

Pen te cos tal ism,

Globalisation
and Society in
Contemporary
Argentina

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Abstract

In Argentina, Pentecostalism had a breakthrough in the early 1980s, and today more than 10 per cent of the population are Pentecostals. The revival coincided with a socio-political transformation of Argentinean society. After half a century of dictatorships and Perónism, democracy was restored, and structural changes paved the way for a certain “autonomisation” of politics, law, economy, science and religion. The “new” form of society that developed resembles what in this study is called a Western model, which to a large degree is currently being diffused on a global scale. This work examines the new religious sphere and how Pentecostals relate to society at large, and the political and judicial sphere in particular.

Social systems theory and an idea of communication as constitutive of social spheres, such as religious, political and judicial ones, form the theoretical foundation for the study. Methods that have been used are fieldwork, interviews and analyses of written material. It is concluded that evangelisation and transformation are of major concern to Pentecostals in contemporary Argentina and that this follows a global trend. Evangelisation has always been important to, even a hallmark of, Pentecostalism. What has become as important is the urge for transformation, of the individual, the family and society. This leads to increased socio-political engagement. However, Pentecostals do not have a “fixed” idea of how society should be organised, i.e., they do not yet have a full-fledged political theology, a public theology or what could be called a Pentecostal ideology. This is mainly because they experience a lack of “compatibility” between the Pentecostal and the political communication. Their approaches to socio-political concerns seem to be based on an understanding of certain “values” as the fundamental building block of society.

Keywords:

Argentina, globalisation, Pentecostalism, society, politics, evangelisation, religious freedom, equality.

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Preface

In the autumn of 1997, I followed Anne, my wife, to Seville, Spain, where she was going to be an exchange student at the University of Fine Arts. I for my part had no particular plan for the stay, apart from touring the city on a daily basis, visiting cafés and walking in the gardens of Alcázar, a former Moorish fort and now a royal palace. I had, of course, brought along some books, among which was *Religion and Globalization* by Peter Beyer. That book became a turning point for my interest in the Study of Religions. Beyer discussed religion, globalisation and politics, topics which I had always wanted to work on myself. When I returned to Bergen, Norway, I went to the Department for Religious Studies, where I luckily met one person who shared these interests, Håkan Rydving. His enthusiasm and sincere openness to my ideas and projects, in addition to the fact that he had started a course on religion and politics, were crucial to my, as well as many other students', academic progress. It was in this course that I first learned about Latin American Pentecostalism, its growth and recent impact on the continent. So, there was a “new” religious movement on a (for me) “new” continent, providing an excellent opportunity for field work! I soon learned that Argentina was a country rarely mentioned in books and articles about the Pentecostal growth in Latin America, and I started out with the following questions: Why are there so few Pentecostals there? Is it because the culture or society or religion of Argentina are different; and, by the way, how many Pentecostals are there anyway, and what are they up to? With these questions in mind, I started to write a master thesis (*hovedoppgave*) on Pentecostalism in Argentina and went on my first field trip in 2001. As this Ph.D. thesis will reveal, my “imagined ethnography”, my ideas about Argentina, Pentecostalism and globalisation have changed a great deal since that time. Argentina is, in my view, still different from other countries in Latin America, but also “similar” in many respects. Moreover, Pentecostalism was a far larger movement than I thought, and globalisation was, and is, far more

complex and diverse than what it seemed to be when I began working on my master thesis.

In 2006 I started my doctorate studies at Södertörn University in Stockholm. That year I also became father for the first time, a fact that delayed the academic progress. In the autumn of 2007 I was beginning to feel at ease with the new “life-world” and set out for a second, and this time more thorough, field work. However, Anne became pregnant with twins, and her pregnancy became quite a trial. She was sick most of the time. After she gave birth to two healthy babies, her condition worsened, and for two more years, until she had an operation in May 2010, I was almost completely away from academic thinking and writing. Thus, it was not until late 2010 when I really started working intensively on this project.

I would like to thank Anne in particular. Besides being a hero in the years of tough pregnancy and illness, she has had to listen to all my talk about Pentecostals, politics and globalisation for more than a decade. In addition to Håkan Rydving, I also wish to thank in particular my good friend and academic sparring partner Bjørn-Ola Tafjord, who acted, more or less, as an academic “life-line” in the difficult years. Thanks also to Astrid Hovden, Terje Østebø, Hans Egil Offerdal and other great friends and academic companions. I would also like to warmly thank David Westerlund, my main supervisor at Södertörn University. He has been most helpful and did not give up on me when I was doing “nothing” because of the above-mentioned circumstances. Thanks also to Göran Larsson, my assistant supervisor from Gothenburg University, and Susanne Olsson for reading and commenting on the text when I first started writing. Last but not least, thanks a lot to all the good friends and colleagues at Södertörn and in Bergen, Stavanger and my new friends Hans, Monica and Fredrik, who have provided with me “safe havens” when I have been alone in Stockholm. Finally, a special greeting to my wonderful children Sofie, Jonas and Hanna.

Bergen, October 2013

Hans Geir Aasmundsen

Abbreviations

ACIERA	Alianza Cristiana de Iglesias Evangélicas de la República Argentina (Christian Alliance of Evangelical Churches in Argentina)
AoG	Assemblies of God
CAN	Comunidad Andina de Naciones (Union of Andean Nations)
CLAI	Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (Latin American Council of Churches)
CONADEP	Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons)
CRECES	Comunión Renovada de Evangélicos y Católicos en el Espíritu Santo (Renewed Communion of Evangelicals and Catholics in the Holy Spirit)
CRM	Charismatic Renewal Movement
FAIE	Federación Argentina de Iglesias Evangélicas (Argentinean Federation of Evangelical Churches)
FECEP	Federación Confraternidad Evangélica Pentecostal (Federation for the Fraternity of Evangelicals and Pentecostals)
IADA	Iglesia Asamblea de Dios en Argentina (Church Assembly of God in Argentina)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MD	Military Dictatorship (1976–1983)
MERCOSUR	El Mercado Común del Sur (the Southern Common Market)
NRMs	New Religious Movements
PP	Príncipe de Paz (Prince of Peace)
RFE	Religious freedom and equality
UEB	Unión Evangélica Argentina Bautista y Hermanos Libres (Argentinean Evangelical Union of Baptists and Free Brethren)
UNASUR	La Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones (Union of South American Nations)
VDF	Visión de Futuro (Vision of the Future)

Introduction

Since the first “outpouring of the Spirit” in a poor neighbourhood in Los Angeles in 1906, what has been called the Azusa Street revival, Pentecostalism has experienced tremendous growth worldwide. Although the remarkable story of this form of Christianity began in a modest locality, the urge to spread the message was already in its infancy an explicit trademark of its creed.¹ As early as 1910, the Pentecostal magazine *Confidence* claimed to be in circulation in over 46 countries (Anderson 2007: 12). Since then, the number of followers has continued to grow at an accelerating pace, and today maybe as many as 500 million people can be counted as adherents (Kay 2009: 12–13).²

In 1909, the Italian-Americans Louis Francescon, Giacomo Lombardi and Lucia Menna were the first Pentecostals to come to Argentina (Sarracco 1989: 43). They were followed by the Canadian Alice Woods and the Norwegian Berger Johnsen the year after. Similar to the early years in a majority of the countries where Pentecostals evangelised, the Argentineans constituted rather small communities during their first 50–60 years.³ In the 1980s, however, a revival nick-named *iglecrecimiento* (church-growth) commenced, and today perhaps as many as 10–15 per cent of the population are Pentecostals.

¹ There are many stories of how “wonderful miracles” and signs of the Spirit manifested at the turn of the century, also in other parts of the world.

² The numbers are far from clear. No real statistics exists that account for the total numbers of Pentecostals. Neither is it obvious who should or can be counted as Pentecostals. Often these numbers include Charismatics and Evangelicals of all kinds. Many also speak of a Pentecostalisation of many older Protestant churches, as is arguably the case with Catholic Charismatics as well as Baptists in many Latin American countries.

³ It should be noted that the growth of Pentecostals in neighbouring countries like Chile and Brazil followed a different pace than that in Argentina, particularly until the 1950s and 1960s. However, compared to the growth from this period and onwards, the growth was relatively slow there, as well.

Because of the large scale of the worldwide Pentecostal movement today, it is also highly diverse in its contents and expressions, and hence not easy to fit into a single definition.

Anderson (2004: 13) defines it inclusively as comprising: "... all churches and movements that emphasize the working of the gifts of the Spirit, both on phenomenological and on theological ground." In addition, some main themes can be detected, like baptism in the Holy Spirit, frequently associated with spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues (glossolalia), healing, prophecies and a strong focus on conversion (like being "born again"). It has been called a religion of encounter with divine forces – particularly the "Spirit of God" (Warrington 2008: 20) ... and a religion of experience (Hollenweger 1996, Aasmundsen 2003, Anderson 2004). Exorcism is another central element within most Pentecostal congregations. In Argentina the "casting out of evil spirits" has not only applied to people, but also to places and institutions, through the spiritual warfare of Carlos Annacondia. In addition to these characteristics, Pentecostalism is an evangelising religion with a global and ultimate goal; the message is for everyone everywhere and it is all-embracing in the sense that it "requires" of the believer a full adaptation (conversion) to the Pentecostal "ethos". Its tremendous growth, mainly in Latin America, Africa and Asia, has been the subject of research by an increasing number of scholars from various disciplines who are trying to grasp the contents and nature of its success. As indicated by the various features of Pentecostalism referred to above, there is no single definition of what might instead best be seen as comprising several entities, or *Pentecostalism*s. In Spanish, the term *Evangélicos* is frequently used to refer to a wide range of Protestant groups. Although it does not correspond exactly to the English word *Evangelicals*, some prefer to directly translate the Spanish term, for instance Paul Freston, who seems to use it to designate all forms of Latin American Protestantism, or *Evangélicos* (Freston 2008). In the preface to Freston's book *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (2008), Timothy Samuel Shah claims that "Evangelicalism in its spirit-filled Pentecostal form has proven particularly contagious, constantly spreading across other well defined ecclesiastical borders" (Shah 2008: xi). To both Shah and Freston, Evangelicals or even Evangelicalism are broader terms than "Pentecostals". However, they both accept that the Evangelicals are also mainly Pentecostals today.

Hilario Wynarczyk is also occupied with the "problem" of defining who is who in the Evangelical-Protestant family. Referring to conditions in Argentina, he uses a sociological perspective in which all Evangelicals and

Protestants constitute an arena (*campo Evangélico*), and the different branches represent different interests, like in a “force-field” (*campo de fuerza*) or “conflict-space” (*espacio de conflictos*) (Wynarczyk 2009: 16–17). According to Wynarczyk there are two main groups “fighting” for influence in this field: Biblical conservatives (*polo conservador bíblico*), who display a negative dualism towards the “world”,⁴ and historical liberationists (*polo histórico liberacionista*), whose dualism is positive in that they approach the “world” as a “place for Christian hope” (Wynarczyk 2009: 39).⁵

The Spanish term *Pentecostales* may refer to people who specifically want to be called that or see themselves as such, either because they want to distinguish themselves from other Protestants or because it has been established as their traditional name. There are also regional differences. In many parts of Latin America (but only rarely in Argentina) the Pentecostals and Evangelicals are referred to as *Cristianos*, which the Catholics are not. However, “members” of the Charismatic Renewal movement within the Catholic Church may be called, or call themselves, *Cristianos Católicos*. The derogatory term *Sectas* has also been used, particularly by the Catholic Church and secular media, in order to describe the Pentecostal movement as something other than “true” religion. Finally, as was the case among Argentinean scholars when they first started writing about Pentecostals in the early 1990s, they were (and still are) seen, by some, as a group who best seem to fit in the category of New Religious Movements (NRMs) (see e.g. Soneira 2005, Frigerio 1993), and even as a new social movement (Marostica 1994).

In the early 1990s, Alejandro Frigerio in many ways set the stage for a new study of religion in Argentina. He claimed that religion, and by that he meant non-Catholic religion, had “gone unnoticed” in studies of Argentinean society (Frigerio 1993: 7). Moreover, this was not mainly because those religions were not present earlier, but mostly because of the Catholic dominance. With the general changes in Argentinean society in the decade that had passed since re-democratisation, the other religions had grown and, just as importantly, had become visible. Hence, he opted for the term New Religious Movements (NRMs)⁶ for mainly two reasons: 1) it provides a ge-

⁴ Wynarczyk further describes this as a “radical asceticism” and uses the Latin term *fuga mundi*, which in Greek monasticism underlines the position of the Church as an “anti-community within the world” (stanthonymonastery.org 2013).

⁵ I will return to positive and negative dualism later when reflecting upon what I consider to be a historical shift within Argentinean Pentecostalism from the 1960s onward. I will then employ these concepts in a slightly different manner than Wynarczyk.

⁶ Hare Krishna, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Pentecostals, Santería and Umbanda are among the NRMs listed by Frigerio.

neral perspective on some central themes, which he observed among the religious groups of NRM; 2) it helps to give these religions a place within the sociology of religion (Frigerio 1993: 8). Frigerio's position is best understood as a response to the awareness of the new religious landscape of Argentina that had evolved during the recent years. He himself highlights this as a response to the dominant academic focus on "traditional" churches. Those churches had formed the studies so that one could rather speak of a religious sociology than a sociology of religion (Frigerio 1993: 9).

Evangelicals in Argentina, as well as in other parts of the world, traditionally belong to another Protestant sub-category than the Pentecostals, but these two groups have more or less merged, mainly due to what may be framed "pentecostalisation"; the Evangelicals have adopted one or several elements of Pentecostal praxis or attitudes, such as styles of proselytising, prophecies and healing. This also, to some extent, applies to the Charismatic Renewal Movement (CRM) within the Catholic Church (Thorsen 2012: 36), as well as Charismatics within "traditional" Protestant churches, particularly in Latin America. These are sometimes seen as Catholic and traditional Protestant counterparts to the Pentecostals, because of their shared focus on spiritual gifts, like prophecies and healing (Day 2003: 93). Since the Catholic Charismatics are a group within the Catholic Church, it is difficult to know how many of them there are. Some estimates suggest that, out of the approximately 425 million Catholics in Latin America (Pewforum 2012), around 80–100 million are Charismatics (Thorsen 2012: 37), whereas as many as 90 per cent of Protestants may be Pentecostals, depending on definition. Traditional Pentecostalism (from 1906 through the 1950s), the Charismatic Renewal Movement (from the 1960s) and neo-Charismatic renewal (from the late 1970s) have been portrayed as three "waves" of "one basic move of the Holy Spirit of massive world-wide proportions comprising 523 million affiliated church members" (Kay 2009: 13). However, there is one aspect that separates, or until very recently separated, the CRM from the Pentecostals, namely their respective approaches to "the other" and to "the world". Pentecostals direct their evangelising efforts towards "the other", pursuing the conversion of as many people as possible wherever they are, whereas the CRM is more like a home mission, a renewal within former Catholic areas, and an attempt to stave off the Protestant competition.

Both *substantial* and *relational* characteristics are highlighted when differences or similarities between traditional Pentecostals, neo-Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Charismatics, neo-Charismatics, Christians, Protestants and

members of NRMs are discussed. One could argue that within theological studies there is a stronger focus on the substantial aspect (definitions referring to what Pentecostalism is *per se*), whereas within anthropological and sociological studies there is a stronger focus on the relational aspects (what does this religion do to individuals, cultures and societies). The former type of studies may also focus more on differences between and within the religious groups, whereas the latter may be more concerned with similarities. This thesis follows the latter approach. Furthermore, I have chosen to use the term Pentecostals, and not Evangelicals or Protestants or Charismatics. There are two main reasons for this. The first is that in the Argentinean context there has been a very strong focus on unity among the various Protestant groups, particularly in the booming 1980s when Carlos Annacondia was a main figure. His campaigns were informed by an emphasis on spiritual warfare, cleansing and conversion as a joint venture. Hence, Argentinean Protestantism came to be characterised by unity in its Evangelical (*Evangélico*) and Pentecostal form. This unity, although not in the sense of one church, or one theology or doctrine, has made it “easy” for the various groups within the movement to accept being called Pentecostals.⁷ The second reason is that the sparse statistics that exist on the number of Protestants, Evangelicals and Pentecostals in Argentina reveal that about 75–90 per cent of the total number of Protestants (or Evangelicals) consider themselves to be Pentecostals (Mallimaci 2008, Wynczyk 2009).⁸

Main concerns

When it comes to the relational aspect, a main theme in previous studies has been whether or not Pentecostalism represents or leads to continuity or a break with religious and/or cultural elements in the places where it establishes itself (Willems 1967, d’Épinay 1969). More often than not, it is concluded that one of its strengths is its ability to contextualise its message and practices, and that it thereby incorporates local elements or “strikes a nerve” in the local cultures it encounters (see e.g. Westerlund 2009, Anderson 2004, Davies-Wells 2010).

Rather than focusing on religious encounters and phenomena such as speaking in tongues, demonic possession and prophecies, this thesis seeks

⁷ There will be more on this in the following chapters.

⁸ The Pentecostals now seem to number somewhere between 10 and 15 per cent of the total population.

to highlight and discuss what Pentecostals are like when they are not preaching, when they are not speaking in tongues or healing the sick. I wish to focus on their practices and communications in relation to politics and society at large. How does this “all-embracing” religion influence how they think, communicate and act, morally and politically, in relation to society at large? Do the Pentecostals constitute, as Wynarczyk claims, a *fuga mundis*, i.e. an “anti-community” in Argentinean society? Or are they, as I intend to show, moving out of such an (op)position and into a more integrated place in “the world”: a community *in* society? Furthermore, following another hypothesis of this study, the Argentinean Pentecostals are becoming decreasingly “Argentinean” (like Argentinean society itself – although arguably to a lesser degree) and increasingly “global”. In many senses Pentecostalism was a religion born to travel; i.e., it was universal and global from its infancy. And travel it did. As Anderson claims Pentecostals were already in 46 countries in 1910. But, these groups often became small “islands” which adapted to local surroundings one way or the other, not losing contact with other Pentecostals in distant areas but waiting and hoping for a revival or a “take-off”. In a sense they were more universal than global, that is, they shared many similar traits as far as faith, preaching and practices were concerned, but they did not constitute (a) global network(s) as they do today.

From the 1980s it is this globalisation of a religion “born global” within a “globalising” Argentinean society that is the focus of this thesis. Moreover, the questions I seek to answer relate to how the connection(s) with society unfold(s)? What do the Pentecostals want with society? How is this manifested? What kind of politics can we observe? Do we see something that can be called Pentecostal politics, Pentecostal ideology, or Pentecostal political theology, as Amos Yong has suggested (Yong 2010) or a public theology, as von Sinner claims (von Sinner 2012)? I have chosen to focus on the case of Pentecostalism in Argentina. Hence, I will only be able to tell a thorough story about the relationship between *Argentinean* Pentecostals and the society they live in. This society, however, is a more or less integrated part of the world, and “globalized” to such a degree that its very borders are unclear. Therefore, a multi-dimensional perspective is used. This means that I will focus on historical and contemporary, national as well as global, dimensions of Argentinean Pentecostals’ relation to politics and society at large. The historical dimension draws the trajectories of Argentinean society, culture and religion. The contemporary national aspects concern how religion, politics and culture are organised and expressed in Argentina. The global dimension, finally, refers to the tremendous impact of transnational forces

upon Argentinean society, particularly since the re-democratisation processes that began in 1983.

