temple to another, according to the needs of the church. The transfer is at times based on the needs of a specific temple and the leadership abilities of a preacher who would benefit that temple, but transfers can also be due to the desire to prevent an excess of personalisation that can be developed after too many years in a same community. This policy is mentioned by Gudorf in his analysis of the 'Assamblea de Dios' Church

in the USA, where it was also used to avoid divisions arising from a charismatic preacher (Gudorf 2008, p.56).

Despite these efforts, there is also criticism of the excess of pastors' power in the context of low institutionalised Pentecostalism, where freedom and personal leadership can lead to the discredit of the church, as Ester points out. The emphasis on charisma can in fact lead to the development of authoritarianism, which for Gudorf is sometimes difficult to differentiate from authority in highly charismatic and low institutionalised contexts (Gudorf 2008, p.46).

*A good work can be damaged with those people, because is true that... just as it has happened in the Catholic Church, where some priests have abused people, but you can't generalise, because there are very good people, the same happens to us sometimes. And it's easier, because here we have less order. At the end, the freedom of worship is a double-edged sword, because anyone can come and... I've heard comments of non-Christian people, hey, I heard about a pastor, what do you think, and I, probably it's true, but we are not all like this... to me, we need more organisation, doing things more professionally and less amateur... (Ester, 26).*

In this context, the charismatic legitimation of preachers and the "emotional character of religious communication" (Orellana 2008, p.55) is challenged by a new generation of followers who are demanding a deeper version of the evangelical religiosity in order to fulfil their obligations as Christians, such as to spread the Gospel among their peers. As analysed in the previous chapter, these demands show that the divine inspiration is not enough for an institution that is experiencing high levels of routinisation. The formal training of preachers, pastors and directors seems to be an immediate task for the Church. However, as Carlos recognises, this training cannot replace the work of the Holy Spirit.

*What we want to do in the future is to generate some kind of permanent study or training for those people that are in charge of young members, to expand the training.*

*You can be very prepared, you can have the scientific arguments to explain something, or theological arguments, but you need the holy spirit, both things can't be separated. Today we have the Holy Spirit, we are aware of that, but we need more training (Carlos, 45).*

This shows the constant tension and balance between charisma and institutionalism: the church has to modernise without losing its identity. This call for modernisation is mostly made by the new generations of members and preachers, as a way to retain the young members that are gaining access to higher education and are developing higher expectations than their parents and grandparents. Jorge's opinion reveals this tension between change and conservation.

*We've changed, what I think that can't change are certain transcendent things, such as the respect for the Word, the recognition of the Bible as the only inspiration and as God's Word, that's fundamental, but there are forms that the church has to adapt (Jorge, 29).*

Overall, the delicate balance between charisma and institution appears as a central feature of the transformations that the Methodist Pentecostal Church is undergoing as a charismatic organisation. The consequences of these changes are numerous and diverse, but as Claudio recognises, it is probable that a group of followers will opt for more charismatic versions of Pentecostalism, such as Neo-Pentecostal groups.

*I think that the groups that show more growth lately are Neo-Pentecostals... they have renewed their liturgy, and people identify themselves with this, they bring novelty. Their cults are more effusive, cathartic, emotional, and many people are searching for that (Claudio, 37).*

The price for being a recognised and institutionalised Church is that many followers will look for a smaller community where everyone knows everyone; where the status of people with low levels of education can be recognised (Gudorf 2008, p.57). In the Methodist Pentecostal Church, membership is becoming more anonymous and this is why the small community of Zelada is an example of how the Church is dealing with its size and the social composition of its followers. However, there is also a

countervailing trend, as Gudorf finds in her study in the US: upwardly mobile classes will be attracted to the structure and recognition of larger and more institutionalised churches (Gudorf 2008, p.57). The routinisation of the Methodist Pentecostal Church shows that social mobility is transforming the structure of the institution, adding evidence to the idea that improvements in social status have consequences that not only end in religious switching or apostasy.

In sum, I observed two processes regarding the relationship between the pastor and the preacher, which are the two faces of the tension between routinisation and charisma. These processes can also be described as the necessity to equilibrate a personal leadership with an institutional framework that canalises it. The pastor could be reflecting the charisma of the office, in the sense that the process of detachment that we have described transforms the Bishop as a leader who does not need to justify his charisma through a personalised bond with his followers, because the charisma is contained in the office that he holds.

***Pentecostal social Mobility and the Efforts to Access in upper-class Circles: The Providencia Church***

Intergenerational educational and social mobility experienced by the neighbourhood of Zelada and the members of the Church demands adaptation efforts at an institutional level and also in members' practices and orientations. For younger Evangelicals, now found inserted among upper social strata, upward mobility implies the need to overcome the public image of Evangelicalism as a religion of the poor. As Fediakova postulates, Chilean Evangelicals traditionally had low social recognition, and their culture was associated with "poverty, lack of culture and ethical and political conservativeness" (Fediakova, 2014, p. 109). Claudio's perception reflects the effort to overcome this image.

*So, it's how we present ourselves, and the evangelical world, to others. In the case of the Methodist Church, the thing is to show that we have grown not only culturally, but also in economic terms (Claudio, 37).*

In this context, many members feel that the Church's classic approach to religiosity is not suitable for this environment, and that the Church has to create new mechanisms to show itself to the community. Constanza, for example, uses classical music and his position in an orchestra as a vehicle to change the social representation of Pentecostals.

*We go (to the Providencia's Municipality) and we play music, music like any other classical music group, I don't know, we play Bach for example, then we go and say that we are the Cathedral's orchestra (Constanza, 23).*

Not only are the members have to react to a changing social environment; the institution is also experiencing transformations in order to respond to these new demands. The Methodist Evangelical Church is trying to be open to social groups that were traditionally out of its reach. A significant example of this transformation is the Church of Providencia, which was created in 2013 in a wealthy neighbourhood to attract an upper middle-high class audience. The Church is called the Evangelical Church of Providencia, avoiding the reference to Pentecostalism, and is in charge of a pastor and thus does not depend directly on the Cathedral. The pastor, José Peña, is a well-known evangelical theologian, considered to be among the more intellectual and progressive members of the Church. Jorge described to me this project from the perspective of the effort to overcome the traditional prejudices among the upper classes.

*The Church is called the Evangelical Church of Providencia, and that's very important, because it's an inclusive name, you are not labelling it with a denomination. You are not putting the label Pentecostal, because if you are Pentecostal you have to raise your hand, play the tambourine, preach on the street. That's an entrance barrier. People who don't know about religion, I say Pentecostal and they think tambourine. And it has a bad image, so the idea is to reach people to which the church hasn't been able to get, and in order to do that you have to... not to put a costume, but at least to avoid the entrance barriers (Jorge, 29).*

However, the project seems to have failed in its efforts to attract people from that neighbourhood. According to Claudio Colombo, the services are not suitable for this kind of audience and the Church has not been able to develop a suitable message for these upper-class groups. The pessimism associated with this project reveals the limits of Pentecostalism in its attempt to penetrate circles of Chilean elites, whose religious alternatives seems to exclude Evangelical churches on the basis of them being incompatible with their status and culture.

*The question is what's going on... obviously what happens is that the Pentecostal world is not attractive for people from a wealthier background. This is due to our worships, which are very picturesque... too emotional or surprising... (Claudio, 37).*

Between charisma and institution, the Methodist Pentecostal Church is searching for its place in a context where modernisation and tradition, or institutionalisation and charisma, have to find a balance in order to maintain its identity as a popular church and at the same time respond to the demands of a new generation that is experiencing an accelerated process of social mobility. The task seems hard, as the efforts to hide the popular origins of the Church shows. For example, the decision to change the name of the Church as a way to obscure the reference to Pentecostalism. This suggests that in the future Providencia could depart from the Methodist Pentecostal Church and find its own identity.

### **Catholic institutional Weakness and the Search for Charisma**

For Catholicism, in turn, the Holy Spirit is understood to operate through certain institutional structures, which are considered God-given and thus part of the very essence of Catholicism, not just as a social requirement. In these sense, charisma and institution are not in opposition: the spirit needs order, on the one hand, and on the other the church structures acquire meaning only through the work of the spirit (Kärkkäinen 2001).

The current situation in Del Carmen, however, shows an increasing institutional weakness, which has as its main component the shortage of priests. As one of the

central institutional receptacles of charisma, the shortage of priests has important consequences especially in a small community that depends on a parish. In this particular case, it means that the parish priest is in charge of too many chapels and unable to respond to this load effectively. An important source of support has been the help provided by the Piarists, or 'Escolapios' in Spanish, a Catholic educational order. A Piarist priest does the Sunday mass when the parish priest is not available (he only assists once a month). For Iván, who is very critical of the leadership problems of the Chapel, the 'Escolapios' have been essential as a source of charisma.

*They have been a great support for us. When we undertook the reconstruction of the Chapel after the earthquake, the Priest sought help everywhere, he got us experts who came to teach us. We obtained money from abroad, we got help from London... and the bond with this Priest was very special (Iván, 54).*

The charisma of the office implies that the priest, independently of his personal qualities, will embody the Holy Spirit for the community (Sharot 1980, p.328). Although he is clearly not a charismatic leader in the genuine sense, the priest is the one in charge of dispensing salvation according to the Catholic tradition, and represents charismatic institutionalism (Weber 1968, p.50, 1964). Although personal charisma is not required to fulfil their obligations, in Del Carmen priests are the charismatic figures who have marked the community. Rosa, for example, remembers Father Tulio and his brief but significant work in Del Carmen. The priest was sent away for bureaucratic reasons and left a broken-hearted community behind, as the words of Rosa reflect.