It should be noted that I have conducted all my fieldwork in Buenos Aires, and therefore have considered whether or not the local-global nexus should concern that city—"the world" instead. However, since the history of Argentina as well as of Pentecostalism is emphasised as to how it unfolds in that country, and the legal and political aspects dealt with mostly are of a national character,⁹ at least as far as the constitution is concerned, I will concentrate on studying first and foremost local (national) and global aspects.¹⁰ However, I will also sometimes write about the translocal and sometimes even the sub-global. All these concepts have different meanings and implications. The local is something spatially (and even temporally) constrained as opposed to the wider regional, national, trans-national, international and global. Hence, for analytical purposes several dichotomies can be thought of, for instance, regional vs. global, where the regional is thought of as local – opposed to global. Regional in a national setting means something different from regional in a global setting. In the latter setting or perspective, Sub-Saharan Africa, China, the European market, MERCOSUR¹¹ and others are regional. In the former setting, i.e. the Argentinean context, the Pampas, the Littoral and Patagonia become regional. Finally, the "national" may be thought of as local as opposed to the global, depending on how the national is understood. The state, the official and common school system, national ceremonies and the common legal framework of the nation become local in a global context. When discussing such specifically national units, I have sought to apply the term "national". For aspects that do not explicitly deal with such units, I will use "local".

⁹ As will be specified later, I study four levels or entities of judicial concern: the individual, the community, the (national) society and the global.

¹⁰ Often, I will use "local" when I could have (and should have, some may say) used "national". I do this because I think it serves the purpose of demarcating a global and a local "field" which interacts on several levels and in several ways. The term "national" may lead one to think of a more official geo-political entity and therefore may not be as suitable for my purpose.

¹¹ The Southern Common Market (*El Mercado Común del Sur*), an economic, political and cultural agreement between various countries in the southern cone of South-America (from 1991).

Narrowing the field

As the number of Pentecostals has grown in various places around the globe, their attitudes and relations to society at large have developed along different paths, depending on the local contexts they have encountered. Writing about Guatemala, for instance, a country which may have the highest percentage of Protestants¹² in Latin America, C. Mathews Samson argues that there are diversified approaches to politics within the pluralist Evangelical community for example, some Pentecostal groups participate in civil society at the same time as other Protestant/Pentecostal groups have strong ties to the power structure in the country (Samson 2008: 64). Another example is South Korea, where the Yoido Full Gospel Church, claimed to be the largest Christian congregation in the world with more than 750 000 members (Kim 2009: 137), has had several members in the national congress, but at the same time has lacked a full-fledged political strategy for the elected.¹³

In Argentina, the Pentecostal revival of the 1980s coincided with processes of re-democratisation after the fall of the last military dictatorship (MD)¹⁴ in 1983. Carlos Annacondia was a (if not *the*) leading pastor focusing his campaigns on spiritual warfare (the casting out of evil spirits from individuals as well as neighbourhoods). In the early 1990s the Argentinean Pentecostals had grown from about 1–2 to 6–8 per cent of the total population,¹⁵ and a period of consolidation, (re)organisation and experimentation with new evangelising methods began. Due to what Pentecostals experienced as a derogatory attitude from the dominant mass media and the Catholic Church, in addition to feeling like a second-rate religious group because of a particular system of official registration, they formed umbrella organisations to represent their interests in society. One of their main foci was, and still is, the issue of religious freedom and equality. This has led to big demonstrations and campaigns and has been one of the main incentives for their involvement in the political, judicial and public spheres. Moreover, as the Pentecostals have grown into a larger movement or community in

¹² Various sources claim that the number of Pentecostals ranges from 20 to more than 30 per cent, with as many as 50 per cent being Protestant (religious-information.com 2013). It is not clear how many of these Protestants call themselves, or are called by others, Evangelicals or Pentecostals.

¹³ Private conversation with two representatives of the Yoido Church in 2006.

¹⁴ MD will serve as an abbreviation for the last military dictatorship (1976–1983) throughout this text.

¹⁵ Perhaps as many as two million converted during the 1980s.

Argentinean society, they have approached politics in various ways. These political “projects” have not yet been as successful as leading figures have hoped for. However, the urge to play a role on the political scene, in order to transform society, is of increasing concern to many Pentecostals, and new political projects have been established during the last decade. At the same time, most (if not all) Pentecostals support and run evangelising campaigns aiming to convert as many people as possible before the second coming of Christ. Thus, evangelisation (traditional and new methods) and societal transformation (political influence and legal amendments) constitute two major aspects of the Pentecostal concern with “the other” today. It is this concern with “the other” that serves as the impetus for the main research questions.

Gender and Class

The categories gender and class are not dealt with explicitly in this study. The reasons for this are complex. Both “gender” and “class” demand of the observer a particular perspective and a particular focus. Such perspectives, whether fruitful or not, would have given the study a different path, a different theoretical framework and a different outcome. Hence, “afraid” of losing track I have chosen to down-play their explicit presence in the study. However, I think it is important to mention that I do find them both highly important. Moreover, I hope that by referring to the role of all these Pentecostal (and Catholic) men, which I do, it becomes clear to the reader that the Pentecostal scene in Argentina is highly dominated by men. The fact that women are playing a role in the congregational work or as the wife of a famous pastor, do not necessarily make Pentecostalism a religion that is “empowering” women. Compared to Catholicism one may argue that women at least “have a say”, but the Pentecostal emphasis on traditional values and the role of women as mothers and the pillar of the nuclear family are actually one of the fields where the two religions meet and overlap. Regarding class issues it seems to me that the Pentecostals in Argentina span several classes. The Brazilian-originated Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, located in downtown Buenos Aires, in one of the busiest shopping streets, *Calle Lavalle*, attract mostly unemployed, poor, immigrants and older people. Príncipe de Paz, located in lower middle- and working-class San Telmo, attract people from that area. Rey de Reyes, located in middle-upper middle-class Palermo, is more of a middle-class church. What we

have then is a conglomerate of congregations and denominations that attract people from various classes and backgrounds. A study of who goes where and why they choose one church over another (is this related to e.g. class, gender, location, pastors, content?) would have taken too much time and effort. However, a study of this on its own should have been done by someone. I really think the outcome could have revealed a lot about a religion and a religious community and/or movement that too often is portrayed as being highly homogeneous.

Main research questions

The Argentinean Pentecostals' attitudes and practices in relation to the three issues of religious freedom, political involvement and evangelism will be focused on in this thesis. How do the Pentecostals relate to society at large, and why do they relate to society at large in the way they do? How does their struggle for religious freedom and political power fit into this frame? What do they want with society? How does this concern with society influence their evangelisation? These questions will be discussed based on the following four assumptions (hypotheses) about why they were able to achieve such growth, and why they, partially, have changed their behaviour since the 1980s. 1) Structural changes, in the wake of the democratisation of Argentinean society beginning in the early 1980s, to a large degree following a global tendency, were a necessary prerequisite for the Pentecostals to gain new spaces in which to evangelise and grow, particularly through the removal of the Catholic Church from its powerful position. 2) The new styles and attitudes of preaching, especially as represented by the leading pastors in the late 1970s and early 1980s, like Omar Cabrera and Carlos Annacondia, were successful because their message "struck a nerve", i.e., it resonated with "folk religion", at the same time as it offered cleansing or liberation from the evils of the past. 3) The growth commenced and continued because of a crucial focus on evangelisation directed towards "multitudes", and evangelisation always has been and still is one of the main (if not *the* main) features of what it means to be a Pentecostal. 4) During this period, both the Argentinean society and the Argentinean Pentecostals have been exposed to substantial pressure from "global" forces. Or, put another way, Argentinean society has changed into something resembling a Western model (differentiated liberal democracy) whereas Argentinean Pente-

costalism has increasingly been interwoven into Latin American and global networks.

I will focus mainly on the first, third and fourth of these points. The reason for this is that the theory that Pentecostalism is a religion that is particularly good at contextualising its message has been explored by numerous researchers already, both in Argentina (see e.g. Soneira 2005, Frigerio 1993, Davies-Wells 2010), and in many other parts of the world. The first point, that structural changes are a condition for the opening of new spaces to manoeuvre in, has not yet been thoroughly studied. Furthermore, I find it important to discuss this in relation to globalisation since it appears that Argentinean society is becoming increasingly similar to other, mainly democratic, societies throughout the world, very much in accordance with what I call the “Western” model. Among those I have met and discussed with, and in the books I have read about Pentecostalism in Argentina, it is mainly Pentecostals themselves who highlight the dramatic social changes of the 1980s as an explanation for their growth, whereas academics have been more occupied with continuity, by focusing on the link between Pentecostalism and folk religion, or what is often referred to as folk Catholicism.

Hinted at above is a hypothesis which will be thoroughly elaborated upon in Chapter 3. This is that the Pentecostal community, prior to these structural changes, was “outside” of society in a double sense. (a) They were outsiders because the members had a “negative” image of “the world” or society at large (of which they were not really a part) and therefore they chose to withdraw. (b) Argentinean society was “unaware” of their presence. They were just one of many small groups of people with a different faith and ethnic origin than the dominant Spanish-Italian Catholic population. The latter representing the backdrop of the national narrative about a homogeneous nation in the 20th century. As outsiders the Pentecostals maintained a negative dualism: “the world” was a threatening place, full of evils, a world for the Pentecostals to avoid. After the structural changes, and the church-growth of the 1980s, the Pentecostal community “drifted”, or was admitted into society. They became “insiders”, members of a society, as well as of a (Pentecostal) community.

The third point, the importance of evangelism, might be the main explanatory factor of the Pentecostal growth overall. This applies not only to Argentina, but also on a global scale. Why is this so? Evangelism is a main concern for Pentecostals when it comes to relations with “the other”, the non-believer. As such, and in many ways, mission is directly related to eschatology. It is urgent for the Pentecostals to spread the “good message”,

because Christ can return any time. Most Pentecostals are premillennialists, i.e. they await the second coming of Christ, who will reign on Earth for a thousand years before the final judgement. As Warrington (2008: 309) claims: “Certainly, belief in the second coming of Jesus ranks as one of their most important tenets of faith”. The Assemblies of God (AoG) has been a major proponent of the premillennial view and Article 14 of their “Fundamental Truths” states:

WE BELIEVE...in **The Millennial Reign of Christ** when Jesus returns with His saints at His second coming and begins His benevolent rule over earth for 1,000 years. This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel and the establishment of universal peace” (Assemblies of God 2012).

However, there are various ideas concerning the return of Christ among Pentecostals, and how this question is viewed and acted upon may have decisive consequences for how they interact with others, and with society at large. The idea that Pentecostals should engage in the mundane affairs of politics in order to transform the world into a better place, before the coming of Christ may, to many Pentecostals, look like postmillennialism: That Jesus will return after a “golden age” of a thousand years marked by the restoration of the Church and worldwide revival (Day 2003: 421). Given such an interpretation, the Pentecostals would act differently since His return would not be until *after* this golden age. Whereas the premillennial view “expects” Jesus to install his “benevolent rule”, the postmillennial view “advocates the belief that the millennium will be preceded by a period of church growth and the return of Jesus will be ushered in by a triumphant Church” (Warrington 2008: 310). Given the tremendous success of Pentecostalism on a global scale in the last decades, I presume that the idea of a “triumphant Church” as a precursor to the “second coming” increasingly will gain support. The premillennial view, still held by many Pentecostals, makes the call for transformation, particularly in the form of conversion of individuals here and now, much more urgent, since Jesus can return any day. The postmillennial view, on the other hand, sees the *transformation* of the world, staged by a “triumphant Church”, as the goal here and now. Thus, this calls for conversion not only of the individual, but also of the family and society. However, it seems that this “classical” division between pre- and postmillennialism may be breaking down, since many Pentecostals throughout the world today are concerned both with preparing for the sud-

den return of Christ, and at the same time are working to transform the world. Finally, it would be an interesting study in its own right to see how these eschatologies have developed and how they are understood by Pentecostals from various denominations in various contexts. One question could be: Is postmillennialism gaining ground because of the Pentecostal success? And if so, how can one explain the ways in which the success of premillennialism has “given birth” to postmillennialism?

Concerning the four assumptions (or points) mentioned above, it is important to stress that they do not exclude each other. The complexity involved in addressing the why, how and where must be taken seriously, and one should not try to seek out only one answer, when a combination of ingredients is clearly involved. It is therefore a main theme of this thesis that several factors together explain the positions of the Pentecostals in Argentinean society. The main factors discussed here are: a) globalisation through the spreading of the Western model (differentiated liberal democracy); b) Argentinean history and society; c) Pentecostal belief, doctrine and tradition, as they unfold in the Pentecostal practices and communication regarding, or within, Argentinean society at large.

Material, method and approach

In order to provide a qualified discussion of the main questions outlined above, the methodological concerns are manifold. One must clarify on the one hand a) how one gathers one’s material, and on the other hand, b) how one interprets that material. In addition, one has to be explicit as to c) what kind of material is being used, and d) what kind of material is being rejected.

The material collected and used here concerns three different but overlapping areas: 1) globalisation, 2) Argentinean society and 3) Pentecostalism, particularly in Argentina. In the following, I will discuss these points before outlining some analytical concepts that are being used:

1) Concerning the processes of globalisation generally, studies by scholars from various disciplines serve as the main source of material. In addition, there are newspapers, magazines, films, music and sports, which all, explicitly or implicitly, reveal traces of globalisation or local peculiarities. Although most of these sources are rarely mentioned explicitly, they are vital for one’s orientation in, and form part of the foundation of one’s general understanding of “the world”, the local and the global, the national and the international. Moreover, the theme of globalisation, which is the focus

of this study, colours the observation of local conditions. One must always bear that in mind, and be aware of the perspective that this involves.

2) Information about Argentinean society comes from a great variety of sources in two main domains. The first domain is what can be read, observed and heard outside Argentina: academic literature of various kinds about history, politics, society, culture, religion, etc. In addition, there are many TV-programs covering a wide range of topics like news, culture, religion and history, and there are newspaper articles, magazines and a great deal of material on the Internet, such as academic works, newspapers and social media. The second domain is what can be found in Argentina (through field work): Interviews and conversations with various kinds of people, “hunting” for literature in bookstores, observing architecture, going to museums of art and history, and so on.

3) Much can be learned about Pentecostalism from books, and a great deal of literature on the subject exists. However, this was far from enough if I was to write anything substantial about Argentinean Pentecostalism when I first started studying the phenomenon at the beginning of the 21st century. Only a few articles were known to me, all of which were written or translated into English. Hence, I needed to do three important things: (1) learn Spanish, (2) go to Argentina and find out what kind of literature existed, and (3) find out through field research how many Pentecostals there were, where they were, what they were up to and, finally, if they would talk to me at all. All this I have tried to do and the main share of my material on Argentinean Pentecostalism consist of Pentecostal literature, Pentecostal websites of all kinds (homepages, social media and newspapers), Argentinean academic literature and other books about religion in Argentina. Pentecostal magazines and newspapers, as well as “ordinary” newspapers, like *Clarín*, *Página12* and *La Nación*, have been used extensively. I have interviewed and/or had conversations with many leading Pentecostals, as well as Catholic priests, Argentinean officials, many academics, journalists and others.

All the material gathered has been viewed from a certain perspective: What does it tell us about how Argentinean Pentecostals relate to society at large and about why they relate to society at large in the way they do? Much of the material that is used here deals explicitly with society “outside” of the Pentecostal community, and particularly with politics or religious freedom. One of the main components of this thesis, evangelism, came relatively late in the process of the work, but there is an abundance of material dealing with this. Moreover, it has turned out to be fruitful to take the material

otherwise interpreted in relation to politics and religious freedom and also analyse it in relation to evangelism.

The material that has been “rejected” or left out makes up a much larger portion than that which has been studied. As mentioned above, there is the academic literature about the link between folk Catholicism and Pentecostalism. There is also a great deal of literature, written by Pentecostals, that deals with how to pray, how to be a good Pentecostal, a good father and mother, etc. Finally, but most importantly, there is the blessing and curse of the Internet. The blessing is that much of the material that one previously had to go to Argentina to find, can now easily be obtained in an office outside that country. However, the amount of material on all these websites, whether they be homepages, newspapers, magazines, journals, history-sites or anything else, is enormous, and they are being updated all the time. Moreover, it is often difficult to know which sites are trustworthy. Hence, when the Internet is used in this thesis, it is only when I know, because I have checked with other sources or because I have first-hand information from my visits to Argentina, that I can trust the information I obtain there.

I have not been able to study all sides and corners of Argentinean Pentecostalism, and the people and material presented here do not make up a representative sample of all Pentecostals and their doings. I have chosen to focus on a leadership- and organisational level. This is done mainly for two reasons. First, because, as mentioned earlier, several studies of “folk” religion have already been done by others, and I figured that if I should need input on this aspect, I could lean on their work (at least to a certain degree). Second, when studying Pentecostalism and politics, law and society at large, it is the organisations and the leaders who seem to be most active, at least most visible. Hence, it would be easier for me to gather material from the abundance of written sources and websites that are constantly being updated. Furthermore, the leaders are the ones who are interviewed in newspapers and they are easily located for personal conversations as well as being “ready” to talk about the subjects I raise.

In order to investigate how different Pentecostal actors/communities interpret, react to and communicate with society at large, theoretical methods and analytical approaches have been developed and improved along the way, following a hermeneutic and semi-heuristic model. An Algorithmic method, “a set of rules for solving a problem in a finite number of steps” (dictionary.com 2013), would, for practical reasons, have been preferred. However, when dealing with complex problems, where the road ahead is unclear due to a lack of empirical data, knowledge about the subject and

insight into the complexity of the issue, and where an open mind is a prerequisite for interpreting events and comparing factors in the best possible way, such a method is not only impossible to follow, it is even counter-productive because its result is given in advance, it assumes you already know where you want to go. On the other hand, the methods applied in this study are not completely heuristic. A certain “map” is laid out, and a certain pattern is to be observed in the traces of the endeavour. Hence, the main questions have always directed and informed the search for information and data.

The practical method has consisted mainly of semi-structured interviews with Pentecostal and other actors at organisational or leadership levels, as well as observation and the use of written sources, such as official documents, media debates and organisational constituencies. Steps have been taken to: 1) uncover the understanding and interpretation of society at large from a Pentecostal point of view, 2) describe the master narrative regarding the potential for change or maintenance of status quo, and 3) explore how these understandings and narratives relate to social life and political practices.

The analytical approach involves employing the idea of *communication* as constituting social spheres, and the concepts of *compatibility*, *double compatibility* and *multi-compatibility*.

Communication is thought of as that which constitutes a social sphere, and in a modern differentiated society there are several spheres. These include a political, judicial, scientific and religious sphere. Furthermore, there are several sub-spheres in these categories like, in the religious, a Catholic, a Muslim, a Pentecostal, etc. There are some “rules” for the various communications, something that “decides” whether what is said and done “belongs” or not, in one or the other. The Pentecostal, for example, is Christian, evangelising and Spirit-centred, and communications that do not accept these as authoritarian will not fit in the Pentecostal sphere. Moreover, I consider modern and Western societies to be *communicatively differentiated societies*. It is the difference in modes of communication that first and foremost differentiate the spheres and which characterises the Western societies.¹⁶

Compatibility refers to the process of achieving a certain degree of *resonance* between different ways of viewing the world, between different modes of communication. For instance, if some religious actors embark on a political “project”, in order to get the support of a religious community,

¹⁶ These ideas are thoroughly elaborated in Chapter 2.

they need to establish a certain degree of compatibility with the religious “project”; the modes of communication inherent in the political and religious spheres have to resonate. To get support and votes from a religious community, members of a political party will need to establish or maintain compatibility. How this is achieved will vary according to cultural, religious and social contexts. For example, a religious community may reject “the world” as a hostile place and prefer to isolate itself from official politics and discourse. In stratified societies, religious leaders, often from the dominant social classes, also occupy “naturalized” places near the top of the social hierarchy. These religious leaders do not need to justify their political actions before “the people” since it is their *position* in the system, and not the numbers of votes they receive, that grants them the right to *define* right and wrong actions. However, if their political actions compromise the religious consensus to such a degree that they no longer can be authorized religiously, compatibility will be reduced and they will have to find support elsewhere, or risk being stripped of their power. In communicatively differentiated, so-called democratic societies, the religio-political leadership attains their influence or success in the political sphere first and foremost through the number of votes they get. Hence, their “natural” position in the religious hierarchy is no guarantee of political success.

Double Compatibility: When compatibility is achieved and maintained in the political sphere by a specific religious community, the political representation (party, institution, actor, etc.) might want or need to *negotiate* further with other relevant actors or communities. In this case *double compatibility* is needed. For instance, the political project of the Pentecostals may have to be made compatible with the lingua franca of the political sphere or with some of the actors within it (e.g., other political parties). In that case double compatibility involves communication with another community or party, which again is necessary for the Pentecostals in order to a) get their Pentecostal votes and b) make an impact as being people with whom other actors want to negotiate and/or form a coalition. When you have compatibility between the “Pentecostal” and the “political” (when the Pentecostals understand the political project as also being Pentecostal, and therefore support it with votes) in addition to compatibility with other actors in the political sphere (e.g. socialists who may seek a coalition with the Pentecostals and vice versa on a particular case) double compatibility is established.

Multi-compatibility refers to multiple communications and negotiations with several societal spheres at the same time, such as the judicial, the scientific/academic, the economic and others, which are taking place all the time

in a communicatively differentiated democratic society. For the religious community (often represented by people in leadership positions) to communicate with, or even to “enter”, science or economics they need to make that communication compatible with the religious project. Deism and creationism (or intelligent design) could serve as two examples where religious communication tries to establish compatibility with scientific communication, much so however, on their own terms.¹⁷ The somewhat popularised debates between the creationists and people like Richard Dawkins about Darwinism vs. intelligent design illustrate how both sides are trying to make their arguments compatible with the other: the creationists by showing how intelligent design “fits” with a sort of evolution, and Dawkins by claiming natural selection as an ontological fact “above” humankind, as “meta-natural” (Dawkins 2007). Science dressing as religion and religion dressing as science amount to the acceptance of the validity of some fundamental questions for which answers are being sought within the two. *Religion*: where do we come from and why are we here? *Science*: where do we come from and why are we here?

Multi-compatibility is therefore appropriate when (or if) Argentinean Pentecostals seek political power (through elections), legal amendments (through their interpretation of the law) and economic influence (by arguing for a more efficient economy).

Disposition

In the first chapter I will present a brief historical background of Argentinean society, highlighting the role of religion, with an emphasis on Catholicism and particularly the history of Pentecostalism in Argentina up to its “breakthrough” in the early 1980s.

In Chapter two, I provide a theoretical framework, with a focus on the influence of globalisation and structural changes in Argentina since the re-installation of democracy in 1983. The main theory is that these structural changes bear a strong resemblance with what I call the Western model, which means an organisation of society based on communicative differentiation, democracy and a (semi)liberal economy. This structural organisa-

¹⁷ I assume that many would disagree that this is what is happening and that they are rather trying to colonise science by claiming so-called intelligent design to be valid and that Darwin’s theory of evolution is not (or simply resonates with intelligent design-theory).

tion of society provides religions with a “constructed” space, where they control their own sphere based on the mode of what constitutes those systems, namely communication. The relationship between different spheres (as I call them) or sub-systems (as Niklas Luhmann calls them), is crucial for the communicative mode within each of them, as well as for the possibilities for communication between them.

In Chapter three, the contents of the rapidly expanding, new Pentecostalism of the 1980s are presented. Preaching for the multitudes, spiritual warfare and unity among all Protestants are central elements of this period – and they are all still important features of Argentinean Pentecostalism today. Some key figures are presented, such as Omar Cabrera, Carlos Annacondia, Ed Silvoso and Luis Palau. Cabrera could be called the “godfather” of the new Argentinean Pentecostalism. It was he who, beginning in the late 1960s, experimented with a new style and attitude; he was the “Reverend”, he wanted to use mass communication, and he wanted to preach for thousands of people. If Cabrera was the godfather, then Annacondia was the father of the new Pentecostalism. “Before and after Annacondia” became a Pentecostal proverb, as he passed through neighbourhoods, gathered all Protestants together and, through large-scale tent campaigns, cleansed the areas of evil spirits. Small congregations, which before the campaigns had only 30–40 members, had to expand to welcome the 2000 newly converted who needed a church. Finally, I briefly present the Argentinean-born preacher Ed Silvoso and Luis Palau, who are sort of anachronisms in the chapter. They both live in the USA, but when they return to Argentina, hundreds of thousands turn up for the rallies. In addition, they represent a translocal element of Pentecostalism, which is becoming increasingly important, and they also represent the value-conservative¹⁸ neo-Pentecostals, who have had a great political impact in the USA. That group is becoming increasingly visible in the political landscape in Argentina.

In Chapter four, I discuss the consolidation processes that began in the 1990s, with a particular focus on the unity among the Pentecostals through their struggle for religious freedom and equality. Their three leading umbrella organisations joined forces and created an organ to present their case on a judicial and political level. At the same time, experimentation began

¹⁸ Certain values become increasingly important, particularly from the early 2000s, as constituting a basis for Pentecostal socio-religious commitment. This is being discussed in Chapter five.

with new evangelising methods. The need to grow and expand, both in numbers and societal influence, became quite apparent in this period.

In Chapter five, I discuss the more explicitly political projects initiated by Pentecostals, from the 1990s until today. Entering politics has been a serious challenge for them. There have been great difficulties getting Pentecostal votes, and they have had serious problems formulating a political platform that is compatible with their religious platform. However, as certain core values, held by many Pentecostals, are being challenged through the implementation of sexual education in schools, acceptance of same-sex marriages and a struggle to de-penalise abortion, it seems as if they now are finding their way into politics. “Values” may become the basis for a political platform that can win the Pentecostal vote.¹⁹

Chapter six is dedicated to a concluding discussion. There I discuss the result of my study, the validity of my theory, and how the research questions have been answered. Finally, I allow myself to speculate about the road that lies ahead for Argentinean Pentecostals.

¹⁹ Because of the Pentecostals’ emphasis on these values, I will in this thesis apply the concept “value-conservative” when I discuss religio-political matters. In English, morally (conservative) or socially (conservative) may be more accurate, but I experience values to better serve the purpose of this study.

1. Historical background

Argentinean history before the first Pentecostals arrived in 1909 and established the first church or community in 1916 is not a main focus here. It is, however, important to examine the socio-religious climate during the founding years of the nation, and particularly in the second half of the 19th century when a national (romantic) narrative was constructed. Many of the officially or culturally “produced” arrangements and myths regarding the outlook and progress of the Argentinean nation that still exist and/or are debated were first constructed in this period. These include, for instance, the process of identifying the country as a Catholic nation, culminating in the creation of *el mito de la nación católica*, “the myth of the Catholic nation” (Bianchi 2004: 9), and the idea of the Argentinean nation as the civilized opposite of *el desierto* (the desert) inhabited by the uncivilised indigenous peoples (Gordillo and Hirsch 2003: 4). In addition, the first constitution, written in 1853,¹ established the Catholic Church as an *official body* of the nation, implemented in law the promotion of conversion of indigenous peoples (Argentinean constitution 1853, article 67, paragraph 15), and required that the president and vice-president be Catholic (*ibid.*, article 76).²

The right of free expression for the Christian churches of the important trade partners coming from Protestant Europe and Protestant settlers were also specified in decrees and amendments. Furthermore, there was a clear tension between liberals, often located in cities (mainly Buenos Aires), who wanted to reduce the influence of the Catholic Church, and traditionalists or *estancieros* (ranch owners), who saw a powerful ally in the latter. The tension between the conservative and progressive forces runs like a red thread through the history of Argentina and is frequently depicted as a cause of economic success as well as failure. It is therefore central to under-

¹ Due to the civil wars and internal struggles for power, between Buenos Aires and the rest of the country, the constitution was not formally accepted by all states until 1860.

² These articles were removed in the constitution of 1994.

standing both the arguments and the arrangements that until this day are perceived as legitimate in debates or quarrels between Catholics, Pentecostals, indigenous peoples and secular interests in Argentinean society.

The colonial and early post-colonial era

The history of colonial Argentina stretches back to the first half of the 16th century when it was part of *Virreinato del Perú* (Viceroyalty of Peru), a Spanish colonial administrative region that covered most of Spanish South America. The capital Lima, in present-day Peru, is situated on the west coast of the continent, but the need for an eastern port that could facilitate the transportation of colonial goods, particularly silver from Potósi in today's Bolivia, led Juan de Garay, a Spanish conquistador and governor of Asunción in contemporary Paraguay, to settle in Buenos Aires in 1580.³ From 1516 until 1816, when a formal declaration of independence was sanctioned in Tucuman, Argentina remained a Spanish colony. In 1776, only nine years after the Jesuit order was expelled from the Americas, and as part of a larger administrative, political and military reorganisation of the Spanish colonies (Lobato and Suriano 2004: 99–100), *Virreinato del Rio de la Plata* (the Viceroyalty of Rio de La Plata) was established with Buenos Aires as its capital. This Viceroyalty covered most of present-day Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and parts of Chile. The position as capital of such a large region both fuelled the city's economy and boosted its self-confidence. Another reason for making Buenos Aires the capital was its location opposite the *Banda Oriental* (Uruguay) north of Rio de la Plata. Uruguay was sandwiched between Brazil and Argentina, a region where the Portuguese had constituted a threat to Spanish interests. In addition, Buenos Aires secured access from the Atlantic coast to the economically and politically more important areas of Alto Peru (Saborido and Privitellio 2006: 11).

However, it was the effects of the Napoleonic wars in Europe and the English invasions of Buenos Aires in 1806 and 1807 that made way for the May revolution in 1810 (Lobato and Suriano: 125). After the victory of the "porteños" (nick-name for citizens of Buenos Aires) the city's self-esteem rose even more, which became significant in the disputes and wars between Buenos Aires and other regions of the country. Moreover, the city's history

³ Pedro de Mendoza had set up a small settlement in 1536, but it was not until de Garay's arrival that a permanent settlement was established.

of being a stronghold of commercial, liberal and independent interests and attitude made it a “natural” place for the independence movement: “Perhaps nowhere else in Spanish America did Spanish colonial commercial policy make as little sense and engender as much hostility as in Buenos Aires” (Loveman 1993: 264). The revolution was formalised in the Declaration of Independence on the 9 July 1816. For the next fifty years, a period of consolidation followed. The young nation experienced internal struggles and civil war, mainly between Buenos Aires and the cities and regions of the interior, as well as wars with Brazil and Paraguay.

A great variety of indigenous peoples with different cultures and religions lived in most regions of Argentina long before the young nation started to expand. Large parts of what today makes up the geographical area that is Argentina were relatively marginal regions within the Spanish colonies. Moreover, the geographical areas were divided into a “civilized” part, controlled by the Argentinean elites and, what these elites considered to be, an “uncivilized” part. The latter was still controlled by the indigenous peoples, which the colonisers thought of as being “savages”. This construction of indigenous groups as a “wild and destructive force – exemplified in their looting raids (*malones*) – that had to be wiped out to give birth to the nation” (Gordillo and Hirsch 2003: 5) constituted a dominant narrative for nearly a century in Argentinean historiography and self-reflection. During the presidency of Bernardino Rivadavia (1826–27) and the political leadership of Juan Manuel de Rosas (1835–52),⁴ limited campaigns were undertaken to extend the colonial boundaries. However, in the 1870s a new and far more aggressive attitude towards the so-called desert evolved, at first through a defensive approach summed up in the building of trenches and forts, *Zanja de Alsina* (Alsina’s trench), and secondly in the aggressive campaigns of Julio A. Roca called the *conquista del desierto* (conquest of the desert) in the 1870s (Rapoport 2008: 45).

The Catholic Church

Catholicism was *the* religion of the colonisers, and particularly of the elites, *los peninsulares* (colonists born in Spain) and *los criollos*, the locally born

⁴ Due to civil wars and unrest, Rivadavia is regarded as the first President of Argentina. Rosas was Governor of Buenos Aires and of the Argentinean Confederation. He was ousted by Justo José de Urquiza, who himself became President of the Argentinean Confederation (1854–60).

people of Spanish ancestry. The relationship between the Catholic Church and the Spanish crown was formalised in the *patronato real* (royal patronage), an arrangement that provided the Spanish throne and, by extension, the colonial authorities with significant powers in church affairs. According to theologian and mission historian Samuel J. Escobar, the *patronato real* of colonial times can be divided into two periods defined by the ruling Royal Houses of Spain at the time: the Habsburgs until about 1700, and the Bourbons after that. During the first part, the legal instrument of agreement between the crown and the church was devised, whereas in the latter part its effects were intensified to the detriment of the church (Escobar 1994: 30). Lloyd Mecham, cited by Escobar, emphasises how the *patronato* was a unique institution in history and writes: “So rapidly did the crown develop a policy of control and administration over the patronage that by the end of the reign of Philip II the civil control over the church was thoroughly consolidated” (Mecham in Escobar 1994: 30). Appointments of clergy and bishops normally required the approval of civil authorities. From colonial times and throughout the 19th century, the relationship between church and state was reciprocal and intimate (though not always peaceful and without conflict); each institution thus had great influence on the other’s affairs. “In a society where separation from the religious ministrations of the church was unthinkable, the church had great moral influence” (country-data.com 2012). In addition, the colonial church was an extremely wealthy institution. “Religious organisations not only owned extensive tracts of land but also served as quasi-official money-lenders to the land-elite and high-ranking office-holders” (country-data.com 2012).

By the end of the colonial era, a combination of money lending and shrewd real estate investments had made the Catholic Church the dominant financial power in the region. At the same time, as noted above, the Spanish crown had increased its influence over the church in Spanish America during the 18th century, a “paradoxical period for the church” (González and González 2008: 130). Thus, when the era of independence commenced throughout Latin America in the first decades of the 19th century, the Catholic Church “found itself facing enormous resentment from those at the lower levels of society on the one hand and enormous expectations from those at the upper echelons of society on the other” (González and González 2008: 130). The Argentinean scene was no exception to this, and the May revolution of 1810 resulted in new circumstances, which led church and state to reach new agreements regarding their mutual relationship. The new local authorities felt they had the right to uphold and renew relations with

the Vatican, as had the Spanish Crown (Ghio 2007: 22). Moreover, not only did the new government consider the heritage of the *patronato* to be a substantial part of its political sovereignty, it also found in its dispute with the Vatican a legitimisation of its own authority. On the one hand, the new rulers wanted to define the juridical relationship between the church and the state as a prolongation of the heritage, but on their own terms; and, on the other hand, by so doing they wanted to obtain a diplomatic victory over Spain (*ibid.*).

The Holy See found this unacceptable and considered the *patronato real* to have been a personal agreement with *los Reyes Católicos* (the Catholic kings).⁵ Eventually the Vatican had to adjust to the new situation, particularly since the new state experienced these particular dealings to be important acts in its emancipation from its colonial heritage. *La Primera Junta de Gobierno de Buenos Aires* (May 1810–April 1811)⁶ forbade the members of the clergy to effectuate petitions that came directly from their superiors in Spain. Furthermore, in 1813, *la Asamblea General Constituyente*⁷ dismantled the Inquisition, prohibited funerals in the churches and constituted tribunals to solve disciplinary problems regarding the regular clergy. And ten years later, the Minister of the government of Buenos Aires, Bernardino Rivadavia, leaning on the existence of the patronage, undertook a drastic reform program for the church eliminating the tithe as well as the ecclesiastical charters and putting into effect regulations for the churches' purchase of properties, just to mention a few reforms (Ghio 2007: 23). However, in the constitution of 1853, article 76, paragraph 19, the validity of the patronage was secured.

In 1884, despite the fact that the patronage was nationalised and the construction of the idea of the Catholic nation, the “secularization” of national institutions culminated with the passing of the law that prohibited religious education during classes in the public schools.

⁵ The title refers to Queen Isabel I of Castille and King Ferdinand II of Aragon, who reigned in the latter half of the 15th and early 16th century, and led the *reconquista* against the Moors, who were cast out in 1492, the same year as Cristobal Colon “discovered” America and the Jews were expelled from Spain.

⁶ The first government of Buenos Aires.

⁷ A general assembly organised in order to write a new Argentinean constitution.

The birth of “modern” Argentina

12 October 1916, Hipólito Yrigoyen became the first elected president of Argentina by popular vote. The election came after a period of about four decades of steady economic growth, peace and constitutionally “elected” governments.⁸ Argentina had become the *pais de las vacas y las mieses* (land of cows and crops), a leading exporter of cereals in the world and second only to the USA in export of frozen meat (Luna 2007: 117). Many of the indigenous peoples had been expelled from their territories (from the Pampas, parts of Patagonia and the regions surrounding the more populous cities of Córdoba, Rosario and Santa Fé). In addition, a great number of people had been killed in the “campaigns” of Julio Argentino Roca in the late 1870s. According to Félix Luna, three main principles had directed the government’s policies for the development of the country in the late 19th and early 20th century: immigration, education and peace (Luna 2007: 119).

The first, immigration, was based on a particular ideology formulated by the Argentinean lawyer Juan Bautista Alberdi. He was of the opinion that a society should offer its citizens every possibility to prosper, work, educate themselves, travel about and own property free from “abuses”, “but one in which they would not yet be able to vote and elect representatives” (Luna 2007: 101). The idea was that people could immigrate and contribute to the nation-building in many different ways: as a labour-force and as entrepreneurs or industrialists. Moreover, in due time, when their children had been properly educated, it would be possible to move towards a more inclusive, democratic society. Alberdi preferred Anglo-Saxon immigrants in whom he saw a particular mentality, which he and others thought could be observed in the USA: “self-sufficient, politically self-determining smallholders who did not rely on hand-outs from governments” (Luna 2007: 102, see also Alberdi [1852] 2007: 96). The Anglo-Saxons were the ones whose offspring eventually should help the nation “mature”. Alberdi praises the English and German immigrants in the USA: the English for their respect for their fellow human beings and for liberty; the (Protestant) Germans for their social and religious freedom (Alberdi 2009: 98). However, the Anglo-Saxon immigration never reached a scale where its influence on Argentinean culture and politics could become a dominant factor. It is therefore impossible to say if Argentina would have been a democratic beacon in the world in the

⁸ Male suffrage was established according to the so-called Sáenz Peña law of 1912. Female suffrage was not introduced until 1947 during the first presidency of Juan Perón.

20th century had things turned out the way Alberdi hoped. What we do know is that some scholars still hold the idea that an Anglo-Saxon culture and religion, i.e., Protestantism in various forms, is more compatible with democracy, egalitarianism and capitalism than, for instance, Hispanic-Catholic culture and religion. This is a recurrent “theme” that runs through much of the academic and political literature about Protestantism and politics, from Alexis de Tocqueville (1840) via Max Weber (1904), to the more contemporary theories of Emilio Willems (1967) and David Martin (1990 and 2002). These theories will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 5.

The second principle guiding the nation in the period leading up to the democratic era was education. A primary school system was introduced throughout the country in 1882 on the initiative of former President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. A law was passed, according to which primary school education became compulsory, and free and secular in the sense that citizens were guaranteed that their children would not have to confess any particular creed.

The third principle, peace, was of utmost importance in order to create a functioning and prosperous nation. Since the time of independence, the country had gone through several civil wars, the first starting in 1814. The civil wars were mainly fought between the centralists of Buenos Aires (with the Unitario as their political party) and the federalists of the “rest” of Argentina (with the Federal as their political party). Between 1814 and 1876, several wars and conflicts between these interests shaped the outcome of the constitution and the balance between the regions. Furthermore, the civil wars to a certain degree overlapped with wars and/or border conflicts with neighbouring countries like Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile and Banda Oriental (Uruguay). This was due to the fact that the borders between these countries were not pre-set when the era of independence commenced. In 1881, a treaty between Chile and Argentina was signed, which decided the borders between them. However, due to disagreement about the interpretation of that very treaty, new tensions threatened stability, development and economic progress in the region (Rapoport 2008: 39). In 1902, the Pacto de Mayo (May Pact) was signed. This agreement, according to Rapoport, ended the conflict between the two nations.