*A young man, who liked to work for the community, he liked it, he dedicated himself to it... when he became a priest we went with him to San Antonio, where he did his ceremony, where he lived all his life. He always talked about this community; he talked a little and mentioned the community. Nice words, and he taught through facts, for example, he was on charge for the adult's confirmation's preparation, so he made his career here. So, we thought, for us it's such a luxury to have such a person in this small community, a person who was formed here and who liked to be with us (Rosa, 56).*

The active role of laypeople is one of the main components of the renewal of Catholicism and its adaptation to the contemporary world. Vatican II expresses the idea of the distinct mission of the laity, and also that they have to have freedom and room to action their initiatives. This was repeatedly emphasised by the post-conciliar popes such as John Paul II (Hartch 2014, p. 5), as Patricia remembers:

*And not only us, the circular written by John Paul II talks about the importance of lay people in the Church, we weren't allowed to read before, many things, with time that has changed. Women didn't have any participation. This has changed with time... (Patricia, 52).*

Deacons have gained great importance within the Church, which is also mentioned by Gudorf in his study of Latin American Catholicism (Gudorf 2008, p.51). The deacon, in contrast to the priest, is required to be married and to work to support his family. They study for five years instead of seven years and they promise obedience, but do not take vows. As Del Carmen's deacon, Norberto notices that the shortage of priests appeared simultaneously with the increase in number of deacons, which could change the church's organisation in the future.

*One day I was talking with the current Bishop and he told me that if this situation continues, one day there will be more deacons than clergy... how many priests were ordained last year, 8, 8 in Santiago. And we were 32 deacons (Norberto, 80).*

In Del Carmen, Norberto is responsible for leadership within the chapel, which is starting to be problematic. The problem is explained by members of the community with reference to Norberto's advanced age and health issues, but behind this discourse is the fact that the community does not rely on the charisma of the deacon. The question that follows is: why does Norberto lack charisma? Although the answer is related to his lack of energy and youth, this is not the whole story. In addition to these physical limitations, the Catholic tradition is strong and implies that the charismatic leader of a church has to be a priest. This cultural valuation of the charisma of office represents an obstacle for the increasing practical importance of laypeople.



The reality in Del Carmen is that laypeople have to assume the great majority of everyday tasks of the Church, playing an increasingly central role in the Church's affairs. They therefore demand more space and freedom of action. The community members have assumed tasks that were traditionally exclusive to priests, including preaching, as I observed at the celebration of the month of the Virgin Mary. As Patricia remembers, this instance was important in terms of the responsibilities assumed by the community members, and not free of difficulties.

*He has given to us... tools for us to work, he has taught us a lot. Starting with Mary's month, do you remember? Ok, you are going to preach... this is what happens when there are no priests (Patricia, 52).*

The increase in the importance of laypeople, which is celebrated and endured at the same time, has brought conflict in Del Carmen, especially between progressive and conservative members. The root of the conflict is generational, as Rosa recognises.

*I've been thinking that there are moments when, ehh... there are two groups: one that is a little more conservative and the other with a more open in its mentality. So, I think there is a problem (Rosa, 52).*

In the context of the Chapel, progressivism means to be more open to changes in order to promote participation and to renew the community with younger members, implying the validation of personal forms of charisma. Iván and his wife Purísima can be considered as leaders of the progressive branch in Del Carmen, as they are very critical of the absence of initiatives oriented to renew the Chapel. For them, older and more conservative members of the community frustrate novel initiatives, which can be highly disappointing.

*And they cut your wings. I even said one day, ok, we won't participate anymore, we will retire, and Puri told me, no, remember that the commitment we have is not with the people...*

*They turn off the will to do things, and that is bad. How can we try to do things or to encourage people, if they are criticising us? And this happens here and in other places too (Iván, 54).*

Even Norberto recognises that there is resistance to change, especially among the older members of the community, who are attached to traditional mentalities and practices, notably the permanence of the charisma of the office. He does not, however, seem to be willing to assume this challenge; he accepts it with resignation to this situation.

*It is difficult to change; it is hard for us to do things. It has been so difficult to change the mentality, but we have to move on.*

*What happens is that our people are old people. Our neighbourhood is an old neighbourhood, so this has been hard for people.... The confession, for example, they want a priest, but there is no priest (Norberto, 80).*

The search for new methods to increase participation and attract new members can be understood in the context of a Church that is losing its charismatic appeal. In this context, the emergence of charismatic groups within the Church is one of the novelties of contemporary Catholicism. For my Evangelical informants, the Catholic Church has reacted to Pentecostal success by assimilating practices that are rejected by traditional Catholicism, such as the emergence of more personal forms of charisma. This is how María describes contemporary Catholics.

*We now see in TV that they play guitar, that they have their instruments, and when they pray they say "let's pray, brothers". In the past everything was in Latin, only the priest had the bible, he had the bible and we didn't (María, 82).*

The Catholic mass as a ritual without efficacy is mentioned by Pentecostals as a central weakness of Catholicism, due to the distance between the priest and the people and the lack of emotional aspects. The celebration of the Virgin Mary's month was an example of how the laity is adopting a style of preaching that appears very similar to Pentecostals. When Iván preached, he asked for divine inspiration to speak, and tried to stimulate the audience's participation with questions. In turn, musical instruments and choral voices are a main interest for many members, who are insistently trying to improve such practices during the mass.

Despite the efforts of the laity, the lack of a leading and charismatic figure – an absent priest and a weak deacon – is an explicit difficulty for the Chapel's continued functioning. The search for charisma is expressed as the lack of new and fresh ideas and methods, and the need for new (and younger) leaders, as Rosa, another exponent of the progressive branch in Del Carmen, expresses. In turn, Norberto himself recognises that he is too old to assume these challenges.

*Someone who comes with new ideas, because here we are all like a poor circus, everyone does everything. So, we are always the same people doing the same things, but we lack new ideas, someone that comes with a new air, with energy... maybe we want to keep going, to do what he says, but with new ideas (Rosa, 56).*

*I sincerely believe that here in this neighbourhood, not only in this community, I also mean Las Mercedes, other communities, we need a young clergy... a new mentality (Norberto, 80).*

There is considerable agreement on the fact that, in order to keep its influence, the Church has to change and adapt to the contemporary world. The new Pope delivers charismatic leadership that is highly required, and thus offers hope for change and innovation, renewed values and the possibility of growth. As Wood et al point out, for the American Catholics hope and despair are shaping the experience of laypeople, priests and bishops in the Pope Francis era (Wood, Fulton, and Doby 2013). Patricia and Rosa represent this enthusiasm.

*This Pope is undertaking innovations and people are very happy with what he is saying, because he is going out, he wants the pastors to have new sheep, so it is hope for us too (Patricia, 52).*

*Things are changing, don't you think? Especially with the new Pope: tolerance, respect, I like it (Rosa, 54).*

Overall, hopelessness is a central emotion within Del Carmen, due to members' fear of extinction. The lack of charisma is a central issue for a community that has not been able to transmit its religion to its members' children and grandchildren, and with aging leaders that are not attracting new, younger members. However, there is

also a discourse of hope, based on the promise of a renewed charisma that has been elaborated in the centre of Catholicism, with the promise of the new Pope that represents this tension between a personal charisma that is limited by a strong institutionalised form of leadership. Locally this hope is manifested as a difficult challenge, brought by the new generation of inhabitants that are arriving in the neighbourhood, and who are revealing the leadership problems the Church is facing. If there is hope for Rosa's hope is a question that represents the current challenges for a Catholic Church that is trying to renew itself within the margins of its own tradition.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter analysed how Catholics and Pentecostals face leadership challenges in a time of change. I postulated that the Weberian theory of charisma is useful to understand the contrasting but also similar processes that both churches are experiencing. More specifically, I recognised charisma and institution as complementary ideas and have shown that Catholics and Evangelicals are looking for strategies to balance charismatic leadership and structural authority in different contexts and within distinct traditions.

In the case of Catholics, I observed a community that fears its own extinction due to a practically non-existent generational replacement and a weak institutionality, expressed by a shortage of priests. Community members are searching for leadership in order to spread their religion in the absence of an effective familiar transmission, and to renew the charisma that it seems to be losing. In a highly bureaucratic institution as the Catholic Church, where rules and routine have a secured place as structural mechanisms, charisma offers an escape that is especially important in a time of change and transformation. However, the priority of charisma of the office puts limits on initiatives that aim to promote leadership that could emerge within the laity.

Pentecostals are experiencing the consequences of the process of routinisation of charisma, which leads to constant tensions between a charismatic identity and the forces of institutionalisation. Between these two poles, the Methodist Pentecostal Church is searching for a delicate balance that will allow them to maintain their identity and also meet the expectations of a new generation that demands institutionalisation.

Both churches find that the charisma of the office and the charisma of the person have a problematic relationship. In the case of Catholics, this problem emerges as the weakness of the charismatic authority of laypeople in a context of the strong charismatic power of the office of the priest. For Evangelicals this conflict is represented by a bishop who is trying to detach himself from a personal leadership role, leaving this task to preachers who are in charge of maintaining traditional Pentecostal charisma. Both institutions are looking to a future in a changing context, represented by new generations that demand changes and proper leadership. Charisma is an essential component of these religious institutions' capacity to attract and maintain followers, as this chapter has tried to demonstrate.