Although the immigration to Argentina was dominated by Italians and Spaniards, and not the Anglo-Saxons preferred by some of the liberal elite, the immigration policy was a success in the boom years, as labour force was much needed both in the fast-growing cities and in the more rural areas where cattle-breeding and the production of wheat and meat were increas-

ing at a rapid pace. In 1869, the total population was around 1.8 million,⁹ approximately 12 per cent of which were immigrants. In 1895, the population had risen to around four million, with about 26 per cent immigrants, before it reached a peak in 1914 with a population of approximately 7.9 million, around 30 per cent of which were immigrants (Suriano and Lobato 2004: 30–37). In Buenos Aires as many as approximately 50 per cent of the citizens were immigrants in 1914. Most immigrants were male adults, followed by female adults. In 1915, the male index was 115, 5. Italians made up the largest group, followed by Spaniards. Italians made up about 35 per cent of the total number of immigrants in 1869, 50 in 1895 and 41 in 1914. In comparison, the corresponding figures for Spaniards were 17, 20 and 36 respectively. After these two countries followed France (16, 10, 4), Great Britain (5, 2, 1), Switzerland, Germany, Russia (mainly Jews) and others. From “neighbouring” countries the figures are in total 21, 12 and 8.¹⁰

Thus, it is important to keep in mind that in the years when the first Pentecostal missionaries arrived, Argentina was in many ways a young nation with a relatively “fresh” population.¹¹ Furthermore, since the immigrants mainly came from Spain and Italy, i.e. Catholic countries, they did not have serious problems adapting to the main religion in Argentina (Catholicism).

However, several Protestant churches also existed in the Americas in colonial time, though small in size and numbers. During colonial times, Protestant settlers, like Germans in Venezuela (1529–1546), French Huguenots near Río de Janeiro in Brazil (1555–1567) and Dutch groups in north-eastern Brazil (1624–1654) were all “absorbed, destroyed, or pushed out by the Spanish or Portuguese” (Cook 1994: 43). Hence, according to J. Samuel Escobar, referring in general to Protestantism in Latin America, “the pioneers of the protestant movement came during the period of war of independence with Spain (1810–25)”. Thus, given the tensions between Spain

⁹ The figures referred to in this section do not completely match one another in the various sources. However, the discrepancies between them are not considerable. I have therefore decided to follow Suriano and Lobato. As an example of different statistics presented: In 1869, Rapoport claims that there were 1 730 026 inhabitants (Rapoport 2008: 53), whereas Lobato and Suriano claim that there were 1 830 214 (Suriano and Lobato 2004: 306).

¹⁰ Suriano and Lobato do not explain why the immigrants from neighbouring countries are listed together.

¹¹ I do not consider the Argentinean nation to be a unit to which the indigenous peoples “belonged” – as these should be regarded as free people. The geographical area which corresponds with that nation, however, was of course inhabited by various peoples long before colonial time.

and the emerging states, and the period of renegotiation of the patronage with the Catholic Church, it is understandable that many welcomed the Protestants. In addition to the national and religious aspect, there is also an economic dimension in that many were on the lookout for new trade-partners and markets. Independence leaders like José de San Martín (Argentina and elsewhere), Simón Bolívar (Colombia and elsewhere) and Bernardo O'Higgins (Chile) all "enthusiastically welcomed Protestant pioneers" (Escobar 1994: 32). However, one should not exaggerate the religious consequences of these positive attitudes; few, if any, converted to Protestantism, and most remained Catholics despite their opposition to Catholic institutions.¹² Moreover, the period of so-called emancipation or independence has also been interpreted as a change from one dependency to another, from the Spanish crown to Anglo-Saxon colonial or neo-colonial domination (Bonino 1975: 14). Furthermore, Bonino has referred to the relations between the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin American worlds as "neo-colonial", and writes: "Protestantism claimed...the role that Latin American liberal elites had assigned it in the transition from a traditional society to the modern bourgeois world" (Bonino 1983: 62).

Most of the early Protestant churches in Argentina are often referred to as "national" or "ethnic", "*refugios de la etnicidad*" (ethnic shelters). Those churches provided the Germans, English, Scandinavians and others with religious services as well as social amenities. Seldom (if ever) did they challenge the Catholic Church and its dominant position. These churches began to appear as early as in the first half of the 19th century: (1824) La Iglesia Presbiteriana Escocesa (the Scottish Presbyterian Church), (1825) La Iglesia Anglicana (the Anglican Church), or as it was referred to in Buenos Aires "*La Iglesia de los ingleses*" (the Church of the English) (Bianchi 2004: 35); (1842) La Congregación Evangélica Alemana (the German Evangelical Congregation). In addition, as early as 1823, Teófilo Parvin, a Methodist missionary from the USA, came to Argentina. He established a tiny congregation, but this first attempt by the Methodists to establish themselves was not particularly successful (Bianchi 2004: 39). Several other "ethnic" churches followed in the second half of the 19th century, and eventually

¹² And this goes particularly for institutions abroad.

Russian, Armenian, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Swiss, Jewish,¹³ Muslim (mainly Lebanese and Syrian)¹⁴ and other congregations were established.

Democracy

The transition to democracy in 1916 was viewed with both enthusiasm and scepticism. There were those who saw the political developments of the day as the culmination of a long process sparked off by the independence movement and revolution in 1810. These were liberals who were thrilled by Argentina's representative democracy and thought of it as a great achievement in the "modern" world. On the other hand, some thought Yrigoyen bore a resemblance to a "barbarous" Caudillo.¹⁵ The Caudillos were warlords who many had believed or hoped were eliminated in 1880 with the end of endemic civil war and the final consolidation of political power in Buenos Aires (Romero 2006: 2). The different perspectives for the road forward for the nation were shaped by the historical contradictions between liberals and federalists, and between the oligarchs and the growing working class. This would come to the surface a little more than a decade later, when the rigging of elections became habitual, and especially when tensions culminated after the Wall Street crash, and anxious military officers joined the oligarchy and other sectors of society to launch the first military coup in the history of Argentina. It was not to be the last, as five more coups followed, before democracy was restored in 1983. Tracing the trajectories of military political influence in Latin America, Brian Loveman argues that "military forces made authoritarian liberalism possible" (Loveman 1993: 6). Since the days of independence, he continues, in Latin America a particular culture had developed:

The constitutions of independent Spanish America charged the military with protecting the political system, conserving internal order, defend-

¹³ The answer to the question of whether "Jewish" is a religious or ethnic category is outside the scope of this dissertation.

¹⁴ The history of Islam or Muslims should be treated carefully. Today the Muslims in Argentina are the largest Muslim community (if one may use such a frame?) in Latin America. Estimates vary from around 500 000 adherents (state.gov 2012) to more than one million (Pewforum 2012).

¹⁵ The Caudillo was originally a warlord, or a strongman, in colonial times. Although the term has mostly negative associations for "democratically minded" persons, it can also apply to a man with what many consider to be a positive character, like Simón Bolívar. As far as I know, there is no such thing as a Caudilla – a female Caudillo.

ing the government against internal subversion, and maintaining law and order. In effect the military became a fourth branch of government, with constitutionally defined status and a political mission.

This so-called liberal acceptance of the role and function of the military continued throughout the 20th century as one of the “invisible yet hegemonic premises of political life”. Thus, following Loveman, one may find in Latin American political culture a certain place for the military, not as a force to set in motion when called for by democratic voices, but a force whose role is to defend the liberal constitutions on behalf of a certain elite. The Catholic Church was not a part of these liberal elites in the 19th century, but as progressive forces began to challenge liberalism, oligarchs, the bourgeoisie and Catholic power, this changed.

José Félix Uriburu became the first *de facto* President of Argentina after the coup in 1930, which has often been associated with the above-mentioned anxiety and uncertainty caused by the perception that the democratic system was not functioning. The rigging of elections was one problem, but in addition to that, many sectors of society, like the military, the Catholic Church and the oligarchy, felt displaced as political actors. Moreover, international affairs were strained and the turbulent years following WWI were marked by serious financial, political and not least ideological turmoil.

The building of the nation in the 19th century had been influenced and shaped by the dichotomy of liberalism vs. federalism, and liberation from the colonial heritage. In the 20th century, however, liberalism was no longer hegemonic, or the sole alternative to traditionalism, with the latter represented in particular by the Catholic Church, the “old religious faith” (Saborido and Privitellio 2006: 157). In socialism, communism and anarchism, formulations of alternative models for the organisation of society were accessible, and received the support of a growing number of people, mainly from the increasingly numerous working class. In the 1920s, the new democratically elected regimes had to balance between these new ideologies, the interests of the old *agroexportador* (agro export) bourgeoisie, the conservative and often nationalistic Catholic Church, a growing middle class, the ups and downs of international markets and finances, as well as fluctuating global politics, usually conditioned by European and North American interests. The period from 1914 until 1929, when the crash on Wall Street hit international economic life, has been called *La Gran Demora* (the great delay) (Rapoport 2008: 156–159, Saborido and Privitellio 2006:

177). This period is the topic of frequent debate. It was the infancy of democracy and it turned out to be a farewell to the old optimism of the liberal elites, as well as a period of demographic change. Why democracy failed, as in many other Latin American countries, and a turbulent and difficult period for the nation began, is still on the agenda as an important topic in academic circles. In addition, the “shadows” of these years is still haunting the nation, whenever an international or a national recession threatens.

The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church, which had long been on the defensive faced with the challenges from positivist liberal and scientific forces, became alert when more pessimistic sentiments started to dominate the scene. Already in the final decades of the 19th century, they had changed strategy in order to influence society by incorporating laypersons in dissemination tasks as well as in order to defend its institutions (Ghio 2007: 43). Furthermore, the Church felt it needed to “Christianise” its social institutions and develop a cohesive group of Catholic intellectuals in order to meet the challenges of the time (ibid.). Various lay movements were created during this period, and in the 1910s attempts were also made to create a political party. This was stopped, however, by some leading clergy, who argued that they should avoid provoking a confrontation between Catholics and non-Catholics, and also because of religio-ideological disagreements (Ghio 2007: 50).

In 1919 the Catholic Church organised a petition called the *Gran Colecta Nacional* (the grand national collective) as a preventive action to hold back socialist and anarchist forces (Saborido and Privitellio 2006: 179). The somewhat strained relationship that had existed between the Catholic Church and the military during the latter part of the 19th century loosened up, and eventually active members of the Catholic Church developed a closer and more positive relationship with the armed forces. The main Catholic political alternative in the more turbulent years, and particularly during the democratic era, leaned towards nationalism and conservatism. For instance, a group called Baluarte,¹⁶ with a Hispanic and anti-democratic program, was formed and supported the coup in 1930 (Ghio 2007: 58). From now on, and until the end of the military dictatorship in 1983, the Catholic Church played an active role in politics and social life. Since 1943,

¹⁶ Literally meaning stronghold.

when Colonel Juan Perón came to power after a coup by the armed forces, various segments of the oligarchy and the Catholic Church played crucial roles in Argentinean society.

Towards democracy

The 1970s in Argentina were, by various standards, a turbulent decade. Perón returned from his exile in Spain in 1973, supported by a conglomerate made up of unions, youth organisations, political interest groups and a guerrilla movement. This reflected the ambiguous character of Peronism as well as the various understandings of who Perón was and what Peronism should mean. “This phenomenon, utterly unique, of Perón’s being simultaneously many things for many people, was due to the heterogeneity of the Peronist movement” (Romero 2006: 197). Moreover, adding flavour to the somewhat confusing image of this man and the movement that bears his name, Romero continues: “Perón’s symbolic figure, one and many at the same time, ended up replacing the real historical personality”.

Nevertheless, whether confusing or ambiguous, it is crucial for the understanding of Argentinean history and politics in the period from the Second World War until contemporary times to try to understand the role of Perón and Peronism. It may not have been particularly decisive for the development of the specific character of Argentinean Pentecostalism, but it still needs to be taken into serious consideration as an element that has (and in many ways still is) contributing to Argentinean socio-political life and the self-image of Argentinean citizens. In addition, it can help in understanding the structural changes that Argentina went through, and which made room for Pentecostalism to flourish. For many, Juan Perón was like a “father figure”. He was the man who gave a voice and basic rights to the working-class. He introduced women’s suffrage (1947), and was the first Argentinean president to acknowledge the rights of the indigenous population. Moreover, Perón was a syndicalist, a socialist, a nationalist and a fascist. Because of the multi-faceted movement that was created he had to fight for the right to define Peronism; or as Jorge Rulli, leader of Juventud Peronista (Peronist Youth), put it in an analysis of the situation in Argentina when Perón returned in 1973: “the whole Peronist movement was in competition with Perón”.¹⁷

¹⁷ In the documentary *Montoneros una historia* (2006).

After a short intermezzo, Perón died in 1974, and his wife Isabel Martínez de Perón became president. She was strongly influenced by her close adviser, José López Rega, a “character” of dubious qualities with strong fascist sentiments, and the instigator of Triple-A (Alianza Anti-comunista Argentina: the Argentinean Anti-Communist Alliance). López Rega was known as *el brujo* (the sorcerer) and an Argentinean Evola,¹⁸ nicknames stemming from his interest in occult and esoteric knowledge. However, despite the “spiritual powers” of López Rega, the government of Isabel Perón was navigating in unclear directions, and given the internal problems of Peronism, the situation transformed into one of political chaos. Then, coming as a relief for some and horror for many, the Argentinean government was overthrown in a military coup on the 24 March 1976, and the National Reorganisation Process, or just “the Process” (Proceso de Reorganización Nacional – el Proceso), as it was called by the regime, was instigated.

Years of human degradation followed, with persecution of political opponents as well as other (innocent) citizens. After a few years, however, the dictatorship started crumbling, not only because of its obvious illegitimacy, but also due to an economic decline during the latter part of the dictatorship. After some recovery during the first years, a devastating war was fought against Great Britain over las Islas Malvinas or the Falkland Islands, over which both countries claimed legal sovereignty. When the war was over, democracy was again installed, and a new mood dawned upon the Argentinean population, as will be discussed in detail below. At the same time a tremendous revival, sparked off by Pentecostal pastors and/or reverends, was about to commence. But for Pentecostalism to gain ground in Argentina, a few obstacles had to be removed.

To provide a thorough picture of Argentinean society and the democracy that was restored with the election of Raúl Alfonsín as president in 1983, some topics need to be examined. First, as mentioned above, there is the ambiguous character of Peronism. Secondly, there is the repressive and paralysing nature of the MD. And thirdly, one has to take into account the role of the Catholic Church as a key religious and political factor in culture and society, and particularly its role as an official supporter of the coup d'état and an accomplice in the politics it put into practice, as well as its troubled relationship with Peronism. Here I will only discuss briefly these issues before reflecting upon how a structural shift within Argentinean

¹⁸ Evola is a reference to Julius Evola, an Italian philosopher and esotericist who believed humankind was living in the Kali Yuga (from Hindu beliefs).

society has moved the position of the Catholic Church further away from “integralism” than it has ever been in its almost 500 years in the country.

As to the first point, the ambiguous character of Peronism, it should be noted that Colonel Juan Perón had a background in, and during his first years as president in many ways represented, the military, and specifically the army, from which he was recruited. Argentina had taken a “neutral” stance during WWII, but national and international circumstances led to a military coup in 1943, in which Perón played a significant part. The victory of the allied forces led to an increase in North American influence in the southern hemisphere, a fact that made the neutral and nationalistic project of Perón, with the support of the Catholic Church, difficult to carry out (Ghio 2007: 121). Besides, segments within the military had established close links with the Catholic Church. In his early speeches, Perón often referred to the papal encyclical on capital and labour, *Rerum Novarum* (Pope Leo XIII, 1891), in addition to another encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno* (Pope Pious XI, 1931), that followed up *Rerum Novarum*, but which came out 40 years later and dealt with more ethical and structural issues regarding work, economics and social order in modern times. As mentioned above, in addition to the relationship between the military and the Catholic Church, the Peronist movement and this Church shared a strong ideological tendency to support nationalism. However, Perón, as a constructor of “the third way”, an ideology located somewhere between fascism and socialism, and between capitalism and liberalism, had little or no tolerance for dissidence or opposition. With his strong hold on the unions and downplaying of the role of the political party (the Peronist party),¹⁹ together with censorship and economic decline, he fell out with the Catholic clergy who instead became a formidable enemy.

Secondly, there were the open wounds created by the oppressive MD of the years 1976–1983. The MD had based its political program on what Horacio Verbitsky, an Argentinean journalist and author of several books about the role of the Catholic Church in Argentinean politics (particularly during the MD), has referred to as “Catholic nationalism” (Verbitsky 2010) because of the alliance between the military forces and leading Catholic clergy. Almost immediately after being elected, in 1983, Raúl Alfonsín initi-

¹⁹ Perón was first elected on the program of the Labour Party, but that party was dissolved and replaced by Partido Justicialista (PJ), the Justicialist Party, which became something of a monolithic organisation controlled by Perón. This created a situation where, according to James W. McGuire, “Peronism has been strong as a collective identity, but weakly institutionalized as a political party” (McGuire1995: 201).

ated the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas, CONADEP) to investigate the fate of the disappeared (*los desaparecidos*) and other human rights violations. CONADEP revealed the results of the investigation in a report called *Nunca Más* (never again) and claimed that more than 9 000 people disappeared. However, perhaps as many as 30 000 could not be accounted for (*Nunca Más* 2012). The military officers managed to arouse nationalistic emotions when they decided to embark upon the project of invading the British-controlled Falkland Islands in 1982. This invasion, and the ensuing war with Britain, turned out to be a total fiasco. The Argentineans lost the war, and the illegitimacy of the regime left no possibility for the generals to continue. Thus, the scene was ripe for change and for democracy to be installed.

Thirdly, the role of the Catholic Church during the MD was based on its traditionally strong role in Argentinean society. The Catholic Church played a central part in Argentinean history for several hundred years, and its position in society has differed over time. However, when it gave the green light to the military junta of the last dictatorship, it sealed a historic tie with the powers that be, a relationship that would change dramatically after the re-democratisation. The MD was religiously legitimised by officials of the Catholic Church. As late as 2010, former general and dictator during the MD, Jorge Rafael Videla, in an interview with the Argentinean magazine *El Sur*, stated that he “kept the country’s Catholic hierarchy informed about his regime’s policy of ‘disappearing’ political opponents, and that Catholic leaders offered advice on how to ‘manage’ the policy” (gaycatholic-priests.org 2012). In addition, more specifically, there was a confrontation with Peronism and with an economy and policies that elitist segments of society claimed were out of hand. National dissidents on the left were also seen as representing an ideological threat, fuelled by international currents influenced by the Cold War. However, one should be somewhat cautious in “blaming” the Catholic Church too much, and bear in mind that many Catholics were also victims of the crimes committed under the dictatorship.

Pentecostalism in Argentina

As we have seen, during the 19th century, several Protestant churches established congregations in Argentina. As of the 1880s, however, a new kind of proselytising Protestantism began having a strong impact. Missionaries were officially accepted in accordance with the political goals of the progressive

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government, namely to promote Protestant immigration and to give the older “ethnic” churches more overt recognition (Bianchi 2004: 80). The new Protestants, like Methodists, Baptists and the Free Brethren, were frequently denominational, and they did not have the close ties with a “mother-Church” in a foreign homeland. Therefore, they represented something new on the Argentinean religious scene; they were evangelising and had not been established in order to support a certain group of “ethnic” immigrants. In the first decades of the 20th century, the missionary endeavours had halted, possibly because of the view formulated specifically at the Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, which did not regard Latin America as a missionary field (Bianchi 2004: 81). The continent was considered to be Christianized already, like Europe, and therefore not in need of missionary efforts. The Pentecostals, however, had a quite different opinion about Latin America. To them, it was “the neglected continent” and “a ‘Romanist’ stronghold, and their letters and reports abounded with allusions to the ‘darkness’ and ‘delusion’ of popular Catholicism in the region” (Anderson 2007: 191).

The first Pentecostal missionaries came to Buenos Aires in 1909, not more than three years after the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, which is often considered to be the starting point for the Pentecostal movement.²⁰ Louis Francescon,²¹ Giacomo Lombardi and Lucia Menna arrived from Chicago, where they all had belonged to a group of Italian-American Pentecostals (Sarracco 1989: 43). In January 1910, the Canadian missionary Alice Wood from the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and in July the same year the Norwegian missionary Berger Johnsen, came to Argentina. They were important because they were the first to evangelise the Spanish-speaking and indigenous populations (Davies-Wells 2010: 92). Wood established the first permanent Assembly of God Church in Argentina, where she worked until her death in 1951. Johnsen was only 17 years old when he was “saved” and set out for the USA in 1905 (Iversen 1946: 2). He came to Los Angeles in 1906, and it is claimed, maybe as part of a mythical narrative, that he participated in the Azusa Street revival (Cernadas 2011). After a few years there, he had a mission call and returned to Norway, before leaving for Argentina. In 1914 he established a base in Embarcación, in the province of Salta, where he set out to “save” the native people whom he claimed lived in

²⁰ Some argue that the history of Pentecostalism actually began in Topeka, Kansas, on January 1, 1901 when Charles Parham, the founder of the Bethel Bible College and members of the community experienced speaking in tongues as a sign of the Holy Spirit.

²¹ Francescon and the Swede Gunnar Vingren are considered to be the founders of Pentecostalism in Brazil (Anderson 2007: 6, Freston 2004: 224).

slavery and poverty: “The men were having problems with alcohol and cocaine and the women had to do all the work” (Iversen 1946: 2).

Louis Francescon had met W.H. Durham, who had “received” the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Los Angeles and was leading a congregation that was the centre of the Pentecostal revival in Chicago. After a week of attending meetings he was convinced that what was going on there was genuine and eventually brought the rest of his group. In this church, the Italian brethren witnessed charismatic manifestations for the first time, especially prophecies, healing and glossolalia. Francescon’s wife was the first to speak in other tongues (in Swedish). It was not long before they all had “received” the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Sarracco 1989: 45).

The group soon began to share their experiences with other Italian immigrants and, “moved by a profound sense of mission” (Sarracco 1989: 45), they reached Buenos Aires, which after New York had the second largest Italian colony outside of Italy. After experiencing various difficulties, like Francescon and Lombardi being arrested in San Cayetano, allegedly due to pressure from the Catholic Church, they left for Brazil where they established congregations. Only a few believers were left in Argentina, and little happened until Narcisco Natucchi, who was a member of the same Church as Francescon in Chicago, the Assembly of Christians Meeting in the name of Jesus, arrived Argentina in 1916, the same year as the first free election was held. Natucchi and a companion of his, Francisco Anfuzzo, had more success than their predecessors, and the new Church experienced rapid growth.

In 1920, Giuseppe Petrelli came to Buenos Aires. He was a “prolific writer and theologian, and his two-year stay served to consolidate the Italian Church theologically and structurally” (Sarracco 1989: 48). These first Pentecostal churches had some similarities with other “ethnic” churches in that they only used the Italian language, which to some extent sheltered and preserved cultural identity. Domingo Marino, another member of the *Asamblea Cristiana Reunidos en el Nombre de Jesus* (the Spanish name taken after this Church had obtained official status in 1945 – today they call themselves *Asamblea Cristiana*), established a congregation in Santa Fé. Today (2013), with more than fifty thousand members,²² the congregations in the two cities make up more than 90 per cent of the traditionally Italian churches. It seems, though, that it was only Italian-speaking immigrants who became members of these churches. Not only did they see themselves

²² This number is a conservative estimate based on the number 48 000 in 1985. They probably by now have more members.

as something separate from the Catholic Church, they organised their congregations and denominations in a different way, emphasising an anti-hierarchical organisation and rejecting any structure which might be large enough to constitute a threat to individual members. Since almost all converts were former Catholics, this particular emphasis on a horizontal structure and “fear” of growing too large indicates that the movement in some respects might be considered to have been anti-Catholic. It was also alert to the problems of organising a church-body, which the old slogan of Francescon, “*ne gerarchia e ne anarchia*” (neither hierarchy nor anarchy), should suffice to illustrate. In addition, they had a “defensive and mistrusting attitude towards the outside world, typical of a minority” (Sarracco 1989: 54). This attitude was typical of the Pentecostal communities in Argentina until the Tommy Hicks campaign in the mid-1950s, when the mentality started to change. It has changed even further since the late 1970s and early 1980s when the church-growth (*iglecrecimiento*) commenced.

The Tommy Hicks campaign: A “glimpse” of a revival to come?

In 1954 the North American healing evangelist Tommy Hicks came to Buenos Aires and instigated a revival that, in hindsight, came to appear like a mini-version of the later church-growth of the 1980s. The country was heading towards a crisis, which was to culminate in yet another coup in 1955. Perón had fallen out with the Catholic Church, whose leaders at the behest of the Vatican supported a political party, the Christian Democratic Party, whose conflict with Perón marked the beginning of his downfall (Romero 2006: 127). In former years Perón had sought allies in other religious groups at the same time as many of these groups “were seeking a place that had always been denied them, where they would no longer be considered second-class citizens” (Saracco 1989: 205). The Evangelical churches had by now been partly “Argentinised”, and their members were no longer only immigrants; altogether, the Protestants made up more than two per cent of the population (Bianchi 2004: 183–184, 302). They did not want to be involved in politics, however, and had maintained an independent stance, but when Hicks arrived and needed the support of Perón to lift a five-year old ban on open-air meetings and radio broadcasting, this attitude changed. Saracco interprets the goodwill of Perón towards the Pentecostals as a response to Catholic and military pressure in addition to the economic collapse, which again had stripped him of “charismatic legitimacy” (to use a

Weberian term). “Hicks fulfilled a supplementary social role for Perón’s shaky charismatic leadership”, Saracco concludes (1989: 206). Hundreds of thousands at a time, and as many as four to six million people in total, turned out to experience the healing powers of Hicks during the nearly two months of his campaigns. Their effects could be felt in neighbouring countries too, and on the last day as many as 400 000 people came, supposedly the second largest number to have attended an evangelistic meeting on a single day, second only to Billy Graham’s revivals in South Korea (ibid.: 210).

The resemblance with the 1980s is remarkable. The Catholic Church had been stripped of many of its privileges and could not easily stop the campaign, which “struck a nerve” in segments of the population who, at that time, were open to several alternative religious experiences (Bianchi 2004: 224). Moreover, Hicks focused on divine healing, which was not too different from many healing campaigns of the 1980s. The Catholic Church opposed the campaigns as well, as did (Western) medical expertise, which resembles the negative framing of preachers as quacks in the 1980s. What differed from the latter period, however, was the socio-political climate, which did not favour the Pentecostals. Their most important ally, Perón, soon lost power, and there was no strong apparatus to support potential new members of the Pentecostal denominations. Tommy Hicks felt obliged to return to Argentina the following year, but momentum had gone and Hicks supposedly complained that “suddenly, it was as if an invisible hand spread a curtain of darkness over the land, and war was declared between Church and state” (Saracco 1989: 216).

However important this event was for the Pentecostals’ understanding of themselves, and the boost it gave their self-esteem, in the long run none of the Argentinean historians, like Romero, Rapoport, or Saborido and Privitellio, even mention the name of Tommy Hicks in their history books.²³ This can, presumably, illustrate (at least) two different things: First, the event was not *that* important for the fall of Perón or Argentinean history in general, and secondly, historians in general have been ignorant when dealing with other religions than the official Catholic Church. During the following years, in the Pentecostal communities and particularly when compared to the context of the 1980s, the Hicks campaigns stand out like a true Kairos-moment (Davies-Wells 2010: 95).²⁴

²³ That is, some of the history books referred to in this thesis.

²⁴ In ancient Greek, Kairos and Chronos designate two related concepts of time. While Chronos can be understood as sequential or quantitative time (the clock ticking), Kairos refers to qualitative time (defining moments – stretching time). Rituals for example may

The present

For the first time the nation accepted that democracy is a regime whose base is not only an association between the politicians and the “people” but also accept pluralism, and the other alternative (Saborido and Privitello 2006: 446–7).

If the inauguration of Juan Perón as President of Argentina in 1943 led to the most important changes in the history of the nation since the Sáenz Peña law of 1912, which introduced universal male suffrage and the secret ballot,²⁵ then the re-democratisation in 1983 introduced the most thorough changes since the latter part of the 19th century. What needs to be highlighted before the analysis of the breakthrough of Pentecostalism in the Argentinean society in the 1980s is the way in which that society has been structured and organised, and how it has been reconstructed through processes that are still going on. The history of political rule based on liberal governments and ideas from the 19th century, via democracy and the opening up for extended public participation in the early 20th century, was followed by a period of several dictatorships, and by the rule of the Peronists, who despite being seen as fascists actually introduced many welfare measures like increased wages for workers and universal health care. These policies contributed more to the democratisation of the country than any others had done since 1912. However, they (or Juan Perón himself) built a monolithic party structure with a “strong collective identity, but weakly institutionalized as a party” (McGuire 1995: 201).

Military elites have interfered in political matters on several occasions. Yet, it almost seems as if they have expected “someone” to straighten things out – that is, have expected some liberal/conservative government to fix things and make them “the way they were”, only to find that in a few years the economy is worse off than ever and the political control is slipping. This has been called the Argentinean riddle: that Argentina is unique in the world in the sense of being the only “developed” economy that has been “underdeveloped” for more than 60 years (Skarstein 2008: 318). Who is to blame for this? The *estancieros* and their reluctance to renew the methods of production? The lack of “modern” industry? The corrupt and inconsistent

be interpreted as extensions of a Kairos moment. Important Kairos moments for Pentecostals are when an “outpouring of the Spirit” occurs, as in the Asuza Street revival.

²⁵ Universal female suffrage was introduced in 1947, during the government of Juan Perón.

political regimes? International conditions? The Catholic Church and/or Catholicism itself? The lack of a democratic and egalitarian attitude? There are many questions and very few of them will be answered here. Hopefully, though, it will be possible to some extent to explain the Pentecostal growth following the re-democratisation and the reduced role and position of the Catholic Church in the same period.

The Catholic Church has experienced a quite turbulent period during the last 200 years, since Argentina was freed from colonial rule. First, the Catholic hierarchy had to deal with the new rulers, who despite being Catholics themselves, saw in the Catholic institutions a serious economic and political opponent and a “relic” of the past. In addition, there was a liberal and scientific climate dominated by the ideas of enlightenment and positivism. Later, the Catholics found new opponents in the increasing number of workers, who often tended to support socialist and communist ideologies with a built-in critique of religions and religious (institutional) power as such. One should also bear in mind that, contrary to what has been, and to a large extent still is, a dominating conception of religion in most Protestant countries, that it should be a private or individual matter, the Catholic Church has for several hundred years been an active participant in society. Its social commitment has been enacted, also within the realm of politics, as it is understood in so-called secular societies, or on a more general basis, with social teachings like those explicitly formulated in the above-mentioned encyclicals.²⁶ Most Catholics with whom I have spoken in Argentina in recent years consider secularisation and what Pope Benedict XVI has called the “dictatorship of relativism” as the new “enemy”.

Many, if not most, of the issues mentioned above have direct or indirect significance for the situation of Argentinean Pentecostals today, as will be discussed in greater detail later. For instance, when the Catholic Church defends its particular position and status in the constitution, historical as well as contemporary concerns may inform the arguments.²⁷ In trying to understand why (or if) it is difficult for Pentecostals to enter the political sphere, the structure of the political system, as well as their relation to poli-

²⁶ *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*.

²⁷ Historical: Because of the Catholics’ long history in the country they claim they have special rights, as in the “myth of the Catholic nation” (mentioned above). In addition, they may consider themselves to be bearers of a (Catholic) cultural heritage. Contemporary: They may see themselves as a bulwark against secularisation, as well as against other faiths and the loss of morals and values in society.

tics in general must be taken into consideration.²⁸ The “past” means something special to every Argentinean.

In the next chapter I will discuss the transition to democracy and the structural changes that have accompanied it. The historical background is only one of the key elements to be considered in order to understand how the processes of societal change and the Pentecostals’ relation to the “surrounding” world unfold. Another key element is globalisation, and the particularities of how it manifests locally (or nationally). The theoretical framework to be presented will hopefully shed light on how the conditions for a new religious sphere have created a space in which the Pentecostals are struggling to play a part, at the same time as they are using it as a base for gaining greater societal influence, through evangelising and public and political involvement.

²⁸ The political system is partly shaped by its history, and the lack of a Western left-right axis for the political parties to relate to may cause problems for the involvement of new groups like the Pentecostals. The “negative” view of politics as a dangerous sphere, where compromises are made and no truth is sacred, could be another reason why many Pentecostals do not get involved in politics.

2. Theoretical framework

This morning I had my regular breakfast, some slices of bread with cheese, ham and tomato, orange juice and a *cafe-latte* that I neatly sipped from my Chinese porcelain cup. The radio had been switched on, in a habitual action, and tuned into the “local” station. The newscaster reported about a new tax regulation for landowners, and the British Labour party’s election of Ed Milliband as their new leader, at the expense of his elder brother David. Finally, there were some commentaries on the build-up to a court ruling regarding a long-running religious dispute in Ayodhya, India, about whether Hindus or Muslims should have the ownership rights to the site where a Muslim mosque was destroyed by Hindu activists in 1992, which led to a riot in which 2000 people allegedly were killed.¹ One does not usually spend a lot of time contemplating the ingredients of one’s breakfast – but when one does, it is striking that this “traditional” meal and its contents have a rather brief local history. Breakfast in itself could be thought of as a “universal” meal, as something “everybody” in the world enjoys, at least those who can afford it or obtain it by other means. The contents of this meal certainly vary throughout the world, but to a decreasing degree. However, despite its variety of ingredients, it is strikingly difficult to find any local elements in this “Norwegian” meal. Bread, which dates back at least to the early days of agricultural Egypt and Mesopotamia, has for centuries been part of a “world-wide” diet (breadinfo.com 2010). Oranges are not grown locally, in Norway but were first cultivated in South East Asia before they found their way to India and then, via Arab traders, to Sicily and Spain during the reign of the Moors (Britannica.com 2012). When Columbus set out from the Canary Islands in 1492, orange trees were common there.

¹ The mosque, which was built in 1528 by a general of Babar Masjid, founder of the Mughal dynasty, was allegedly placed on the same spot as a Hindu temple to the god Rama which had been there since the eleventh century (Peter van der Veer: 2) – hence the dispute.

Moreover, although Scandinavians today are among the top coffee consumers in the world, it would take a great deal of hard work and good fortune to grow any coffee beans in Sweden, Norway or Denmark. Not only the food and drinks, but even the coffee cup has a fascinating history. Porcelain production officially traces its origin to Jingdezhen, China, in the year 1004, and after more than a millennium of development and trade, Chinese porcelain coffee cups have become increasingly common objects in many, if not most, western European homes since the 1950s and 1960s.

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from this modest analysis of my breakfast, its ingredients and composition, is that my Norwegian breakfast is not very Norwegian at all, and that the only things that make it “local” are that its composition and ingredients are shared by a great many other Norwegians, and that it is eaten, and thus *localised*, in Bergen, Norway. The oranges, the coffee beans and the Chinese porcelain bear witness to a long history of international trade, colonialism, imperialism – and *globalisation*. In addition, the above-mentioned news flash was squeezed into a five-minute-short newscast and presented in an “ordinary” way, as if its contents were all part of the same story, which fabricates the world we inhabit. The local and the translocal, the particular and the universal, the known and the unknown, can hardly be distinguished, except within the *constructions* of reality of which we are all part. Moreover, both the breakfast and the newscast are evidence of a different reality than was the case just a few decades ago. They hint at greater diversity, heterogenisation and pluralisation (see e.g. Banchoff 2007) locally, at the same time as the “package” itself, standardised and common in many corners of the globe, is an example of homogenisation. These two seemingly contradictory tendencies – (local) heterogenisation and (global) homogenization – should, in my opinion, be seen as parallel tracks along which globalisation unfolds. Roland Robertson has perhaps made the foremost attempt to capture this ambiguity. He does this, firstly by interpreting globalisation as “the universalisation of the particular and the particularisation of the universal” (Robertson 1992) and, secondly, by advancing the concept of *glocalisation*. The latter he wants to use “to make a number of points about the global-local problematic” (Robertson 1995: 29). His intention is that glocalisation should mean something other than globalisation,² and he even goes on to suggest em-

² Robertson himself contemplates the possibility of having to replace his term glocalisation with the older globalisation in order to make his “argument more precise” (Robertson 1995: 30).

ploying the term “globality” to refer to the current state of affairs as something other than what is meant by modernity.³

However, acknowledging that globalisation, to varying degrees, is part of our lives wherever we may be in this world, we should be cautious when dealing with this phenomenon. There is no doubt that it is a contested concept within the academic world as well as among people wherever they meet and discuss. In mass media and elsewhere people display concern about and reflect upon this topic. Some of the main issues that have been highlighted is its connection to modernisation (Giddens 2002 and Robertson 1995), to post-colonialism (Bhabha 2004, Spivak 1996), to cultural flow (Appadurai 1996), to economics (Wallerstein 2011) and to religion (Beyer 2006, Robertson 1992, Anderson 2007, Haynes 2005, Yong 2010, Cox 2001), and not least its relations to and tensions with the *local* (Robertson 1995). Various theories emphasise different dimensions or aspects of globalisation, either in a monistic sense, where globalisation equals the spread of a liberalist and capitalist economy (Wallerstein 2011); in a asymmetric sense: globalisation is not uni-linear and takes place in different places and at different paces; a dialectic sense, where globalisation is created in tensions or negotiations between localities (Robertson); in a universalising sense, where globalisation means, or leads to, homogenisation; or in a particularising sense, where globalisation means, or leads to, heterogenisation. In addition, there are theories about the interface between globalisation and post-modernity (e.g. Baumann 2002), globalisation and risk (Beck 2009), globalisation and the “social imaginary” (Appadurai 1996) and globalisation and networks (Castells 2004).

Moreover, apart from these different and often overlapping views of globalisation in whole or part, there is a range of *normative* approaches to take into account. Many, if not most people have opinions about globalisation, whether it is a good thing or not, or what should be done about “it”; and some, particularly those who are politically engaged, be it as official office-holders or activists of various kinds, seem to have strong opinions about what globalisation does to people, cultures and societies, and therefore either support or oppose it. Globalisation, some claim, is the spread of capitalism – and because capitalism is bad, globalisation is also bad (anti-globalisation movements); or, globalisation is the spread of capitalism – and because capitalism is good, globalisation is also good (World Bank, Interna-

³ Robertson also wants to free the discussion on globalisation/glocalisation from the idea that it is a direct consequence and/or continuation of modernity.

tional Monetary Foundation or IMF). Another view is that globalisation means neo-colonialism, which further means new assaults on cultures and people, and therefore it is bad (various segments within the post-colonial discourse and quite a few people from the global South); or, globalisation is a vehicle for modernisation and a continuation of the “enlightenment project”, and therefore, although some might call it neo-colonialism, the enlightenment values and forms of system of rule and behaviour, inclusion into the modern world economy, and styles of government that are diffused within the globalisation processes are good for the countries and regions concerned (human rights organisations, Western states, UN). Although it is possible to understand or observe globalisation from many different angles, I will focus on what appear to be some *common* traits within the processes of globalisation. These may be addressed in the following three ways.

1. The “world” is getting bigger – People as global movers

The world, in the sense of the physical, cultural and geographical areas or spaces that people relate to in their daily lives, has been “expanding” at an increasingly rapid pace during the last decades. People in business, academia and politics, for instance, may be the ones who experience this most strongly. They travel around the globe for conferences, seminars and meetings, and to invest in projects in formerly remote places. To these people, the “physical” aspect of globalisation, that they themselves can move around freely, often gives them a sense of living in a “global village” where “time has ceased, ‘space’ has vanished (and we are living in a global village)...a simultaneous happening” (McLuhan 1967: 63). In addition, not only does tourism send vast numbers of (mainly middle and upper class) people around the globe, it is also among the fastest growing economic sectors in the world (Stausberg 2011: 1). However, large segments of people, and particularly those with scarce resources, do not experience this global freedom to move around. They are physically more localised, so to speak, but their access to food, jobs, school, good health and so on, to an increasing degree depends upon the doings of those with political, economic, military and definitional power, who often are located in places further away from them, both physically and power-wise,⁴ than ever before.