These leadership challenges and the way religious institutions are adapting to the new demands of their environment will configure the role these organisations are going to take in Chilean civil society. Chapter 6 will address this topic, in relation to questions about individual and institutional morality that arise when there are religious precepts that increasingly differ from the secular values of contemporary societies.

## **Chapter 6. Religious Morality and the Public Role of the Churches**

In Chapter 5 I addressed the topic of leadership in a changing environment, presenting the challenges facing a society that is experiencing profound change in terms of a new generation that is demanding a different approach to religious belief and practice. I argued that charisma and routinisation are concepts that reflect these tensions, as well as the transformations that both churches are undergoing.

The present chapter will continue to focus on these changes and the adaptation efforts of both individuals and institutions. More specifically, it will discuss the problem of how religious-based morality can be exercised in an increasingly secular society. I will observe this phenomenon on two levels. On the one hand, I will discuss how religious individuals conceive and practise the moral teachings of their churches, revealing contrasts between Catholics and Evangelicals, and also a generational change that is visible in both cases, especially among Pentecostals. I will consider how religiously-involved individuals conceive their relationship with the world, the problematic ambivalence that Evangelicals develop regarding controversial moral issues, and the ways in which they combine the demands of their lifestyle with the features of the secular youth culture. On the other hand, I will address the public role of the churches, including an historical analysis of the relationship between both institutions and civil society. I will also discuss the public position of the churches in a particularly controversial political moment, when so-called progressive reforms are being implemented in the country, shortly before the presidential elections.

At the individual level, I will present the way in which members of both religious communities conceive their relationship with the world. I will argue that Catholics understand their religious practice as one specific sphere of their personal and social life, while Pentecostals understand religion as a lifestyle that marks a difference between them and the secular world. I will refer to Goffman when interpreting these findings, especially the idea of how the self is produced in the context of social interaction, thus an individual can perform more than one role in his/her social life. The concept of audience segregation will assist my explanation as to how young

Evangelicals can perform different roles in each social situation and are therefore able to manage their relationship with the secular world in which they are increasingly involved.

At the institutional level, I will show two different trajectories of the relationship between the Churches and the civil sphere, problematising the role of the churches as civil institutions. I will argue that while the Chilean Catholic Church developed a focus on moral doctrine after a politicised struggle against Pinochet's dictatorship, the Methodist Evangelical Church, although it developed its identity as a self-organised movement of the urban poor, has a controversial position in terms of its uncivil tendency based on its practice to create internal bonding ties at the expense of creating ties with the outside world.

These particular configurations inform the ways in which the churches relate to political power. On the one hand, I observe a Catholic Church that keeps its distance from political partisanship and defends its moral values using a pluralistic argument, demanding the respect of its institutional conscience. On the other hand, I find a divided Evangelical church, which is attempting to gain political influence and seems to be willing to have a high public profile. However, this approach is not favoured by many of its members, who don't want to be seen as religious fanatics.

## **The Individual Morality**

### **The Relationship with the World**

Catholics and Evangelicals have a different approach to the secular world. While Catholics show a deep commitment to worldly affairs and do not make strong moral demands on their members, for Pentecostals tolerance acquires a particular meaning in their effort to be separated from the world.

More specifically, for Catholics, religious values do not seem to be in great conflict with the secular world and tolerance for non-religious ideas and individuals is a common and unconscious practice. For example, I found a strong tendency among

my Catholic informants to have non-religious or non-practising individuals in their close families, usually the younger members of the family, but in some cases it was the informant's partner. This feature aligns contemporary Catholicism with mainstream religions such as liberal Protestantism, where intrafamily religious transmission is increasingly unlikely (Bruce 2015).

Marital religious homogamy is also uncommon among Catholics, which marks an important cultural difference with Evangelicals in terms of gender relations, which in this case do not rely on religious practice. For instance, Elena's husband belongs to the freemasonry. Although they had a religious wedding, each one follows their own convictions and respects the other's. However, for Elena, they share a common set of beliefs despite the fact that her husband does not practise Catholicism.

Elena's perception of her mixed marriage reveals that for many Catholics, religious values are a moral root that do not require religious practice apart from the main sacraments, thus family and gender roles are not mediated by religion. The low expectations regarding the maintenance of religious concordance between parents and children and the insistence on individual choice are distinct features of contemporary Chilean Catholicism and are probably behind the low intergenerational transmission in Del Carmen.

However, Elena also considers that in spite of the absence of constant religious practice, her children are in essence Catholics. Polo, in turn, as a father of four adults, thinks that faith can remain even when there is no religious participation, and there is always the possibility to return to the Church.

*They came to church when they were younger, but they grew up and not anymore... but all of them carry their Catholic roots, because they are married, they've got a religious marriage, their children have done the first communion, confirmation, all of that (Elena, 70).*

*Until I could influence them, not impose, influence, they went to mass... () They didn't continue going to mass, but I imagine that their faith remains, I think and hope so, and someday they will come back... (Polo, 74).*



Together with sacraments and faith, social sensibility is considered among those indications of religiosity that transcends a specific religious practice, as Rosa explains regarding her children. As a mother of two grown-up children, she seems proud of her children's commitments to social causes, which she considers to be a moral trace of a Catholic upbringing.

*My children stopped participating. While Marcela was in college, she participated a lot; in fact, she has a degree... social work. She dedicates herself to this, she has some closeness with the elderly, she likes it a lot, and she has that sensibility.*

*My son is very devoted to what he does, he works in a school, he does social work here in Estación Central, he goes to the Villa Portales, now he's there for example, and works with vulnerable children. So, I say, well, he doesn't come to church, but he has a social side... so, in this sense, it makes me very happy that they give part of themselves. I say to them, you have a lot to give, we raised you with a lot of love, so I think that this allows them to give (Rosa, 52).*

This flexible perspective about what it means to be Catholic is also visible in the openness of some members of Del Carmen to the relaxation of certain traditional moral precepts. Divorce, for example, is a reality among members of Del Carmen. María Inés, for instance, has a traumatic past related to a bad marriage that ended in separation when she was still young, and recently in a divorce. However, she declared that she never wants to have a partner again and seems to feel both sad and proud about that statement. As a very lonely person with a history of depression, the support of the church and the closer community has been a central pillar of her life.

*I never wanted to rebuild my life, imagine that I was married only for 20 years... but due to respect to my parents and my children, I never, never... so I ended up by myself.*

*I remember... there was Father Antonio Dieve... And I remember that one day I told him, and he told me no, you can take communion, you are not in sin. And I also asked don Norberto and he told me, no problem, there is no reason for you not to*

*take communion. Because formerly you were like... excommunicated from the Church (María Inés, 78).*

The relaxation of traditional rules is a controversial topic but also presents the possibility to end the vow of chastity among priests. Norberto thinks that priests have to remain single, because in his experience the maintenance of a family and a household is not compatible with priesthood in terms of time and finance. But for Iván and Rosa, there are ways to solve this practical problem. For example, Iván thinks that it is likely that, if the vows of chastity were abolished, more people would be attracted to priesthood, and the current priests' workload could be reduced. Rosa, in turn, postulates the possibility that, like the deacons, the priest could work to maintain a family.

Although controversies are not absent, all these perceptions support the idea of Catholicism as a flexible religion, supporting to the argument that flexibility is a constitutive part of the way in which contemporary Catholics understand religion. In this sense, the involvement with the social world is highly appreciated and moral mandates are not strongly demanded. Pentecostals, on the contrary, show a deeper consciousness of being separated from the secular world, which includes a more rigid requirement for distinctive moral standards.

For Pentecostals, religion is understood as a lifestyle that marks a difference between them and the rest of the people. They conceive themselves as more or less separated from the world, understood as the non-Christian others and secular society. They have to maintain a symbolic and ethical distance from it, in order to control its influence on their lives. This ethical position has consequences in the realm of non-Christian social and familiar relationships, in particular the demand for religious homogamy within the nuclear family, which has as a counterface the possibility of distance from non-Evangelical family relationships. As Marcos explains, social relationships with non-Evangelicals, including his parents, are limited to those activities that do not interfere with his religious obligations, and assumes this as a cost of his lifestyle choice.

*We are in the world, but we don't belong to the world. This means that I have to draw this thin line in which I can spend time with everyone, I don't have to isolate myself, but as I always tell my brothers, I work until 6 on Thursdays and Fridays, but I won't go to the "happy hour" (to have some drinks), I will go to the Church.*

*The cost we have to pay, as the Lord himself said, is to be able to leave our father, mother... of course I love my dad, I love him, I take care of him, he is my father and I don't deny it, but beyond that, if he makes a party I will stay until they begin to dance, no more than that, because I don't have anything else to do in that party. On the other side, the indication could be, love me as I am, beyond that I can't. I've imposed on myself a life choice in which we can be in tune in some things and not in others (Marcos, 52).*

This conservative approach to religious life is challenged by young Evangelicals that struggle with the rejection of worldly affairs. Although they also conceive themselves as separated from the secular world, they want at the same time to be fully integrated in it. Javiera recognises that the values of secular society often contradict her beliefs, but for her the right approach is to try to influence them and not to avoid them. In a similar perspective, Jorge argues for an openness to establish social relationships outside the church.