⁴ At the same time as democracy is spreading, many local communities are losing control over their resources, and decisions that may concern them are being taken by distant politicians and businesses. Thus one can see both democratisation (new democracies) and de-democratisation (old democracies relinquishing local or national control, as in e.g. the EU or UNASUR) at the same time.

2. *The “world” is getting smaller – It comes to our homes*

A new form of ‘politics’ is emerging, and in ways we have not yet noticed. The living room has become a voting booth. Participation via television in Freedom Marches, in war, revolution, pollution and other events is changing everything (McLuhan 1967: 22).

The world, in the sense of a *psychical* or mental cultural and/or geographical area or space that people relate to in their daily lives, has “shrunk” at an increasingly rapid pace during the last decades. The telephone, mass media and, later, mobile phones and the Internet, with its social media and open gateways to almost any site independent of geographical location, have created a sense of being in the same room as “everyone” else. In these respects too there are huge differences in how people of different classes, location and background relate to the virtual rooms, worlds or experiences. The World Wide Web was introduced in 1992, and by 2008 there were already 580 million websites and 1.5 billion individuals with Internet access (Hylland Eriksen 2008: 94).⁵

In Argentina Internet access has also grown steadily. In 2001, around 20 per cent of private homes had access, a number that rose to around 50 per cent in 2010; by the end of 2011, the number was 66 per cent (lanacion.com.ar 2012). However, it should be noted that there are considerable regional differences. In addition, one has to assume, although no data on this have been found, that there are significant discrepancies in the distribution of computers and Internet depending on where in the larger cities or in the rural areas one is situated. That said, there is little reason to doubt that the Internet has a major impact on people’s understanding of themselves and their own (local) culture. McLuhan’s statement above, published as early as in 1967, displayed a rare glimpse of foresight. However, I think it best suits an understanding of the world as limited to the West and perhaps some cosmopolitan areas around the globe at that time. However, it is exactly because of the diffusion of the Western “model” that McLuhan’s point of view has become applicable to many other corners of the world today.

3. *Heterogenisation and/or homogenisation?*

In my opinion, one of the main, if not *the* most important, forces driving the globalisation processes is the diffusion of a Western “model”. This involves a particular and communicative differentiation and organisation of

⁵ Approximately 2.2 billion had access s to Internet in October 2012 (Hult 2012).

society into different “spheres” or *subsystems* (as Niklas Luhmann calls them).⁶ For instance, according to this model, politics, religion, economics, science and law are differentiated and “set apart” from one another, making it difficult, even almost impossible, for one of them to “rule” or overrun the other.⁷ If this actually is happening one may ask, what then is the actual *function* of these spheres? The evolutionary idea of modern society, which sees it as more complex than earlier/other societies and therefore as having developed specialised subsystems that serve particular functions for the whole system (society), goes back at least as far as American sociologist Talcott Parsons in the 1950s.⁸ Niklas Luhmann takes this idea a step further by defining modern society as structurally-functionally differentiated. The function of the subsystem in his theory is directed “inward” so to speak; i.e., the function of religion is to “serve” itself and not society overall. Although such social systems theories are highly interesting, they will not be discussed in their own right here: The function of religion as a sphere, and here mainly Pentecostalism, for Argentinean society is not the main issue. If that were the topic then a more comprehensive view would be called for. Society as such would have to be examined, with all its subsystems or spheres and all its extensions and limits. In fact, the very concept of *society* itself would have to be scrutinized. What is it and where are its borders? Is there such a thing as an Argentinean society at all (perhaps as limited to the nation state?), or do we have to reconsider this construction given the impact of transnational cultures, communities, societies, spheres and globalisation? That said, in order not to get “lost” in a conceptual jungle, I will speak of “Argentinean society” more as a commonly used concept, in an epistemological way rather than in an ontological one.

If globalisation, as I believe it does, involves the diffusion of a communicatively differentiated Western model, then the very structures of societies are becoming more similar. This does not mean that I agree with Thomas Hylland Eriksen that globalisation concerns form and not content (Hylland Eriksen 2008: 26), which leads to his notion that the content is contingent; i.e., it can be anything (or as Luhmann says: “it can always be different”). On the contrary, because of the dominating forces behind the diffusion of

⁶ To expose this differentiation I will use the term *sphere* and not sub-system. A sphere is more open than Luhmann’s sub-systems, and as such better fits the empirical data which I have encountered.

⁷ The relationship between these spheres will be discussed in greater detail later.

⁸ Differentiation was also a theme earlier, with theories put forward by Georg Simmel and Max Weber. It is, however, beyond the scope of this dissertation to enter this field in its totality, so these theories will not be discussed.

the model (Western corporations, states, religions, human rights activists, science), its contents are more fixed. The “package” is usually called or referred to as *democracy*. If the form is communicative differentiation, then the content is portrayed as “ideal types” which frame and constrain the contingency within each sphere (and as such contest the very contingency – or idea of contingency – itself). That is, politics is thought of, and accepted (by the so-called world-community and leading protagonists of the model), as comprising everything from social democracy to liberalism (political sphere), rule of law (judicial sphere), economic liberalism (economic sphere), freedom of speech (public sphere), independent academia (scientific sphere) and religious freedom and semi-privatised religion (religious sphere).⁹

As ideal types, these are all contested and subject to definitional power. The meaning of religious freedom is not a given (as will be discussed in Chapter 4). How and for whom rule of law applies is not horizontal. And what is more, the balance, or lack of balance between the spheres influences how their ideals are practised; is the rule of law the same for the poor and marginalised as for the rich and powerful?

This structure and the communicative differentiation give the different actors within the different spheres limited room and limited options. For instance, although politicians make decisions that concern the economy, it is economic models which are used to calculate the outcome of the political decisions, and that in the end “decide” what the best political measure is. Likewise, it is within the judicial sphere that judicial issues are sorted out, by lawyers and other professional judicial personnel, and not by sociologists, priests or even politicians. This is the characteristic of differentiation: to know what belongs inside or outside each sphere. However, there are tensions between the sub-systems, or spheres, and they all bear a universalism at the core of their “being”; the Law, Christianity, democracy, liberal economy and so on, are for “everyone”, and are thus universal. In other words, the spheres treat the outside world, or their environment, as “irritants” or obstacles, which they have to either keep outside (maintaining difference) or negotiate with, i.e. make compatible and meaningful (renegotiating difference) or colonise. But “Christianity” or Christians may find their moral or ethical considerations to be in conflict with the law. Hence, the law might be considered not to be “Christian” enough, not to be compatible with Christianity, to belong in another sphere. The economy may be in conflict with politics; for example, politicians might want to eradicate poverty by

⁹ But nothing outside of that – like e.g. socialism, theocracy, planned economy, etc.

increasing taxes which the economists may not accept, by arguing that the economy will collapse if this or that is done.

A solution to this problem, and a hypothesis in the following, is that in order to compensate for a lack of dominance or influence in the other spheres, communication can be ordered in such a way as to give it some influence after all. To do this it must be made *compatible* with the communication in the sphere it addresses, and therefore it needs to be made meaningful outside its own sphere as well. Hence a religious institution aiming to implement religious values in the political or judicial sphere, or society as a whole for that matter, must translate its mode of communications, its arguments and make them compatible with the communication (lingua franca) in those spheres. For example, arguing for religiously based values “outside” of the religious sphere: Why are Pentecostal values good for politics? Because they can secure stability and reliability (and not because the Bible says so – which would be a just argument in the Pentecostals sphere). Why should values inform economic decisions? Because the decisions made by economists should benefit the common good and therefore these decisions should be informed by these values (and not because the Bible says so).

Communication

What constitutes the social systems¹⁰ themselves, according to Luhmann, is communication. Furthermore, all systems *reduce complexity* and are *self-referential* (Luhmann 1995: 437). This means that, although the system’s *environment* can be endlessly complex, the system always reduces this complexity and “frame” it within its own communication. Thus, difference is (re)produced. Given that at least two individuals are required in order to

¹⁰ I will not provide a general review of similarities and/or differences between social, cultural and/or socio-cultural systems. However, I do recognise that such discussions exist (see e.g. Margaret Archer 2003). Moreover, I find Luhmann’s system theory to overstate the contingency and constructivism aspects – that is, that “everything” can be different. The latter argument/observation, as I see it, is most valid on a societal level (that all kinds of political systems or laws/constitutions are possible and therefore can change – be different). On a cultural level, on the other hand, what is just as interesting is *why* the culture is not different. For example, one may ask why political systems come and go in Europe over a period of 100 years (like the 20th century), whereas the cultural systems seem to be more tenacious, or why the Argentinean society goes through periods of democracy, dictatorships and oligarchies in the same period but only sees modest change in religious affiliation? Anyway, this is a comprehensive, and too important, discussion to be taken lightly. It could be the topic of a study in itself. Hopefully, though, I contribute modestly to this with the thoughts presented in this thesis.

communicate, communication itself could be considered as “impossible” (Brekke 2003: 98). Why? Because individuals too are self-referential systems whose utterances are *contingent*; they can always be different.¹¹ And the recipient can always understand or interpret the message in any possible way. This problem is referred to as *double contingency* (Luhmann 1995: 103–136). Although it is individuals who communicate and act, it is communication that constitutes and structures the social systems, according to Luhmann. Contingency and double contingency are central parts of Luhmann’s theory of both social and psychic systems as well as of communication. Something is contingent, he claims, “insofar as it is neither necessary nor impossible; it is just what it is (or was or will be), though it could also be otherwise” (Luhmann 1995: 106). “Communication must be viewed as a three-part selection process” (Luhmann 1995: 140). These three parts are information, utterance and understanding.¹² For communication to be possible, the intended *meaning* of the message needs to correspond to the actual *understanding* of the message. What enhances the possibility of this happening is *language* and shared cultural codes. Furthermore, a certain type of message may be understandable in one sub-system but not in another. A statement like “we need to play down our support for the rich in order to get more votes in the election” may make sense in the political sub-system but not in a religious sub-system. “The world is the way it is because God created it like that” makes more sense in a religious social system than in natural science. Although social systems are self-referential, they are also contingent (they could always be different) and dynamic. “By communication, the system establishes and augments its sensitivity, and thus it exposes itself to evolution by lasting sensitivity and irritability” (Luhmann 1995: 172).

According to Luhmann, the sub-systems’ communication is based on binary codes. *Politics*: position vs. opposition; *economics*: pay vs. not pay; *judicial*: legal vs. illegal; and *religion*: immanent vs. transcendent (or faith vs. no faith). These are the basic elements of their mode of communication. For example, a business, operating within the economic system, “wants” (or needs) to expand wherever there is money to be made. To do that, it needs to get rid of all obstacles (that which “irritates”), and it needs to reduce risk

¹¹ According to Luhmann, individuals are also types of systems. They are, however, *psychic* systems and not *social* systems. In addition to these two, there are so-called *living* systems like cells and organisms (Hagen 2007: 397–398).

¹² I consider utterances *and* actions to be communication. This includes both statements about the Bible or politics as well as the foundation of political parties or umbrella organisations.

so it will not lose its money. Although money-makers might provide any kind of good or bad (or no) morality, the system itself is not occupied with such concerns. The only “interest” of the system is to reduce complexity and thus to be in a “friendly” environment where it can exist and grow. In my opinion, and as I will argue for in the following, the social sub-systems, or spheres as I call them, always try to expand at the expense of the other spheres within the Western model (e.g., law at the expense of politics and religion at the expense of science and vice versa). Furthermore, the spheres, alone or with other spheres,¹³ try to expand on behalf of other social systems, which have different codes of communication and which may not yet be communicatively differentiated. One might say that the spheres “feed” on their environment and, with increased globalisation, this environment is expanding. The dominating religion within the Western societies (Christianity) also has this expansive “urge”. Because its message is universal, Christianity also “wants” and “needs” to penetrate the other social systems and make them part of its own system.

Moreover, the sub-systems, by being self-referential and by treating all other systems as their environment, from where they reduce complexity, become “holistic”. Hence, the economic system, for example, has “no limits” except the ones defined by its relation to its environment. For instance, the argument (information) that certain people should be allowed to pray during working hours because of their religious beliefs represents not an act of religiosity to the “ears” of economics, but a loss of income, due to the loss of labour during the time of prayer. At the same time as the spheres deal with this reduction of complexity from the environment, of which all other spheres are part, they also balance each other. They live side by side and as part of their reaction to the environment I think of three different ways that the spheres react or interact: 1) *colonisation*; 2) *isolation* 3) *compatibility*. Colonisation means to make what is meaningful in its communication also to be meaningful in another sphere. An example of this could be if Pentecostalism was colonised by science: Conversion could be based on evidence or empirical data and not revelation. Then the Pentecostal communication

¹³ Political, economic and religious interests were/are commonly present in colonialism and imperialism. However, the divide between them was rather murky; i.e., their autonomy was not yet established to the same degree that they are “supposed” to be in a modern differentiated society. Thus, evangelisation and territorial expansion were often two sides of the same coin, so to speak. Until recently it has been considered more difficult to legitimise the idea that business and evangelisation should join forces. However, divisions between e.g. evangelisation and business, and foreign policy and academic research, are constantly being challenged.

would change dramatically and actually cease to exist, at least in its present form. Colonisation reduces differentiation, and may lead to a total de-differentiation. For example, if one of the sub-systems in a functionally differentiated democratic system gains control over the others, they will experience a breakdown in their modes of communication (or – the communication will be replaced by another). This could occur, for example, as a consequence of a revolution. Then, the communication, of for instance art or science, could be turned to serve an explicit political purpose, as was the case in Nazi-Germany or the Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin. But also in so-called democratic and differentiated societies there are challenges and threats to the autonomy of the social spheres. If, for instance, academics become more concerned with their institutions' financial situation than with the production of research-based knowledge, then the academic endeavours are informed by financial concerns at the expense of scientific concerns. The result may be that scientific communication breaks down and “good” science becomes the “same” as profitable science. The binary code, true–false (or empirical, theoretical and research-based vs. not empirical, theoretical and research-based) knowledge, is replaced by pay–not pay (knowledge?). Another example could be if one or several people, representing a specific religion, enter politics and become more concerned with re-election than the religiously based foundation (communication); i.e., the priest becomes a politician and stops being a priest (he or she becomes more concerned with re-election than with Christian values). The discussions about this issue go straight to the heart of a long–lasting debate over the relationship between religion and politics, politics and economy, and economy and science, and in the end have to do with how these spheres are understood, or from what perspective they are observed.

The second way is to be isolated from the others. Isolation may be “chosen” as a defensive strategy or response to the difficulty of existing together with the others. This may be the result of an anti-modern stance, i.e. of a religious group not wanting to live and be like the others. Isolation may also be the result of oppression. In order not to vanish (be colonised) a religious group may protect itself by distancing itself as far as possible from the other spheres. Isolation, as a defensive strategy and/or as a result of oppression, may well have been the case for many Pentecostals in the early 20th century. In Argentina, until the 1950s and the Tommy Hicks campaign, Pentecostals constituted marginal communities and did not act as an integrated voice in the public sphere or openly expressed strong views on politics and economics.

Although colonisation and isolation may occur, another, and maybe more common, approach, at least in communicatively differentiated societies, to the other spheres is to seek compatibility. This is not to colonise the other, but to co-exist and make room for mutual influence. Colonisation may be the final goal of one system's interference with another, but due to the "strength" or flexibility of the systems, a sort of co-existence is sought: politicians (try to) meet economists halfway; religious groups enter politics without leaving their religion behind; scientists are concerned with (academic) knowledge at the same time as they perform commissioned work. The analytical tools applied in order to solve "the problem" of communicative differentiation, i.e. the problem or lack of communication between the spheres, will be approached from a theory of compatibility.

Compatibility, double compatibility and multiple compatibilities

The third way of relating to the other spheres is to negotiate and make them compatible.

As mentioned above, the different spheres share a common trait that they have inherited from a long European history of colonisation, imperialism and expansion. They have a *teleological* and a *universal* character, which are highly intertwined. The teleology includes a universalism that "treats" the world (the environment) as a single place, where history unfolds in a linear and evolutionary way. Not only Christianity but also science (reason and "true" knowledge based on empirical research) and ideologies (from Marxism to liberalism) share this feature, traces of which can be found in every differentiated sphere in the social systems of the nation states of Europe. The spheres in these systems are in constant competition with one another, and the contents and constitution of the spheres (their *lingua franca* or mode of communication) are to a large degree "set". They are defined not only by what gives meaning within their modes of communication, but also by what does not give meaning; a priest is not running the financial department as part of his ministry; an economist is not judging whether a stone-axe belongs to the bronze-age or the stone-age; a politician makes laws, but does not interpret them, and so on. In view of the genealogy of the modern differentiated society, one may suppose that the differentiation had a functional character – that the spheres were meant to serve certain purposes for society as a whole.

However, it is also possible, as Luhmann suggests, that these functions for the “whole” have turned inwards towards a self-referential function where it is now the structure of the system of sub-systems (or spheres) and not their function for society that defines them. The Christian (religious) sphere, because of its (universal) “mandate” to save as many as possible before Christ returns, will try to “colonize” the other spheres at the same time as the religious communication does not break down. The other sub-systems or spheres, for their part, will also try to “colonize” one another. If one of the spheres would succeed in colonising the others, then the overall system would begin a process of de-differentiation. If every sphere ultimately were to be colonised by one of the spheres – for instance, if the economic mode of communication became the lingua franca in all spheres – then a total de-differentiation would occur, and the very model would collapse. For example, if a hospital is measured by its economic success rather than its success in terms of curing patients, a church’s religious success is measured by its income and not its biblically inspired work, or an academic is measured by her number of publications and not her production of new knowledge, then these sub-systems develop an internal communication problem.

However, to serve as a “middle-way” between colonisation and/or isolation, in the situation of constant struggle, competition and adaptation, between the spheres, a certain method can, and is, being implemented: *compatibility*, *double compatibility* and *multiple compatibilities*.¹⁴ Whereas (simple) compatibility refers to one sphere’s attempt at harmonising its communication with that of another sphere without losing the meaning of its own communication, double compatibility includes adaptation to the communication in another sphere. Multiple compatibilities refer to a certain harmonising that all the spheres to various degrees seek out, or are forced into, with another. Compatibility is directed “in” (or home) and double and multiple compatibility is directed “out”. For example, if Argentinean Pentecostals, whose communication is based on the binary codes biblical vs. not biblical and Spirit – filled¹⁵ vs. not Spirit – filled, are to enter the political sphere, they need to harmonise the political project with the religious. They need to make it compatible and show how the political project is anchored, legitimised and grounded in the Bible and that it accords with the working of the Spirit. Furthermore, once they have actually entered the political

¹⁴ Compatibility: “the fact that different ideas or systems can exist together” (Macmillandictionary.com 2013).

¹⁵ Here, following Allan Anderson’s definition on page 1, I will hereafter shorten this to “Spirit vs. not-Spirit”.

sphere, for instance as a political party, they need to make their communication also meaningful within that system. In a democratic political system, where position vs. opposition is the binary code of communication, the Pentecostal party must also harmonise with that. When that is done, double compatibility is achieved. In a way, it is all about how to deal with the environment: Interact or withdraw? Expand or isolate? Reduce complexity by changing it or by seeking to understand it (make the noise go away)?

For religions in general, and in communicatively differentiated societies in particular, this means, simply put, that the religious sphere seeks to reduce the complexity of the environment, constantly adapt to it and seek compatibility, try to colonise or avoid being colonised and try not to be isolated (unless such a strategy appears to be a good choice). Hence, a defensive, a harmonic and an aggressive approach may be at work at the same time. For the religious sphere¹⁶ to “survive” in an environment with the other spheres, such as the legal, the political, the scientific and the economic sphere, and so on, i.e., those that constitute its environment, compatibility must be sought. In the religious sphere, the different religions each have their own lingua franca, the communication which constitutes them as such, and it is these modes of communication which *legitimise* and *authorise* the communication as belonging to this or that religion. It differentiates one from the other. Usually, this legitimation is based on authority, scripture, tradition and/or consensus. For instance, divine vs. not divine (or sacred vs. profane) could be thought of as the binary code for religion. In the case of Christianity this could be biblical vs. not biblical, and for Pentecostalism: Spirit vs. not Spirit.¹⁷

In addition, as long as the political system is considered to be compatible with the religion at hand, then it is given legitimacy by that religion. Through compatibility between the different spheres, they not only “exist together”, they also legitimise one another. In this circumstance lies an almost paradoxical strength of the communicatively differentiated system: In order not to collapse, the system “needs” for the different spheres to “accept” one another. Acceptance, through compatibility, becomes the factor that integrates all of the spheres into the system, or into society at large. For

¹⁶ Given that one can speak of such a “religious sphere” at all, one has to include several religions. These are of course not the same and do not have the same modes of communication. Rather they should be thought of as sub-systems or spheres in their own right. There are also competition, overlaps, colonisation-attempts and compatibility between these.

¹⁷ On page 109, there is a more detailed illustration of this.

example, in Argentina, as long as the legal system is recognised as stemming from a Christian (Catholic) tradition, it is given a Christian authorisation. The so-called secularisation of Western societies could therefore be seen as a religiously legitimated process, and can be accepted as such, as long as the other (non-Christian) communicatively differentiated sub-systems or spheres are authorised in scripture or/and tradition, i.e., are given meaning in a religious sphere. In multicultural and multireligious societies, which in addition are prone to globalisation, the complexity of compatibilities, threats of colonisation and isolation become a particular challenge. In Argentina, as we shall see later, the Catholic hegemony has given the clergy a position in society from which it has worked long and hard to avoid being isolated and to secure compatibility between itself and its environment (e.g. politics, economics, the military and science). When this “cosmos” of the past, the very order of society as it was before democracy, collapsed, “chaos” threatened and the structures of society were remoulded. New balances have had to be found and new compatibilities sought out. Its position as part of an elite, a “society in society”, is no longer given, and the environment of the Catholic Church is no longer “only” made up of politics, science and law, but also includes other religions.

If, however, the legal system is legitimatised as being in the interest of the common good, tradition, or pure reason, and if this legitimisation is in conflict with the lingua franca of the religious sphere, it is no longer religiously authorised – compatibility is lacking and a conflict, or at least lack of legitimisation will exist. According to Luhmann, the scientific system, for instance, has the binary code true-false (knowledge) where knowledge (or truth) is supposed to stem from theoretical or empirical scientific research and not from tradition, consensus, God or any other authority. For Pentecostals to accept that science could have something to “offer”, and that Pentecostals could be scientists, they need to authorise it and make it “meaningful” in one way or another. For example, they can find biblical references, they can refer to some iconic figure in the history of Pentecostalism (tradition), or perhaps a contemporary leading figure, like a particularly “strong” pastor who might argue that science is not in opposition to their religion. If science, as it is done today, were to be “sanctified” by the Pentecostals as according with the will of God or being Spirit-filled, then compatibility would be achieved.¹⁸

¹⁸ Deism in the 17th and 18th century may be considered to have expressed an attempt to achieve double compatibility.

One way to illustrate the tensions between the spheres and the issue of compatibility might be to look at how some Muslims experience this.¹⁹ If Muslims want to implement an ideology based on Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones*, for instance, in a differentiated system, where the legal system, the scientific system and the political system are expected to be subordinated to the religious system, then a conflict of interests, a conflict of compatibility, is most likely to arise. It can even be claimed that it is impossible since subordination of this kind means colonisation, hence de-differentiation. If, however, the other spheres could be made compatible with the religious sphere in one way or the other, the differentiation could be achieved or would be maintained. Another example is the conflict between the Catholic Church and liberals in 19th century Argentina, at which time the country was not truly a communicatively differentiated society but rather in the process of developing such differentiation.

In conclusion, there are three main practical options or strategies for how a religious community can "behave" in a communicatively differentiated society: 1) Isolation, to exist as a religious community, "outside of society"; 2a) Compatibility, acceptance of the system at large and the other spheres (for the time being), and getting the support of the community in order to address issues in the other spheres; 2b) Double and multiple compatibility, acceptance of the system at large and the other spheres, and "sanctification" of the other spheres' right to legitimise their own mode of communication; 3) Colonisation, claiming the sovereignty of the religious communication at the expense of all the others, trying to colonise them and making them accept the higher status of the religious mode of communication.

If a religion-based political party, for example a Pentecostal party, is to succeed, it therefore needs to make its political "project" compatible with its religious "project". The adherents need to feel/realise that the Pentecostal party is in tune with their religious creed, that it is looking out for their "religious" interests. As soon as this is achieved, compatibility is in place. However, unless the religious community is very large and the Pentecostal vote will secure a majority in the parliament, the religio-political party needs to adapt to the lingua franca of the political sphere to be successful. It needs to negotiate with other groups in order to make sure that its policies are implemented. Hence, the religious project must be made compatible with the political project. The compatibility is directed first to the adherents, and then to the actors and rules of the political sphere. The voice of

¹⁹ This is not unique to Islam, which only serves as an example here.

“the other” political actors is part of the Pentecostals’ project (as far as the Pentecostals are concerned). When both are in place, double compatibility has been achieved.

This may be illustrated with the following example: Many Pentecostals oppose same-sex marriage because they consider it to be a sin and not in accordance with their understanding of the Bible. If the Pentecostal community in Argentina had still been isolated, as they used to be before the 1980s, that would not be a “problem”.²⁰ However, in a societal context where other forces and institutions are also fighting for influence, the message needs to be formulated in such a way that it will win the support of other and/or secular politicians as well. Therefore, in order to win the votes of the elected politicians in the political sphere, Pentecostals in Argentina refer to article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This states that “men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family” (paragraph 1), and that “the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State” (paragraph 3). In this way they cite a source they have in common with secular groups, namely the UDHR. By referring to human rights instead of, or in addition to the Bible, the Pentecostals are trying to achieve double compatibility. The consequence of this in the end could be that they “sanctify” these human rights.²¹ The Argentinean Pentecostals’ dealings with the compatibility and double compatibility issues in relation to their engagement in the judicial, political and public spheres will be more thoroughly discussed in later chapters.

Spatial and temporal aspects of globalisation

With the diffusion of the Western model, societies around the world are becoming more similar, which supports the homogenisation theory. On the other hand, these societies are experiencing tremendous changes and are filling the spaces made available within the limits of the model in different ways, which supports the heterogenisation theory. Moreover, in societies

²⁰ Because it “belonged” to the sinful society, of which they were not really a part.

²¹ There is an important question about the instrumentality involved here: Are they referring to these rights only because they know that they will be helpful in making their argument more acceptable to the non-Pentecostals? However, this kind of search for motives and instrumentalities may apply to all groups or individuals who refer to this or that authority, be it a holy book or a constitutional right. The question of motives is not a main issue in this thesis. Rather it is practices that we are dealing with.

where differentiation of this kind has not existed, one often sees an increased *pluralisation*.

From a local point of view, for instance in the case of the Norwegian breakfast mentioned above, the “Bergen version” is more international than it was only some decades ago. Many ingredients have been added to the local table, and more international news items are presented on the local radio. If one takes a walk in this, once small and modest Norwegian town, one can eat Chinese, Japanese, Thai and Indian food, go to salsa clubs, take tango classes, etc. The population itself is more diverse, with various immigrants, workers and tourists coming from many places around the world. Furthermore, this is not a description that would fit Bergen alone. Many “localities” throughout Europe and other parts of the world are experiencing the same thing. As the local scene is getting more diversified, the global perspective presents a picture of sameness; i.e., viewed from the outside, the localities share many features which they did not share just a few decades ago. In addition, things like the Internet, television and the (mobile) telephone can be found around the globe and, as boundless means for mass communication, are breaking down borders between the private and the public spheres, thus making even the private spheres appear more similar.

However, one should not forget that this is not happening at the same pace and on the same scale everywhere. Big cities may be more “globalised” than villages, Sweden more than Mali, the middle class more than the working class or the unemployed and homeless, men more than women, etc.²² Nevertheless, there are a many compelling signs of the integration of the world, of the homogenisation of the world, and of the asymmetric use of the power and resources being put into various efforts to achieve religious-ideological goals, economic dominance, military control and political hegemony. For the sake of analysis, in the following I will focus on the differentiation processes by focusing on globalisation from the perspective of the diffusion of the Western model with its sub-systems or spheres. This does not mean that these sub-systems are actually in place and operating on their own right in global society, as Peter Beyer, relying on the theories of Niklas Luhmann, claims (Beyer 1994, 2006). Rather, the discussion about their

²² Although the poor and homeless in many places around the globe might be considered “victims” of neo-liberal capitalist globalisation, and in that sense are as globalised as anyone else, they might also be considered to be marginalised and *excluded* and therefore as not taking part in the integration processes involved in the access to citizenship, democracy, and public sphere benefits that include literacy, time and resources to obtain information, Internet, TV, etc.

presence or diffusion represents a perspective, and will serve as an axis of analysis throughout the text – a model or sparring-partner so to speak.

Inherent in the homogenisation-heterogenisation aspects of the globalisation processes, there is also a *spatial* tension between the global and the local. What this means, however, is not obvious because the concepts and the dichotomist construction they form are intertwined. What are the implications of this, both in practical and epistemological terms? Moreover, how is it possible to separate them?

The simple answer is that the global includes “everything”, all that is in the world, while the local refers to separate entities, bounded wholes so to speak. This divide is not “only” of ontological or epistemological character, but is also a division marked more than anything else by the scholarly focus and discourses constructed within different disciplines. Anthropology and ethnography, on the one hand, study local cultures and places, while political science and sociology, on the other, focus on societies and “the world”. This difference in areas of scholarly attention has been described as, and also criticised for being based upon particular perspectives embedded within the disciplines: a holism of the local and a “wholism” of the global (George Marcus 1998). The problem, according to Marcus, is that to study a local culture as a closed entity, one is not taking into serious consideration the influence and implications of translocal concerns. On the other hand, the study of “the world”, as in so-called grand theory or macro-studies, one does not capture local differences and flavours, and all too often these theories lack an empirical base.

How, then, is it possible to solve this problem? How does one study a local culture that does not represent a closed unit, and how does one provide information and empirical data to back up a grand theory? Is it impossible or just a challenge? Impossible is a word that does not belong in the scientific or academic sphere.²³ The very concept presupposes an a priori judgment of what science can determine, and strictly speaking is based on speculation (and hence is non-scientific). Therefore, the only valid approach from a scientific point of view is to meet the challenge. A multi-sited approach (as suggested by Marcus 1998), which studies several localities at the same time, could be one solution, and a multi-dimensional approach, which studies place, space and temporal concerns, another. A multidisciplinary approach – different disciplines representing different perspectives –

²³ Throughout the text the word scientific is used to cover natural science, social science and the humanities. If I am referring to one of these specifically, I will write it explicitly.

could be a third alternative. A number of other possibilities could be mentioned too, but what they all have in common is that they require a special focus and, more often than not, a joint venture by scholars representing various disciplines. In the end I think it is necessary to accept that there are limitations to any single and/or even plural approach; they will always represent certain *perspectives*. When such an epistemological recognition is in place, one needs to travel the route to the place from which one's observation is done as clearly and explicitly as possible: guide the reader so to speak. Finally, it requires of the other (the reader) not only the will, but also the ability to exit his or her "box" (or bring it along?!) and join the writer on this journey. Then, the shared perspective, although observed with different lenses, can facilitate increased knowledge. The radical constructivism in such a perspectivism is in many ways related to Niklas Luhmann's idea, that contingency and double contingency, difference and communication, are the basis for social systems and (relative) meaning.²⁴

This thesis represents an attempt to take into consideration the global aspect of the religious scene in Argentina. To do that I have chosen a dual approach: A) to study globalisation in a particular macro perspective; and B) to study a national or local community, the Argentinean Pentecostals. More specifically, I claim that one of the vehicles (if not *the* vehicle), driving globalisation processes is the hegemonic diffusion of the Western model or system, whose trademarks are democracy, semi- to neoliberal economics, rule of law, the privatisation of religion and communicative differentiation of society. This might be called the *general* aspect of globalisation. On the other hand, I will discuss what this means for Argentinean society and for the Pentecostal community specifically. How is Argentinean society reacting to these global (transnational) forces? How has that society been transformed during the latest 30 years (1980–2010), and what are the implications for the religious scene and particularly the Pentecostals? The latter may be called the *particular* aspect of globalisation, which one can regard as the grounding of the theory. Moreover, Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems, combined with my own concept (or theory) of "spheres" provide the main analytical perspective, both on a global and on a local level.

²⁴ Not meaning *per se*, but relational meaning. It is a basic idea in this thesis that communication constitutes social spheres and that communication is meaningful as long as it is understood within the social sphere. As a matter of fact *what makes sense* in a Pentecostal social system is that which relates to the binary code or the gravitational centre of that system: "Spirit vs. not Spirit".

The general aspect of globalisation

As mentioned above, globalisation is a contested and debated concept. The theory presented here does not provide *the story* of what globalisation is, but rather represents one *perspective* that may shed light on some of the processes involved. The theory takes as a starting point that for several hundred years the West has constituted an axis of power in the world. Through colonisation, imperialism, hot and cold wars, and military, economic and political dominance, the West still plays the most important role in the processes of globalisation. Furthermore, globalisation means that the Western world has evolved in the direction of communicative differentiation, with different sub-systems or spheres having developed more or less autonomous characteristics. Globalisation, which includes the diffusion of the Western model, happens in two ways: 1) through the expansion of each of these spheres more or less independently of the others and, 2) through the diffusion of the communicatively differentiated model as a “package”. Every sphere contributes to some degree to the diffusion of the model, but at the same time acts in its “own” interest.

Luhmann, differentiation and autopoietic sub-systems

Thus the theory’s design resembles a labyrinth more than a freeway into the sunset (Luhmann 1995: lii).

As mentioned above, Niklas Luhmann defined functional differentiation as a distinguishing characteristic of a modern society and in so doing he followed scholars like Max Weber, Talcott Parsons and Jürgen Habermas. Luhmann’s main project was to create a *general* theory of society, based on a *universal* theory of social systems (Luhmann 1995: 15). Moreover, this *sociological* theory should account for “everything”, even the observation point of its creator – implying an acceptance that there is no Archimedean point from which to look at the world from outside: “The general theory of social systems claims to encompass all sociology’s potential topics and, in this sense, to be a universal sociological theory” (Luhmann 1995: 15). According to Luhmann, sociology was in a state of crisis and desperately needed a comprehensive theory. He did not consider the postmodern fall of the meta-narratives to be a problem but rather a challenge. “In his view, the postmodern semantics of impossibility is a belated reaction, on the part of

modernity, to the shock of its own contingency: ‘there is no *métarécit* because there is no external observer’” (Knodt 1995: x).

Different differentiations

Although the theory of social systems is first and foremost a theory about modern democratic society, it presupposes a clear demarcation of that kind of society from other kinds of society. According to Luhmann, there are four evolutionary stages of societal development: segmentary differentiation, centre-periphery differentiation, stratified differentiation and functional differentiation (Hagen 2007: 394).

In the segmentarily differentiated societies, communication was characterised and structured according to residence and genealogy. People identified each other based on place, family, clan, etc. In societies that are centre-periphery differentiated, villages and cities became crucial places for concentration of power, which again structured communication. In stratified societies, hierarchical elites constituted the “centres” of society and thereby represented a “society within society”.²⁵ The modern functionally differentiated society has no such central body – or ‘society in society’ – and therefore there is no superior social rationality, just sub-systems with their own rationalities (Hagen 2007: 392). One may argue that all these types of society were functionally differentiated, but that the very functions of the various segments of society were structurally distributed in different ways. For instance, in a stratified society, the function of the elite could be to be priests or judges, politicians or entrepreneurs. These constituted the elite, a “society in society”. What separated the types could rather be thought of as difference in *structure*, resulting in different functions for different layers or segments society. Following Luhmann, as society becomes more complex, a differentiation based on specialized functions arises. Let us therefore think of all the four types of society as being functionally differentiated but with different structures. Moreover, I suggest that we view the last stage, the so-called functionally differentiated society, as being instead a communicatively differentiated society.

²⁵ As we shall see later, this Luhmannian understanding of a stratified society resembles to some degree Argentinean society during the turbulent dictatorship-ridden years from 1930 to 1983. Hence, it is possible to speak of the small Pentecostal community during those years as a community “outside of society”.

System, environment and the autopoietic turn

“System” originally meant something put together as opposed to something elementary. A system was something more than the sum of its elements. This understanding of the concept, as a unity, is applied by Fichte in his system thesis from 1794, and Hegel when he argued that “the truth (is) only real as a system” (Kneer and Nassehi 1997: 22).²⁶ Later on, in sociology, systems were considered to be either *open* or *closed*. Luhmann follows this track, but takes it further and shifts his focus from the relationship between elements and systems (where the existence of each sub system was explained by the function it had in a more comprehensive social system) to the relations between system and environment, with this divide, system/environment, becoming the central axis of the theory (Brekke 2003: 91).

Since the beginning of the 1980s, and particularly thoroughly presented in *Social Systems* from 1984,²⁷ the concept and idea of *autopoiesis* is being presented.²⁸ Autopoiesis is composed of two Greek words: *auto*, meaning *self*, and *poiesis*, meaning creation. Hence, it means self-creation. The concept is borrowed from Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francesco Varela, who, in response to the fundamental question “what is life?”, used it to describe what specifically characterises living organisms, namely that they produce themselves and what they consist of, and are *self-referential*. Luhmann expanded the concept, writing that *psychic systems* (relating to individuals) and *social systems* are autopoietic. Thus he “makes” social systems self-referential and “closed”. First and foremost autopoiesis concerns the relationship between a system and its environment, and “the concept of a self-referentially closed system does not contradict the system’s *openness to the environment*” (Luhmann 1995: 37). This is the *function* of the system: that it *reduces complexity* (from the environment) but in a closed manner, so to speak – by only accepting that which can abide by the rules or, more precisely, by the binary code of the system (ibid.: 177).

This can be called the Luhmannian structural-functional turn: the role of each differentiated sub system is not to serve a particular function, in an organic manner, for society at large. Its function is to reduce complexity (from the environment), to differentiate (from the other systems), to uphold its lingua franca (its particular mode of communication). The structure is “decided” by the differentiation itself, between the different sub-

²⁶ Translated from Danish: “det sande (er) kun virkeligt som system”.

²⁷ I have used the English edition, published in 1995.

²⁸ Original title: *Soziale Systeme: Grundriss einer allgemeine Theorie*.

systems: politics from religion; Islam from Christianity; Catholicism from Protestantism; Lutheranism from Pentecostalism. Following this, and generally speaking, it is the function of the Pentecostal sub-system to reduce complexity from its environment (the outside world) and uphold its binary code (Spirit vs. not Spirit). That which makes sense within the Pentecostal communication is that which is Spirit-filled, and that which does not make sense it that which lacks Spirit.

Applied to the Argentinean Pentecostals' relation to their environment during the latest 30 years or so, which is the particular focus of this thesis, one can see how this binary code holds. However, as the sphere has grown, its environment has started to produce less "noise"; the Pentecostals' negative dualism has transformed into a positive dualism, to a large degree resembling what has happened in other parts of the world. "The task, according to Ted Haggard, the former President of the National Association of Evangelicals, is to put 'God-in-everything', so 'anything-can-be-holy' [Newton 2006]" (Comaroff 2010: 20). It is not only the world that has shrunk, but also that the Pentecostal sub-system has expanded and, equally important, changed the way it relates to the negative side of the duality; there are few dangerous places any longer, and the "soldiers of Christ" are on a mission to transform the world.