*The things I see in the world may not be according to my ideology, that's the thing, but I don't believe that we have to avoid it, by not going out of your house, by not talking to certain people. I think that we have to go out to discover the world, we have to be a part of it, but we also have to do things to make the world a better place (Javiera, 18).*

*For me it's good (to engage with the world), indeed, Jesus said that, he said don't get them out of the world, just protect them from evil. Jesus himself ate with all kind of people. I'm not saying that my university classmates were prostitutes or sinners, but Jesus gave us the example that we have to get along with all kinds of people, even those who may appear as the most deplorable (Jorge, 29).*

As evidence from the USA suggests, the tendency observed among younger members of the Temple of Zelada is common among some contemporary Evangelical churches, whose members are increasingly engaging with the world and becoming “more like the world” (Shibley 1998, p.78). This transformation could be interpreted as a generational conflict, which is reflected in the demand for access to popular culture, such as secular music, movies and literature, but also in specific life choices. For example, Constanza is very critical of older members of the church who look down on how she chooses to spend her free time. As a highly cultured young woman, she has musical and literary interests that sometimes do not fit with the traditional Evangelical culture.

*I was judged, how terrible it is to read Harry Potter! But the book was presented to me at school and I continued reading it by myself. Some people don't understand that, they think that you will become a fanatic of it and won't be going to Church anymore... but that's not true.*

*I feel very judged when I miss services. Next Sunday I have to sing a Brahms' Requiem at the Campus Oriente of the Catholic University with the choir I take part in, and I won't be able to go to Church, my parents know that, but I know people will gossip about it (Constanza, 23).*

The orchestra is a good example of a cultural initiative that encounters barriers among the more conservative members of the Church, for whom some of its musical instruments can be considered too mundane or even diabolical. This condemnation of worldly culture is at the base of the proliferation of a duplicated Christian cultural scene, oriented to the glory of the Lord. This Christian artistic scene is very popular among Christian youth but with increasing exceptions, among those for whom Christian culture is not good enough. The orchestra represents an effort to improve the musical quality and sophistication of the Church's initiatives.

*With the orchestra we are playing a Bach's cantata. And we have a small chamber choir and I'm making them sing in German, with what I've learnt with the Catholic University choir. And my sister also learned some German with a teacher, so she is*

*helping us with phonetics. And the idea is to say, we are singing something from Bach, Bach was a Protestant musician who composed a cantata every week to be used at the liturgical service. And that's something important, that they know. And they don't know, they think that is something from the devil; they are drowned in their own ignorance. And that's why I do it, because I want them to learn their own history (Constanza, 23).*

Beyond the cultural world, an everyday challenge for young Evangelicals is their social relationships outside the church. Tolerance is a widely used concept among Pentecostals when they try to describe their relationship with non-Evangelicals or with those that “do not know God”. Tolerance is presented as the right attitude given the human incapacity to judge: the other is conceived as a sinner but a good Christian should feel compassion. During one of my visits to the Cathedral, I attended Sunday School, where I was included in one of the groups of married women. The teacher reflected on the image that Evangelical women should present outside the Church, highlighting the importance of appearances and also the obligation not to judge others.

*We are always well dressed, we are ladies, we are... subtle... people appreciate us. But we should not judge the others, only God judges... (Sunday School Teacher, in her 60s)*

The teaching to be non-judgemental is thus a pillar of the Evangelical moral mandates. Judgement is avoided in order to do the right thing, but it also implies a self-criticism based on the imperfection of humanity. Additionally, the belief of a personal relationship with God implies that there are no valid mediators between the sinner and the Lord, as Claudio recognises. However, Claudio's discourse is also critical of some members of the Church who have developed a high moral perception of themselves, and thus criticise others.

*I know that as a person I'm not perfect, I make mistakes, but I'm only accountable to the one up there. Thus, I cannot judge someone, I can't look at the straw in the other's eye, when I have a rafter in my own (Claudio, 26).*

### **Religious and secular Morality**

Given this complex relationship between Evangelicals and the non-Christian world, the tension between a religious and a secular morality is a recurrent topic among my informants, especially the younger ones. Certain moral issues are problematic for the younger generation, who are developing a different lifestyle to that of their parents and are included in secular social circles. Gender roles and homosexuality are themes that appear in our informants' everyday lives, challenging traditional religious-based values.

As was discussed earlier, the patriarchal model of the Evangelical culture, which was able to reform and mitigate machismo, seems to be challenged by young Evangelicals, in particular women. Pentecostalism has been able to mitigate "machismo", revitalising the conjugal bond and the masculine role of providing father (Brusco 1995; Montecino 2002). This mechanism has been described as a main component of the appeal of Pentecostalism among popular classes (Beyer and Fontaine 1991; Montecino 2002), but it seems to be losing strength among younger women, whose aspirations are not built around marriage and motherhood. Young female Evangelicals are increasingly assuming non-traditional gender roles, related to their access to higher education and the consequent new expectations in life, but also to the rejection of patriarchy. The reformation of gender roles is being challenged by a post-machismo and post-patriarchal model that implies that young women confront difficulties in finding a partner.

Among my informants, sisters Constanza and Javiera, the daughters of Zelada's main preacher Marco, are examples of independent women who are not looking for a traditional family in the future: both are happily single and do not want to have children. They do, however, appreciate the traditional family, in a discourse that sometimes sounds ambiguous. As Shibley explained in relation to the North American case, this ambiguity is related to the fact that although Evangelicals are mostly pro-family, they are also open to reformulate gender roles and adapt them to contemporary patterns (Shibley 1998, p.74). But it is also likely that this ambiguous rejection of traditional family is related to the lack of suitable partners, because

evangelical men are relatively conservative, while non-Evangelicals do not share a lifestyle marked by religiosity.

*This topic of getting married is not interesting to me. I'm like a weirdo, I don't know, because all the girls in the church think about getting married, having a husband who hopefully has gone to University, having children and going to Church. I don't... I'm not against family, on the contrary, my family is my life, it's a very good... the best group, for me has been very rewarding. I've noted the difference between myself and my classmates that come from dysfunctional families... but I don't see myself as my parents, I think that we are different... (Constanza, 23).*

Ester can also be included among these non-conventional women. After a relationship with an Evangelical man that almost resulted in marriage, currently marriage and motherhood are not among her plans. As an engineer, she is currently working as researcher at a university and aspires to continue her studies abroad. A husband seems unlikely to fit in with her plans. This attitude is related to life expectations and also with the fact that possible husbands for Evangelical young women are likely to come from within the Church: these women are rejecting the patriarchal model of family.

*When you study inevitably a variety of opportunities appear to you, I don't see myself now... maybe when I develop a maternal instinct, but for now I don't imagine myself staying at home all day, no, no way. Besides, I'm very active, I do a lot of things during the day... I think this has changed... from the Church, only one of my friends is married, she has my same age, she already has two children, but the rest is in a relationship, studying or single. Now it happens that there are girls that have studied, they have their diploma and they provide for themselves (Ester, 28).*

Homosexuality is an especially controversial moral topic among Evangelicals. From an institutional perspective, Evangelical Churches have been a central pressure group against same-sex marriage and against legal recognition of homosexual rights in general. As Bean and Martínez point out, this opposition can be explained by the Evangelical tendency towards a literal interpretation of the Bible and also by their

definition of cultural boundaries by opposition to gays and lesbians as a group that embodies a liberal sexual ethic of the world (Bean and Martinez 2014, p.411).

However, at the individual level, the opposition to homosexuality acquires important complexities. Although all my informants regard homosexuality as a sin that has to be rejected, most of them do not want to be considered homophobic or anti-homosexual, especially those who are work or study in secular spaces. There seems to be an internal conflict because conservative religious convictions are not easy to put into practice in modern Chilean society. Constanza, for example, has gay classmates at her music school with whom she tries to have normal relationships but her religious beliefs clash with her everyday life.

*I do believe that they are in sin, but I can't avoid being involved with them, I can't stop living my life due to a personal prejudice (Constanza, 23).*

In general, the strategy to deal with this ambivalence is to draw a distinction between the gay rights movement, on the one hand, and individuals who identify as homosexuals, on the other. Fizabel represents this position, arguing that homosexuals have to be respected as individuals, but this respect does not necessarily extend to political rights. Daniela also shows this ambivalence, supporting respect but at the same time affirms opposition.

*My opinion is that they have the right to do what they want, to make their own decisions, we can't judge them, if they want to come to Church they can come, but they can't come with placards supporting gay marriage, because that is the same as if they come to your house...*

*In my opinion... is not that I agree, I hope it doesn't happen, but if it happens, I think it's probable that it will happen, that gay marriage will be allowed. I don't criticise gay people, each one with their choices. I feel sorry for them, because according to my beliefs they won't be able to enter the kingdom of Heaven, and that's what troubles me (Fizabel, 21).*

*God created a man and a woman, and that's the basis. And it's not that I say so, it's the word of God: a man and a woman. I have to respect them, because the law says*



*so, and also because I had... at school, it was an only- girl's school, I saw many things, haha, and I had to respect them, and because I respected them, they respected me (Daniela, 22).*

These opinions show the effort to reconcile religious precepts and secular practices, which reflects how young Evangelicals construct their identity as members of a religious group inserted in a secular environment. As Bean and Martinez note, Evangelicals build boundaries around their social context but at the same time remain engaged with it. This means that although they defend a hetero-normative model of family, their discourses are influenced by secular ideas that support a greater tolerance toward gays and lesbians (Bean and Martinez 2014, p.411).

As a result of this effort, it is probable that these young Evangelicals experience what Bean and Martinez call psychological ambivalence: contradictory feelings towards gay individuals. At a social level, Bean and Martinez call this phenomenon “structured ambivalence”, which they describe as “...the inconsistent normative expectations that result from one’s social position and the way those expectations require inconsistent ideology and behaviour” (Bean & Martinez, 2014, p. 397). This results in young Evangelicals that show an increasing support for homosexual rights while maintaining moral opposition to homosexuality (Bean and Martinez 2014, p.397). Drawing boundaries against homosexuality is for Evangelicals a way to respect divine judgement, but allows them to engage with gay and lesbian people in everyday life and express moral compassion (Bean and Martinez 2014, p.397).

Concepts such as compassion, tolerance, respect and free will are commonly used to explain this controversy, in an attempt to depart from the extreme positions of some members, which for Constanza reflects their lack of culture. The turn to tolerance is especially interesting: young Evangelicals represent a paradigmatic example of a radical version of liberal tolerance, as they tolerate those from whom they essentially dissent.

The fear of being catalogued as fundamentalists and homophobes is also contained in this ambivalent discourse, which indicated that Evangelicals are civil enough to be

part of society. Claudio is especially aware of the necessity to overcome this image of Evangelicals as religious fanatics. As a dentist, he encounters a wide plurality of patients and colleagues, so he is very careful to maintain an open discourse that respects other beliefs.

*I try to maintain my rules, my Christian values, but obviously as a doctor I try to be as open as possible. I'm not a fanatic that is trying to imply God in everything, because at the end people have the right to think what they want. The Bible itself says that there is free will, I don't have to influence people or force them to think like me. I grew up in a pluralist environment and I'm used to behave in this way, even when I believe and I'm certain that it's true, but I can't ever force anyone, and I also can't have a shocking, strong or offensive discourse. Because people realise, they will brand you as a fanatic, crazy... (Claudio, 26).*

The Goffmanian conceptualisation of stigma, as an attribute that is deeply discrediting (Goffman 1963, Chapter 1), can be useful to understand why young Evangelicals can sometimes hide their religious identity in certain circles, keeping their membership as an “inside secret” (Goffman 1959, p.142). This idea of religious fanaticism as a stigma can explain the paradox that being an Evangelical can represent an abnormality in some circles. This means that the negative attributes of Pentecostalism as a religion that discriminates against homosexuals can transform this religion into a stigma that separates its members from the norm in the context of progressive or highly secular environments. Fizabel, for example, told me that the question about religiosity is part of the psychological assessment he had to take in order to apply for a job.

*They asked me, do you go to a Church? And I said yes, I participate, I'm an Evangelical, and then comes the typical question, what do you think about homosexuals? They ask that in the context of your psychological profile, they can't hire someone that is going to discriminate against homosexuals... and my answer was, I don't like homosexuals, they are not compatible with me, but I don't discriminate against them (Fizabel, 21).*

For Goffman, stigma causes feelings of identity ambivalence among those who suffer from it because the standards that they apply to themselves appear as impossible to put in practice. Acting “normal” can be difficult in certain circles (Goffman 1963, p.130). In a country whose public opinion is becoming more liberal in relation to so-called ‘moral issues’, the possibility of being stigmatised is a permanent risk for Evangelicals. To protect against this, I argue that these young men and women practise what Goffman calls “audiences’ segregation”, playing different roles according to the audience to which they are directed. Given that it is highly unlikely that these audiences could be mixed in the same situation, it is easy for them to be a different person in each role without discrediting the other (Goffman 1967, Chapter 3, 1959, Chapter 4). In this sense, Evangelicals can hold civil attitudes in civil society but at the same time can participate in an organisation that defends uncivil values. This sort of ambivalence is common among contemporary Evangelicals.

### **Evangelical Lifestyle and the Culture of ‘El Carrete’**

The ambivalent position in which young Evangelicals find themselves in the sphere of morality can also be found in the realm of youth culture. This realm is marked by the term ‘El carrete’, which summarises all these activities that can be included in the space of youth social entertainment. The concept is controversial in the context of this research: while from a secular perspective it would certainly include drinking and taking other substances, such as cannabis, or sexual encounters, for young Evangelicals these kinds of activities are not necessary for entertainment. The avoidance of alcohol and practices considered as vices are never conceived as an external imposition but as a natural result of the knowledge of God. This is not, however, always a straightforward decision. It commonly includes a stage of rebellion, which is experienced as departure from and return to religion, and is valued as a way to find a personal testimony among native Evangelicals. As Lindhardt finds in his research in Valparaiso, adolescence is commonly a time of departure from the paths of the Lord, followed by a reconversion (Lindhardt 2012, p.488).

The ambivalence can be described in two simultaneous attitudes when it comes to youth culture. On the one hand, Evangelicals avoid certain typical youth practices and seem to feel proud of it but, on the other hand, they seem to be attracted to this world of fun, diversity and effervescence. A good example of this kind of search is Javiera, who is very excited to start college in a secular and liberal university and in an unconventional subject: sociology. She chose the University of Chile and not the Catholic University because of its pluralism and novelty.

*I chose to study at the University of Chile because to get to know different realities motivates me. Besides, it's a very conflictive University, in terms of social manifestations, and that calls my attention (Javiera, 18).*

Although there is clearly curiosity among some of my interviewees, there are still practices that young Evangelicals are proud to avoid, as a way to differentiate themselves from the rest of their generation. In this sense, a significant topic regarding Pentecostalism and youth concerns how Evangelical young people party or spend leisure time with their peers. Alcohol and other typical activities, such as dancing, are tacitly banned. Many of the young people I interviewed declared that they do not like to 'carretear': to drink alcohol, to smoke and even to dance are activities that they are not willing to partake in. Although some people have taken part in the past, they chose abstention as a way to be closer to God and to mark a distance from the secular world. Claudio and Fizabel, for example, remember the moment they quit 'el carrete' as a religious awakening.

*Now I'm certain that where I am, God exists. And if I was chosen, if He called me it's because I have to do something important for Him. Thus, from that moment my experience changed, from that moment I quit drinking, I quit 'carrete'. Obviously, I still have friends, some of them are still in the same stage and I didn't leave them, because you live in this world and you have to relate to people, but now my life is different, because I'm certain that God exists (Claudio, 26).*

*... in some way these things take you away from God... so, in an attempt to get closer to God I stopped doing those things, I stopped drinking, I stopped smoking (Fizabel, 21).*

In general, young Evangelicals understand this avoidance as a personal choice or as a visible consequence of God's presence in their lives, not as an external prohibition. Claudio, for example, seems very interested in highlighting this point, especially when he has to explain his attitudes in non-Evangelical circles.

*There are personal options, people ask if it's forbidden to us to do those things, and then you have to explain that no, that it's a personal choice. I say, my heart is God's temple, why I'm I going to contaminate it with alcohol, with tobacco, I won't dance because I would feel that I'm not adoring Him, that I'm adoring anything but God.*

*So, then I start explaining to the people that surround me, because you are surrounded by people that don't go to the Church, I have friends from the University that aren't Evangelicals, that are Catholics or not religious. So, some people may find you boring, but when they are close friends they respect the fact that we are like this (Claudio, 26).*

In any case, it is clear that abstention, particularly from alcohol, is a cultural mark of Evangelicalism due to its origins as a popular religion. In this sense, Manuel argues that abstaining from alcohol represents a communitarian practice of Pentecostalism.

*It's not that I don't drink because the Church says so, I don't drink because I don't like it, because I've tried it, I've drunk wine and all, but I don't like it, it doesn't call my attention. And they don't forbid you to drink here, we don't drink because the Gospel went to many lower-class places where many people were immersed in alcohol, so how can I drink in front of people that had problems with that? (Manuel, 21).*

Moreover, young Evangelicals have a lifestyle that in many ways is not compatible with typical youth activities. For many of them, who attend Church several times a week and also have demanding study or job obligations, spare time is scarce. In this

context, some of my interviewees describe themselves as home-loving kinds of people.

Although the avoidance of vices is never understood as an external imposition, the rebellion stage is normal, especially for those who were born into the Church. In some cases, this stage is related to deeper questionings and with life crises, which normally ends up in a return to the Church. Constanza and Paulette told me similar stories of departure and return.

*They party, they destroy themselves, haha. I had a classmate at school, we went to the same church, to the Cathedral, and she... she had a special story. But anyway, although they party, they always end up growing up and they stay in the Church (Constanza, 23).*

*We have falls, there are people who were born in the Gospel and when they are 16 they are not here anymore, and at 21 they realise that the world is not what God wanted for them and at 21 they are back. It was like a temptation... and that's the testimony they have (Paulette, 18).*

This personal experience is narrated as a testimony by Fizabel, who relates his worldly habits to his family story.

*Now I interpret it differently, and not because my dad came back, at some point I said, okay, it is God's will, if He doesn't want my parents to be together, there should be a reason, if He wants them to be together, that's better for me, but I understand that it's God's will. And God wants them to be together again, and now I look at them and they are like so in love, something I never saw when I was a kid, I only saw them fighting. We are human, we also have those experiences. And well, then I grew up, my dad came back home and... when my dad left there was a time when I got the habits of the world, I drank, smoked and all of that... (Fizabel, 21).*

An interesting cultural phenomenon that appears in this context is a Chilean movie called "Young and Wild" ("Joven y Alocada", 2012), which tells the true biographical experience of an upper-class Evangelical teenager who rebels against her family and

church, experimenting with sexuality and sharing it in a blog.<sup>6</sup> Javiera, for example, although she marks certain difference with the main character in the film, she identifies with some of the sentiments.

*I've seen the movie twice, once alone and once with my sister. And it's ok, it's not like ohhh, this girl is so heretical, no. These are situations that you experience in life, it's like you really... I'm not so like her, but it happens that sometimes you start questioning things, why is this, why is that... (Javiera, 18).*

In general, young Evangelicals are very interested in showing that although they do not drink, they are not dull people and that they know how to have fun. Friendship and social life, or a softer version of 'carrete', is still an important part of my informants' lives. Nicole, for example, told me about her family meetings as different versions of a typical Chilean party.

*We are really messy, very messy when we meet, people get surprised. My family is huge, the Lemunao, and when we meet we can be up until 2 or 3 am at home fooling around, talking non-sense, laughing, singing... people don't understand... sometimes I arrive to work very tired because the evening before I had a birthday party, and they tell me, ah, you were partying, and they think I'm hungover, and they don't know that I was only laughing and drinking juice. Sometimes I don't know how to explain those things, but this makes you different to others, and that's a way that we have to preach the Gospel (Nicole, 26).*

As Fizabel and Manuel told me, abstention from alcohol is not an issue for their non-Evangelical friends. Although they recognise themselves as different, at the same time they do not want to be excluded or be seen as abnormal.

*For example, my friends from the neighbourhood call me, to meet to drink, I participate anyway, but I don't drink.*

*I don't have to do those things to feel good with them, if they are my... there I realised that they were truly my friends (Fizabel, 21).*

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<sup>6</sup> <http://jovenyalocada.blogspot.cl/>

*I'm one more within the group, I do the same things, it's just that some of them smoke and I don't... they realise that I'm different, but not because I stay away from them or anything, I'm with them there, I'm one of them, I join them in everything. That's what I think, how I feel, and that's how I think people see me, as normal. Not because I come to church I am a creep... (Manuel, 21).*

Thus, the sociability spaces with non-church members were important for my informants, as a means to relate to the world and to show that they can integrate members of it. However, for some of them, the relationships within the church are more "transparent" because there is a common lifestyle that makes interaction easier and more fluent. Mirian and Ester are both inserted in secular circles; Mirian as a medical student and Ester as a researcher at a university. For both, however, communication is easier within Evangelical circles.

*Is not that because you are not an Evangelical I won't trust you, I don't segregate people for their religion, not at all... but you get the sensation that you can talk about topics that with other people you can't, that's all (Mirian, 23).*

*I don't think it's easier, because for me is easy to have friends... they respect... For me there's no problem in being with them when they drink, smoke, but I won't do it, and they also respect that. But I do feel that we speak differently, we use a certain language that the others don't know. For example, I have a friend that... we don't do anything on Sunday, because we are at Church, with the family... so we know that from Monday until Saturday we do homework, and that's easier to communicate with her than with the others, that is like, hey, on Sunday, ah, no, because I don't know or I send it at night. But these are small things... maybe it's not easier, but it's better... it's better because we understand each other better, we speak about the same things or maybe we both see the problems from a different perspective... (Ester, 28).*

Many of my young informants recognised that the church represents the main location for sociability but there were exceptions. For Coni, for example, social life is mainly composed of university classmates because they, and not her Church mates,



share her musical interests, which represent the most important part of her life. Although Coni may be an exception, she reflects an interesting phenomenon, which happens when young Evangelicals start to develop professional interests that redefine their relationships with the more traditional members of the Church.

*I'm an odd case within the Church, because it's not common to hear the music I hear. Now I came listening to Beethoven's Fifth. Many young members of the Church listen to Jesús Adrián Romero, a Christian singer, because they are used to the lyrics, that the songs say something nice... and I look for... I don't know, I prefer to read a book. So, outside the church I find people with more affinity in what I like to do, music, my area of performance. I do have friends from the Church, but...*

*(Constanza, 23).*

In this context, young Evangelicals recognise that friends from the Church and other friends live in separated worlds which are better not mixed, confirming the idea of separated audiences to which young Evangelicals perform different and segregated roles. The different styles of 'carrete' still represent a crucial cultural frontier that separates Evangelicals from the rest of the Chilean youth.

*I think that they are two separated groups, yes. Because none of these groups are equals, so, for example, I couldn't mix them in my house and have a party, no. Because one of them would drink and... they would be drunk in the street and the others would be ehh... too healthy, so it would be like, oh, they are so boring...*

*(Javiera, 18).*

### **Religious Morality in the Public Sphere**

The second perspective considers the way in which the Churches express their moral concerns in the public sphere. Although both the Catholic Church and the Methodist Pentecostal Church have maintained a conservative position in the public space in recent decades, the recent approval of an abortion law for three specific cases has revealed two different approaches to the contemporary normative discussion in Chile.

In this section I will show the conflictive relationship between institutional Pentecostalism and politics, specifically in terms of its attempt to defend a religious morality in the context of a secular state. In turn, I will also show how the Catholic Church seems to maintain a more specialised approach to this conflict, showing its opposition to certain secular reforms but at the same time recognising that the religious morality only applies to those who are religious. This comparison will highlight again the fundamental differences between traditional Protestantism and its Pentecostal varieties: Protestantism has historically shown a liberal approach to political power, in the sense of the values of civil society. In our case, this position seems to be coming into Catholicism.

I will first analyse how the relationship between religion and politics is controversial among our Evangelical informants, revealing a traumatic past marked by the support of Pinochet's dictatorship and also an historical lack of confidence in the political system. In turn, I will argue that the Catholic Church has developed a more civil position regarding moral issues in the public sphere, defending their institutional rights from a pluralist perspective.

### **Religion and Politics in Zelada**

The hierarchy of the Methodist Pentecostal Church is explicitly attempting to gain political influence, evident from my informants' interviews and also in recent public events that are discussed in this section. For Marcos, Zelada's head preacher, this effort reveals a mature Church that is ready to participate in the country's major discussions and decisions. This maturity is related to the social mobility experienced by their leaders and their faithful.

*The last administration, from the Bishop Eduardo, has been very innovative in many topics, and has opened the Church... because the Church is mature enough to receive political visitors, before we couldn't (Marcos, 45).*

However, this effort to increase the political involvement of the Church is a controversial topic among its members. Political power is still conceived as a

dangerous and evil worldly force, and for some members this path could take the Church away from its spiritual orientation. This approach to religion is more consistent with the traditional Protestant and Pentecostal vision of politics as a worldly force that entails the threat of corruption, and also with the conviction that moral beliefs are a private matter. Jorge, for example, is very radical about the negative consequences of political commitment.

*For me it's negative, because it bonds you with power in some way, and you start to make commitments... we should provide a message of hope, we should be oriented to a Kingdom that isn't of this world. We shouldn't be involved in the power spheres in order to impose a point of view, that's not good. It's not good, for example, that we, as Christians, go out to say that we are against homosexuality, abortion... the society is advancing in that direction, and not because me, as a Christian, say another thing, the other will listen... (Jorge, 29).*

Although there is agreement that religious values have to be promoted, the question of how to deliver that religious message reappears. For some members, like Marcos, this is a battle that the Church should fight, but for others, like Jorge, this fight is personal, and the Church has to show options and not assume an imposing message. From Jorge's perspective, echoing a modern vision of religion, choice has to be presented as the principal basis of morality.

*We have to fight battles in the moral sphere, abortion, homosexual marriage, laws that show the sign of the times, but we should fight, we have to show our position (Marcos, 45).*

*It's good for the Church to have a voice, but from the point of view of how you deliver that message, I think that maybe... it's good to have a microphone and to understand what you think, that's good, but what I think it's negative is the way in which we deliver that message. If we don't show it as an alternative but as an imposition... the Church can't use God to tell people what to do, God gives the capacity to choose. And in that sense, it can be symbolic or not, but He gave an option, a choice... (Jorge, 29).*

These developments are revealing an important source of conflict that touches a very sensitive topic for young Evangelicals: the way in which they want to be recognised in the public sphere. Again, the fear of being stigmatised makes many Evangelicals prefer a lower public profile. As Jorge argues, stigma is not related to a lower socio-economical background anymore, but to a discriminatory public discourse.

*To be an Evangelical today, and that's the Church's higher spheres discourse, is not something to be ashamed of, but... is not as it was before, when being Evangelical was the same as been an alcoholic, of being at the bottom of the social scale, but now it is different: we are point at for what we think, we have a negative image.*

*People see us as intransigent, as discriminatory (Jorge, 29).*

The Catholic Church has shown a different approach to its relationship with political power and to the public sphere during the last few years. Although the Church has expressly shown its opposition to abortion on every circumstance, the main voice regarding the recent passing of the abortion law has been the vice chancellor of the Catholic University. Chancellor Ignacio Sánchez has pursued with success the article that allows the institution to be a conscientious objector, thus able to refuse to perform abortions in its clinics without losing the right to have access to public funds (UC 2018). Beyond the legal battle, this reference to universal rights of identity and values situates the Church among the institutions of the civil sphere, revealing a Catholic Church that is trying to adapt itself to the secular world and at the same time preserve its religious values.

This position can be understood following Casanova's analysis of the democratic turn of Catholicism after the second Vatican Council and its Declaration of Religious Freedom, when the Church appropriated the discourse of universal human rights (Casanova 2001, 1996). Freedom of conscience, in this context, is a principle that the Church recognises as a right for every person and also for itself as an institution to oppose an authoritative position in relation to the state (Casanova 1996). In this case, the Chilean Catholic Church, represented by the Catholic University, abandons the model of political mobilisation and departs from the Methodist Evangelical Church. In turn, the public role of Catholicism will take place as an actor in civil society and

using universalistic principles (Casanova 1996). Paradoxically, this position puts the Catholic Church closer to traditional Protestantism in its relationship with political power, while Chilean Pentecostalism assumes the model of the American Christian Right.

### **The Catholic Approach to Sexual Abuse Scandals**

In the opening section of this thesis, I mentioned Pope Francis' visit to Chile being a religious and social event that revealed a crisis of the catholic Church, but also an interesting sociological trend that could be summarised as secularisation. Although this event took place after my fieldwork, in this last chapter I would like to add that Pope Francis' visit also unleashed a series of events that express an institutional transformation, which can be interpreted in the context of the emergence of a vibrant civil society.

After its significant contribution to the restoration of democracy, the Chilean Catholic Church retrieved from the political sphere to a focus on moral doctrine. Pope John Paul II's project to evangelise culture and the public sphere required the Church to adopt a position on questions of public morality. From this emerged the Church's most turbulent contemporary institutional crisis.

Starting with paedophilia and sexual abuse scandals, and followed by the institutional cover up, the crisis exploded after the visit of Pope Francis in 2018. Since the Pope's controversial defence of the now former Bishop of Osorno and the later Vatican investigation, Francis I admitted he made grave errors and invited the victims he discredited to his residence to listen to their stories and ask for their forgiveness. In the meantime, the Pope sent an extraordinary letter to Chile's bishops, summoning all to the Vatican for an emergency meeting, with the objective of repairing scandal and re-establishing justice (The Guardian Associated Press in Santiago 2018). A few weeks later, Francis publicly denounced a culture of abuse and cover up in a pastoral letter to the Chilean faithful, assuming an unprecedented position regarding the Catholic Church's sexual abuse scandals (The Guardian Associated Press in Vatican

City 2018). At the same time, he gave a letter to the 34 Chilean Bishops at their encounter on May 15 2018 to serve as the basis for their reflection and prayer.

This 10-page text was published by Chile's Canal 13 Television, revealing a discourse that recognises the necessity of the Church to abandon authoritarian and totalising positions: "never an individual or illustrated group can pretend to be the totality of God's people and neither pretend to be the authentic voice of its interpretation. In this sense, we have to pay attention to what I call elite psychology, which can be used to our way to interpret things. The elite's psychology produces division, separation dynamics, closed circles that end up in narcissistic and authoritarian spiritualities..." (Pope Francis 2018, the translation is my own). Pope Francis demands new institutional participatory dynamics in the space of civil society: "This is why, and allow me to insist, it is urgent to produce ecclesial dynamics that could promote participation and shared mission from all the members of the ecclesial community, avoiding any kind of messianism... . In concrete, for example, it will be good for us to open ourselves more and to work with the different organisations of civil society to promote an anti-abuse culture..." (Pope Francis 2018). In turn, the letter's footnotes are especially hard for the Chilean Church, stating clearly that abuses are criminal conducts and not merely moral faults: "In the special mission report, my envoys could confirm that some priests, expelled from their orders due to their immoral behaviour, and after the criminal facts have been minimised in their absolute gravity, attributing them to a simple weakness or moral fault, would have been embraced in other dioceses and even, in an imprudent way, it would be offered them diocesan or parish offices that imply an everyday and direct contact with under-aged persons" (Pope Francis 2018).

The civil position of Catholicism is thus a global phenomenon that encounters local challenges. Globalisation not only implies the compression of time and space, but also of meaning and cultural logics. This process produces a virtual global civil stage where local events are evaluated against transcendent cultural logics, such as democracy and human rights (Alexander 2005). Although Alexander postulates this global civil society as a dream or aspiration, the fact that the Catholic Church is a

global institution makes it more likely that its local actions are evaluated according to global standards and before an idealised audience of world citizens (Alexander 2005), as the Chilean case demonstrates.

### **The 2017 Te Deum**

As discussed earlier, political protest is a common reaction of Evangelical Protestants when a conflict with secular society emerges (Campbell 2004, p. 159). In this section I will describe and analyse an example of how the Chilean Pentecostal Methodist Church reacted to same-sex marriage and abortion, which has been highly confrontational and profoundly politicised.

During the last Te Deum, which took place in the Evangelical Cathedral on 10 September 2017 as part of the celebrations of the National Holidays and was attended per tradition by President Bachelet, the bishop's son, Eduardo Durán Salinas, preached a highly political sermon. Durán Salinas is a pastor of the Church and at the time of the Te Deum was standing for election to the parliament; an election that he won in November 2017. In his sermon, he defended the right of the Church to have its own candidates that could defend Christian values in Congress. The pastor questioned that "minority groups have installed an agenda that doesn't even have the support of the majority of citizens", adding that "there are some people that visit our temples saying that they defend our values and principles, but afterwards they treat us as intolerant and promote laws that go against Christian beliefs", sending a direct message to Bachelet (Sallaberry and Labrín 2017).

On the same occasion, Bachelet was insulted by some of those in attendance, who called her "an assassin" and "a national embarrassment", clearly in relation to the moral agenda of her government. She left the Cathedral visibly upset, according to press reports (Cooperativa 2017; Vera and Cáceres 2017; Emol 2017). Other authorities attended the religious service, including Bachelet's ministers and also the presidential candidates. Sebastián Piñera, the current president, who stands against abortion, was also present and received applause.

The government made a public complaint through its spokeswoman Paula Narváez, who is herself the daughter of an Evangelical pastor. She wrote on twitter “We were invited to pray for Chile, and not to a campaign meeting. We believe that it’s important that at this kind of occasion there is respect for the different opinions that exist in our country and that are part of our democracy”. She added “when the president is disrespected, Chile is disrespected” (Cooperativa 2017). Similarly, candidates from Bachelet’s coalition and also from the more conservative Christian Democracy also criticised Durán Salinas, showing support for the President. In turn, Piñera opted for focusing on the defence of Christian values and declared that he was “grateful for the affection he received” and that “there are fundamental values in the Chilean society, such as the value of life, of the family, marriage and solidarity that we have to promote, and I think that the laws should go in that direction”(Emol 2017).

This situation clearly shows the political involvement and aspirations of the Evangelical Church, which is standing firmly and sometimes violently against liberal initiatives. This was evident in the candidacy of Durán Salinas, as part of the right-wing party ‘Renovación Nacional’. At the same time, it revealed that the moral vote against liberal initiatives was a valued asset during the presidential election of November and December 2017, when Piñera won on the second electoral round. Certainly, Evangelicals were the public religion that fiercely represented the importance of the religious vote.

However, this episode has also brought a strong internal criticism, as well as conflicts with other Evangelical and Protestant denominations. The pastor from the Lutheran Church of Valparaiso, Rodolfo Olivera, published a letter in a leading newspaper, where he asks for forgiveness for Chileans, who have seen “the worst face of the Church”. He criticised the Evangelical pastors for preaching a moral agenda and not the love of God, and he claimed that the Churches should respect individual freedoms. “Which part of the separation between the state and the Church in the Reformation did the churches not understand?” he added (Olivera Obermöller 2017). But the political approach of bishop Durán and his son has also revealed an internal crisis within Evangelical churches. During the Te Deum, the president of the extended



board of Evangelical Entities of Chile, the bishop Emiliano Soto, made a call for tolerance. Soto, who is linked to the political centre-left, criticised afterwards the position of Durán against the government.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed the way in which religious people exercise their moral beliefs in a secularising society. In this regard, I have found important differences between Catholics and Evangelicals, both at an individual and at an institutional level, which reveal how Catholicism is assuming the model of traditional Protestantism, while Pentecostalism departs from its Protestant roots.

While Catholics live their religious morality as a general guidance that can include those who do not practice, Pentecostals understand themselves to be separated from the secular world. Evangelicals struggle to insert themselves in secular circles, which is especially problematic for the new generation, which is likely to experience a moral ambivalence between their different roles. Ambivalence responds to an effort of adaptation of religious practices that reveals that, similarly to the challenge that represents a change of status, a secularising society also imposes challenges to Evangelical religiosity, which lead to transformation.

This difference is also visible at the institutional level, where the Catholic Church is willing to defend religious values asking for respect for pluralism, as the example of the Catholic University makes clear. The objection of conscience in the case of abortion means that the state cannot force a Catholic institution to go against its values or beliefs, which implies a defence of religious autonomy against the state. In turn, the Methodist Pentecostal Church has shown a different approach, making public its interest in defending its values from within parliament. As may be expected, this attempt is highly problematic, especially if the complex relationship between Evangelicals and worldly affairs is considered.

## Conclusion

Assuming a comparative perspective, this research was oriented to exploring how secularisation and religious pluralisation are experienced among the participants in two churches in the city centre of Santiago de Chile. Within this general objective, this research sought to understand how Chile's particular religious identity has been affected by social differentiation and modernisation and also to observe how religious institutions are assuming their public role in a secularising society. These general objectives incorporated a two-level perspective that included the observation of individual practices and also of institutional adaptation, based on the idea that religious processes affect and are affected by both the individual and institutional spheres. More precisely, I observed how the modern processes of individualisation and privatisation are perceived and experienced among the members of religious communities. At the same time, I analysed how the churches react to challenges emerging from a secularising society, under the assumption that churches are facing social and organisational changes that reflect a current necessity of adaptation and legitimation.

During this research, I tried to understand how contemporary processes of religious change are affecting the country's religious identity. In this sense, I think that it is possible to affirm that the population that is neither religious nor secular, which constitute a main category among secularising countries, is not a novelty in Chile. Occasional participation in religious services and nominalism, as a category of people who claim a religious identification but do not participate, has been a traditional and persistent profile among Catholics. In this research, the typical approach of Catholics to religious practice was associated with the preparation of sacraments such as baptism, first communion, confirmation and marriage, but not with an active and regular participation. In this sense, I believe that it is not likely that these categories of people are moving towards the secular, as Bruce would predict (Bruce 2015, Chapter 4). The persistence of popular Catholicism, as the religious practice that operates outside the institutional margins of the Church, can be observed in this research as a central feature of a flexible, inclusive and adaptive Catholicism.

Despite this continuity and persistence, this thesis was built upon the argument of religious change, understood as Chile's ongoing secularisation process. In this sense, what it does represents a novelty in the Chilean case in that the religious sphere differentiates itself from other social spheres. The differentiation theory appeared to me as the more appropriate framework in which to explain the relationship between modernity and secularisation. This approach means that, while in the traditional world religion and society were not distinguishable systems, now there are places outside religion from where it can be observed and described, yet at the same time religion confronts non-religious distinctions and has to react to them.

However, the process of secularisation does not necessarily lead to the disappearance of religion, as some scholars insist on predicting. At the individual level, what can be observed is a different form of religiosity, in which belonging is no longer taken for granted. At the institutional level, the loss of religious organisations' power does not imply their disappearance but the possibility for them to be constituted as civil society institutions. The next sections will discuss both phenomena.

### **Challenges arising from a changing Society: the new Generation (or its Absence)**

The generational pattern of religious change that has been observed in developed countries resounds in my findings. In a context where the ideal of individual choice starts to include the sphere of religious life, individuals, families and institutions differ in their capacity to transmit religious loyalty from one generation to the next.

Chilean Catholicism and its accommodation to the secular world could be related to its weak intergenerational transmission. My findings show that among Catholic families, religious homogamy between couples is unlikely, even when both parents are committed Catholics. They are not expecting to raise religious practising children but to offer a moral upbringing according to Catholic values. In this sense, there are low expectations regarding the maintenance of religious concordance between

parents and children and an insistence on individual choice, which are probably behind the low intergenerational transmission at Del Carmen. This feature puts contemporary Chilean Catholicism in continuity with mainstream religions such as liberal Protestantism, where intrafamily religious transmission is increasingly unlikely. Pentecostal parents, in turn, are more likely to share a religious identity and lifestyle and seem to invest more effort in recruiting their children. However, intergenerational changes in social status represent an additional difficulty for Pentecostals.

I found that the lack of a replacement generation is a constant concern at Del Carmen Catholic Chapel. As a mainstream religion, Catholicism is building bridges with the secular sphere but in this process seems to be losing its ability to provide for a generational replacement that comes from within church-going families. The young generation of emerging middle-class people is starting to change the composition of the Zelada neighbourhood. It is a group that represents hope for the future, but at the same times appears as highly inaccessible to the type of leadership emerging from the chapel, where priest callings are scarce, and the laity appears as a challenge for the office charisma of priesthood. The fear of extinction is thus always present, as well as a demand for change and renovation.

In turn, my findings indicate that young Evangelicals have incentives to conform to their group of peers, which are affecting their approach to religion. Changes in social status and its effects on preferences and lifestyle are central aspects of religious choices, and material security challenges religious adherence. However, religious change in itself is also affecting those choices: together with upward mobility, a secularising society imposes challenges to Evangelical religiosity, which lead to transformation and adaptation.

I argue that transformation and adaptation are the mechanisms used by these young people to accommodate their secular and worldly status in their religious lifestyle. I could observe a generation that does not share the same material and cultural conditions of their parents and grandparents and that challenges the way I perceived contemporary Pentecostalism, showing a kind of religiosity that is adapting to Chilean

society, in which young Pentecostals aspire to be fully integrated. This particular position of young Evangelicals can be interpreted as a permanent ambivalence between normative expectations and actual behaviour, reflected in a fluent identity that changes depending on the role they assume and the audience to which it is performed.

Young Evangelicals confront traditional religious practices that do not respond to the features of their everyday context. The answer is problematisation and adaptation, both at an individual and institutional level. I argue that, in their adaptive effort, the new generation of native Evangelicals tries to appear 'as normal as possible' in front of their non-Evangelical peers, which is also reflected in an institution that evolves to fulfil the standards of an established church.

Changes in the way in which Evangelicals interact with the secular world are indicative of their aspiration to inclusion and integration. The world is not a hostile place that requires the conversion of the sinners, but the place in which they want to belong. Tensions between a religious and a secular morality, the strategies of presentation of the self and the more general ambivalent behaviour reveal that Pentecostalism is still an attribute that contains the risk of social and cultural stigmatisation. However, the stigma is not only related to social status, but also and perhaps more importantly to moral standards: religious fanaticism and incivility are essential elements of the social stigma that young Evangelicals are trying to avoid.

Overall, my argument recognises that Pentecostalism is challenged by status improvement, but adds that economic and educational mobility transforms the way in which young Evangelicals understand and practise their religiosity, not necessarily leading to the abandonment of their religious identity and lifestyle. Although the possibility of switching to more liberal denominations or to Catholicism and even apostasy is not off the table, it is also the case that transformation and adaptation should be considered as relevant elements of religious change. Evangelical Christianity is not necessarily retreating but adapting and changing, and religion remains an interesting sphere in which to observe the transformations driven by modernity.

Although the Providencia Church shows the limits of Pentecostal growth among the elites, efforts of adaptation are challenging these limits, at least among upper-middle classes. Although I could observe a community that retains its new generations, these young members try to adapt the inherited practices to their particular individualities, status and secular context. This demonstrates an effort that indicates that successful transmission does not mean that religious practices remain unaltered in times of social and cultural change.

### **Religious Practice in Santiago's Civil Society**

During this research, I observed two different churches that express both civil and uncivil versions of religion. In Bruce's terms, it can be argued that both the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church are building bridges to the secular world, and in this sense are developing strategies to adapt to civil society and its values. These strategies, however, differ. While Catholicism seems to adopt some elements of the European liberal Protestantism, taking a more inclusive view of religious morality and accommodating the secular world, the Methodist Pentecostal Church maintains a conservative and sectarian approach, taking a more exclusive form of religiosity (Bruce 1998). Thus, while Catholics understand religious life as a particular sphere of their social life, Pentecostals experience religion as a lifestyle that differentiates them from the civil world.

Pentecostalism entails strong uncivil tendencies, which in the case of this research are softened by a new generation of Evangelicals that aspire to be fully integrated in contemporary Chile. Chilean Pentecostalism differs in essential ways from the so-called historical or traditional forms of Protestantism. Although Pentecostals maintain an individual relationship with God in terms of the rejection of ecclesiastical mediation, communitarian aspects are essential to religious practice. Evangelicals are highly integrated in a religious community founded in personal relationships, with a great level of charismatic legitimation and strong internal solidarity. This represents the potential of incivility as bonding social capital creates a strong internal community at the expense of the possibility to create links to the outside (Miller

2012; Pérez-Díaz 2005, Chapter V). In this sense, Pentecostals constitute a religious group situated permanently on the limits of civility, where the potential of incivility is always present and, in some occasions, real. These cases of isolation appear when social life is reduced to family and church, and in few extreme cases, when the individual is isolated even from family relationships. In these cases, there seems to be a status compensation that produces an uncivil commitment to the church, when the status gained within the church is much higher than their status in secular work or family life, and thus religion operates as an isolator from normal relationships.

Perhaps the main source of uncivility of Pentecostalism is related to the political sphere. Anomie was the concept used by Lalive d'Épinay in the 1960s to define Pentecostalism, which for him constituted a spiritual refuge for the lower classes, withdrawing them from the social and political world. In this sense, Pentecostalism has an uncivil tendency that is part of its identity, as it prevents its members from engaging in political activities (Lalive d'Épinay 1968). However, this political feature of Pentecostals has evidently changed, as this research has shown. The increase of participation of Latin American Evangelical churches in political life is documented (Miguez Bonino 1994), but in the Chilean case is a more recent and an ongoing process, having important consequences. Religious fervency, that once withdraw members from political and civic involvement, now is representing an impetus for political mobilisation. However, this political involvement does not appear to imply a renovated civil attitude, but a conflict with secular society, as Campbell notices in the case of the USA (Campbell 2004). In the context of political involvement, the Evangelical Church's current political efforts are oriented to the formation of leaders that could represent their interests in the realms of power and decision making; a strategy that has already produced results, as this thesis has shown. From the parliament, Evangelical representatives are defending religious values, which has brought internal and external criticism.

In turn, while the Chilean hierarchy has greatly struggled to respond to the standards of the civil sphere regarding the sexual abuse scandals, the position of Chilean Catholic University as a conscientious objector against abortion shows a reference to

universal rights of identity and values. This initiative situates the Chilean Catholicism in a civil position, revealing an effort to adapt to the secular world and to the democratic discourse of civil society. Freedom of conscience is a principle that Catholicism recognises as a right for every person and also for itself as an institution to oppose an authoritative position in relation to the state.

The question about the social role of the churches acquires its relevance in the Chilean context, where it can be postulated that secularisation not only implies that social spheres are no longer under ecclesiastical oversight, but also that the religious sphere is observed and scrutinised by the civil sphere. This means that from one standpoint the churches gain independence and freedom from the structures of the state, but this process has an additional face: the fact that religious institutions increasingly have to respond to the moral codes and values of civil society.



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