Globalisation in Argentina

How, then, can these processes of globalisation be observed in a local (national) setting such Argentina? The country has, by various observers, long been considered a modern nation (Romero 2006: 2–3), and hence also, presumably to some degree communicatively differentiated. As early as in the late 19th century it had incorporated secular laws and forbidden religious proselytising in public schools, and in 1910 "it was the most ingenious transplant of European civilization that had ever been seen" (Luna 2007: 123). There had been enormous economic growth in the period from 1880 until 1929, and a "modern" democracy was born when Hipólito Yrigoyen became the first democratically elected President in 1916, as noted in Chapter 1. The 1914 census showed that about 30 per cent of the country's population and 50 per cent of Buenos Aires's population were immigrants (Lo-bato and Suriano 2004: 305–313), largely from Italy and Spain. Hence, a solid majority of the population was Catholic, although some claim that Argentina at the same time was, to some extent, one of the first secular

countries in the world.²⁹ However, after only 14 years of democracy, something went wrong. José Félix Uriburu led the first of many coup d'états and a turbulent period of various dictatorships and democratically elected governments held sway until the “dirty war” (1976–1983) ended the dictatorships, and democracy was re-installed. In the late 1970s the number of Pentecostals and Evangelicals was rather low, amounting to not more than 1–3 per cent of the population. Ahead of the coup that led to the last dictatorship in 1976, military generals had close contact with the episcopate. This was instrumental in order to legitimize the actions they felt they needed to take. A vast majority of the Catholic bishops and other leading clericals actively supported the military. Adolfo Tortolo, Vicar of the Armed Forces, stated that “the nation was free” after the coup. Archbishop of Rosario, Guillermo Bolatti, claimed it “helped the nation from falling apart” and the bishop of Avellanda, Antonio Quarracino, saw in the coup a “rebirth of hope” (Verbitsky 2010: 16). Moreover, still according to Verbitsky, Pio Laghi, the Papal Pro-Nuncio in Buenos Aires, during the time of the military dictatorship – and who later served as John Paul II’s Pro-Nuncio in the United States, announced the satisfaction of the Holy See. In addition, Giovanni Benelli, Secretary of State in the Vatican, congratulated the new regime and its “Christian vocation”. According to Uki Goñi,³⁰ the above-mentioned Laghi has admitted that he had knowledge of some 6 000 people who “disappeared” (Goñi 2012).

The fact that so many of the Catholic clergy felt the country was without proper leadership was one thing. But, that they also felt they were the ones who should be “responsible” and “set things straight” is another. This understanding of the rules of government – where some consider themselves to be natural leaders with “legitimate” reasons to take matters into their own hands – is not typical of communicatively differentiated and democratic societies (if this happens, then the society in question is no longer communicatively differentiated). This intermingling of the military and the Catholic hierarchy illustrates that at the end of the 1970s Argentina was, if not a totalitarian society, then at least a totalitarian state with an integralist Catholic actor that justified and legitimised its political actions religiously – and by so doing revealed the flexible character of religion (or at least Ca-

²⁹ Private conversation.

³⁰ Argentinean investigator and author of several books on the role of the Vatican during and after WW2, and also later in Argentinean history.

tholicism).³¹ However, when religion defines politics, law, science and the spaces of other religions, then we have another kind of differentiation than the communication kind – instead we have a stratified, hierarchical differentiation where the powers in charge can overrule or simply control the communications of other sectors, and even make it part of its own. The military and the Catholic hierarchy – the national Catholicism they represented and the power they wielded – together were an example of the “society in society” referred to above which is a characteristic of a stratified differentiated society. Pentecostalism was at that time “outside of society”, and as such constituted an entity of its own with little room for growing and developing.

However, from around 1980 something changed. The totalitarian powers began to crumble, and in a desperate attempt to maintain power the generals invaded *las Malvinas*, which resulted in the Falklands War (1982) against Great Britain. The war was over in 74 days and inflicted a severe defeat on the nation and the generals. In 1983 democracy was again restored. At the same time the numbers of Pentecostal followers began to grow, during the first years in fierce and explicit conflict with the Catholic Church, which referred to them very negatively as *sectas*.³² The Catholic Church, on the other hand, found itself in a peculiar situation after years of military rule; it was not the strong opponent it could have been. In addition to being negatively associated with the MD, it could no longer easily defend its “natural” position as the religion of the people. Moreover, Argentinean society changed in this period, from a stratified differentiated society to a more communicatively differentiated society, with the creation of a religious sub-system or sphere to which the Catholic Church had to adjust. In this society it was easier for the Pentecostals to manoeuvre and oppose the Catholic hegemony.

In this period, globalisation processes accelerate at the same time as the Argentineans are trying to create a democratic nation state. Translocal forces are challenging local control – over the economy, the law, science and religion. It is therefore very important to acknowledge that what we are seeing here are both global and local processes of change at the same time. The perspective I present by no means reveals the full story of the lives lived by the people of Argentina, be they Catholics, Pentecostals or adherents of any other religion, or none at all. Starting around 1990 the first studies of Argentinean Pentecostalism were carried out, by foreigners and eventually

³¹ The fact that some Catholics could be nationalists and others could be Marxists illustrate how “flexible” religion can be when it comes to politics.

³² Sects being in their view not proper religions but more of a “brainwashing” enterprise.

from a growing local academic field too. Anthropologists, sociologists, theologians and Pentecostals presented various perspectives based on field-work and general theoretical reflections. Of particular interest is how the steady growth of an Argentinean academic milieu corresponds with the increase in Pentecostal followers. This supports the theory of the process of communicative differentiation. Moreover, after the establishment of MERCOSUR³³ in 1991, a *regional* academic focus became more important – among other things with the intention of presenting alternative views on, for instance, regional cultures, religions and politics, studies that differ from those by Westerners, who were accused of overemphasising modernity (Frigerio 1993) and presenting or re-producing Euro-centric perspectives on Latin America and Argentina.

Differentiation and the Argentinean case

Although there are numerous spheres and sub-spheres, I will limit myself to those that are most relevant for the following discussion about the religious-political landscape in Argentina, with particular emphasis on the religious sphere. Several factors or institutions that are of great importance, like MERCOSUR, UNASUR (La Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones), the Catholic Church, the UN, the World Bank and IMF, are of vital importance to more than one of the spheres. For instance, the Catholic Church rightly “belongs” to the religious sphere, but because of its history and position as both a religious and political force, it could also be perceived as “belonging” to the political sphere.³⁴ MERCOSUR can first and foremost be considered an economic bloc, but it also has a vital political dimension, as well as a cultural and religious dimension, and so on. As a matter of fact, this South American regional community claims to be constituted on the basis of common values and to promote democracy, pluralism and human rights (Mercosur 2013). Such self-presentations should be viewed with caution, since they are normally expressed in terms of how they want to be seen and not necessarily what they actually are.

³³ Mercado Común del Sur. Member states: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and, since 2012, Venezuela. In addition, Bolivia and Chile are associate members.

³⁴ Furthermore, as an organisation it is important for the communication between the spheres and, thus, is a significant instrument for the production of compatibility between the spheres.

Throughout the discussion I will stress the roles of the different spheres and the communication between and within them – an *internal* communication as well as an *external* communication. The internal communication takes place within the boundaries and heeds the restrictions of each sphere. For example, assuming that the binary code that constitutes the communication of the Pentecostal sphere is Spirit vs. not Spirit, then all communication taking place within the Pentecostal sphere has to abide by that “first commandment”. One cannot communicate within that particular sphere on the basis of another assumption, for instance claim that one is “saved” by science, or that one does not serve Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The external communication is the sphere’s communication with its environment. This communication will ideally always instrumentally serve the sphere from which it originates. A religious leader will argue for religious freedom in another sphere, for instance the judicial, as long as it serves and is compatible with his or her religion. Such arguments need not be based upon a wish for all religions to act freely *per se*, unless one thinks that freedom of religion will benefit one’s own religion, or that there is compatibility between one’s particular religious view and religious freedom. For instance, the Catholic Church has several times promoted religious freedom in places like China and India, where it has had a particular interest in gaining access to believers, but in Latin America it has been rather reluctant to give up its own privileges, and has not promoted equal religious rights.

The spheres

Below the spheres are listed and presented briefly from the perspective of the outlined systems theory, globalisation and Argentina. Luhmann’s theory of sub-systems has been “moderated”³⁵ into a theory of spheres. Spheres, as opposed to sub-systems, may constitute weaker analytical constructions, but they are in my opinion stronger theoretical constructions to use as analytical tools for dealing with empirical data (and not only on a theoretical level). Spheres are more open than systems and are thus more flexible and elastic. Although the Pentecostal sphere is constituted around the Spirit vs. not-Spirit nexus, what this means is, to a certain extent, negotiable and open for various interpretations.

The following spheres are presented: 1) the political sphere; 2) the economic sphere; 3) the public sphere; and 4) the religious sphere.

³⁵ And thus ruined, I suppose he would have said.

The political sphere

On the level of nations, states, empires, cultures or societies, people have for a long time, or perhaps always, been in contact, influenced one another and experienced struggles, wars, trade and so on. These entities have had various political regimes, bodies and structures. However, although these regimes or systems of rule have been challenged and put under pressure, it is first during the last two centuries that various models of *modern* political rule have been formulated and mostly in the form of ideologies, which in addition have become internationalised (global?) “standards”.³⁶ As history has shown, there have been quite fierce struggles between different interests regarding which ideology is best suited for the organisation of society. The most devastating examples of ideological conquest were witnessed in World War II, when Germany was organised according to the Nazi ideology³⁷ and set out to conquer the world and eradicate Jews, Romani people and homosexuals. The following Cold War was a stalemate between the nuclear superpowers, and was (portrayed as) a struggle between communism and capitalism. On the other hand, liberalism and socialism are often cited as important vehicles for social reform to secure rights and prosperity for individuals and the masses. Last, but not least, imperialism and colonialism have characterised the interactions between the global north and south in this period. These two isms, more than any (other) ideology, may have had the greatest impact on global relations, and their “heritage” and new faces and forms are still dominating these relations.

From the perspective of religion, or religious institutions in particular, it has been a long and difficult task to deal with, challenge or align with all the different ideologies and systems of rule. This can be exemplified by the changing positions of the Catholic Church in Argentina, from the *patronato real* of Spanish colonial rule to the nationalisation of that system after the Independence in 1816 and the subsequent tensions between conservative and liberal segments of the establishment, with the Catholic Church aligning with the conservatives, and throughout the period of secularisation

³⁶ There have been several systems of political rule throughout history, in China, India, the Roman Empire, medieval Europe, etc., and several texts and codes within those geographical-cultural areas but no-one of those systems like Confucianism, Dharmism, Roman law (although this has served as a kind of model) are actually “competing” with Western democracy (in which liberalism, socialism of the ‘moderate’ kind and capitalism have been absorbed).

³⁷ An ideology created and designed by the German NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei), the National Socialist Party of Germany, ruling Germany in the period 1933–1945,

under Sarmiento's presidency in the 1880s, and the opposition from the Generation of 1837.³⁸ In the second half of the 19th century there was an international trend of liberalism, and Pope Pious X's formulated his famous "oath against modernity" in 1910. Later, in 1930, the Catholic Church supported General José Félix Benito Uriburu's coup, and since then they took various opportunistic stances until democracy was restored in 1983. Through all these periods the Argentinean context was inspired and influenced by international affairs. The struggle between the conservatives and the liberals was also of Western origin, and the different ideologies that occupied the lives and times of so many people in the 20th century were no exception to this, although they were locally "flavoured", particularly the nationalist, socialist national-syndicalism of Juan Perón – sometimes referred to as a "third way".³⁹

Although local and translocal forces have informed and influenced each other for more than 200 years, and Argentina is no exception, it is only during the last 30–40 years or so that the integrating powers of globalisation have really accelerated. Politically this has had implications for many different aspects of concern for societies, depending on which definition of politics one chooses.⁴⁰ One consequence of the internationalisation of local concerns is that nation states have been put under increasing pressure. Although, as illustrated above, local entities (such as the nation state) have long been influenced by international affairs, there are a number of issues that until recently were controlled by the state, but that no longer are under the political rule of local power-holders, at least not to the extent they used to be.

An increasing number of international regulations restrict, confine and regulate the freedom of action of national and/or local politicians. International law, the legal framework that regulates relations between peoples, states or nations, has a long history, dating back to the Sumerian so-called Lagash-Umma treatise, carved in stone and recognized as the first bi-national agreement (from 2100 BCE), and the legal system of the Roman empire, Roman law, which included *ius gentium*⁴¹ (Fn.no 2012). This law intended to regulate relations between non-Roman peoples. The peace of

³⁸ The Generation of 1837 was a name given to a group of young liberal intellectuals, who rejected much of the Spanish colonial heritage and focused on the building of the new nation. Many of these came into various leading positions from the 1850s. Members include, besides Sarmiento, Juan Bautista Alberdi, Miguel Cané and Bartolomé Mitre.

³⁹ *Justicialismo* – something between (and other than) socialism and capitalism.

⁴⁰ A more thorough discussion of the concept of politics is provided in Chapter five.

⁴¹ "Law of nations".

Westphalia in 1648, and the treaties that came about as a result, has been considered the birth of secularisation and modernity (Haynes 2007). Finally, the UN charter of 1945 eventually came to include most corners of the world. Today there are translocal laws and standards that regulate commerce and finance (WTO, EU, MERCOSUR, etc.), border issues, war and war crimes (Geneva Convention, International Court of Justice in the Hague), and academia (the Bologna process, various ranking and rating systems for academic literature). In addition, there are many unwritten rules and codes of behaviour, more often than not based on the standards of the so-called world community, which to a large extent holds the definitional power of how states, parties and other interest groups *should* act. Moreover, there is the semi-legal status of the Human Rights convention, implemented in national law by many countries, but still only a “guide-line” for many others.⁴²

Some significant numbers illustrate the increasingly important role of the international scene as an arena for handling political matters. In 1909 there were 37 IGOs (international governmental organisations) and 176 INGOs (international non-governmental organisations) – in 1989 these numbers had risen to almost 300 IGOs and 4624 INGOs (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton 1999). According to Anthony McGrew, “the UN calculated that there were 28,900 citizen-, or non-governmental, organisations with an international dimension compared with 176 at the turn of the century” (McGrew 1997: 6). The main reason for the increasing importance of the judicial sphere, and the various participants on the scene, in relation to the international political sphere, is the trans-nationalisation of political (and judicial) issues. Environmental issues that, although they may arise locally, have translocal significance are at the fore today. After receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, Al Gore, former vice president of the USA and “spearhead” of American environmentalism within the establishment, claimed that the issue of solving the global climate crisis was “beyond politics”.⁴³ Even if one recognises the importance of saving the planet from environmental havoc, one would expect or consider this problem first and foremost to be solved in the political sphere, since it is difficult to see what other sphere could have the means and opportunity to act effectively. However, Gore’s statement reflects both the “problem” inherent in differentiated

⁴² Various parts of the “body” of human rights legislation have been ratified by various countries at an increasing level over the years – supporting the observation that the world is becoming more integrated.

⁴³ This is how I remember his formulation from a brief TV-interview.

societies, and the lack of political (democratic) tools in a globalised context. Representing individual countries, the politicians feel powerless unless they receive the support of politicians in other countries or of actors in other spheres. If Gore is right, and Luhmann is right too, then there is little hope of solving the problem (politically at least) because “ecological threats have no clear address in a society consisting of sub-systems, which only react in accordance with their own codes” (Hagen 2007: 395). If they are wrong, and politicians actually do have the power to solve the problem, then at least it needs to be recognised as a political problem, and not to be “beyond” politics.

At the heart of the Western model is a particular notion of a universal political system called democracy. This has become something of a “sacred” word, and it is often accompanied by freedom – a pair that together legitimises actions and rhetoric which “no-one” can contest. But can the word be divorced from its content? An essentialist approach would suggest that democracy means something specific, and what is more natural than to translate it “directly” from its Greek meaning: “the rule of the people”. However, considering how the word has been used in diverse contexts throughout history, it is clear that it may mean different things to different people. If people want to vote for a non-democratic party, would that party be legitimate (in a democratic sense)? Can the people of one nation elect politicians that instigate war against another nation in order to “free” the people of that other nation (whether they are asked or not?). Are so-called democratic nations also democratic in a globalised world where local politicians are overruled by international law, economics, military force, cultural imperialism or migrations? Is it “the rule of the people” when only the politicians are elected in differentiated societies, whereas the economic, judicial, scientific and religious spheres still have much power but lack elected representatives?

The differentiated “form”, which I suggest is encapsulated in the Western (democratic?) model, and which acts as a main vehicle in the globalisation processes, is not *the same* as the standard definition of democracy found in various dictionaries such as “government or rule of the people”. Differentiation may in itself mean a de-democratisation of society in the sense that only the political bodies are elected by the people, but the others, the economists, academics and religious leaders are, more or less, outside of (organised) political control. Though not explicitly stated or understood as such, this is also a main reason why so many consider globalisation to be a threat to democracy. Not only does it weaken local influence over local affairs, but it also removes power from elected organs, as when politicians

have to abide by international rules, or accept that multinational corporations operate on other terms than the locals to get a deal through.⁴⁴ However, it is the understanding that democracy means government by the people in free elections which is applied when one measures the globalisation of this system of rule. According to David Held, more than two-thirds of all states could be called authoritarian in the mid-1970s, but by the end of the 1990s less than a third of all states were authoritarian, and the number of democracies was growing rapidly (Held 2005). On the level of the political sphere, it seems as if there is a globalisation of a particular kind of rule, a universalisation of the particular (democracy as “rule of the people” through free elections), as argued by, among others, Roland Robertson (Robertson 1992). Argentina is no exception to this, following the re-democratization of the country since 1983.

The economic sphere

The economic sphere is considered by many to be a frontrunner in the globalisation processes and is often referred to as a spearhead of a particular neo-liberal capitalist system driven by different interests like multinational corporations, financial institutions, international trade in general and the World Bank and IMF in particular. The way national economies are becoming ever more integrated and dependent upon international affairs supports this theory (see e.g. Annual World Bank Report 2012).⁴⁵ In addition, it is becoming more and more difficult to understand the mechanisms at hand when the contents of one’s wallet are dependent on the condition of the labour force of China, the oil industry of Saudi Arabia, wheat prices in Africa, a subprime lending crisis, or the outcome of some financial speculations on Wall Street in the USA. Not only is it difficult to keep track of the international financial and trade market, it is also a problem for democracies to deal with it because national elected governments are unable to cope with it on their own terms. To meet this challenge, the 2011 Human Development Report argues, the urgent global challenges of sustainability and

⁴⁴ One might claim that politicians or lawyers should be able to control this and just reject those who do not accept the local regulations, whether in Sweden or in Angola or Argentina, but as long as the company generates money (the economic incentive) or jobs (and thereby votes; the political incentive) the local regulations can be stretched and changed and thereby adapted to international standards, in short globalised.

⁴⁵ This is only suggested so that one can see how such an important institution as the World Bank conceives of these matters. It does not mean that I think their opinions (on anything) should be considered to be the “truth” about world affairs.

equity must be addressed together – and the report identifies policies on the national and global level that could spur mutually reinforcing progress towards these interlinked goals (hdr.undp.org. 2012). Therefore, several international political and economic institutions have been established in recent decades in order to improve the control of the economy so that we do not end up in, what these institutions understand as, financial turmoil, as well as see to it that particular rules for economic policy are implemented throughout the world.

These institutions are often (or almost always) established by political bodies, and act in a sort of grey zone between the political and the economical spheres. They are what Luhmann calls structural couplings.⁴⁶ However, they are often *informed* and *guided* by economic theories and incentives, and more often than not they are given mandates⁴⁷ to operate on their own in their dealings with various issues considered to be of a financial “nature”. These international financial institutions (IFIs) were established after World War II, and the most important of them are the World Bank, IMF and the International Finance Corporation. In addition, there are several market-oriented sub-global constructions which seek to strengthen the global competitiveness of regional zones such as the EU, its South American counterpart MERCOSUR, and the more recent Union of South American Nations, UNASUR.

MERCOSUR was established in 1991 by Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, and today it also has six associated member states: Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia and Colombia. MERCOSUR presents itself and its goal in the following manner (my translation): “MERCOSUR makes up a community of shared values, expressed in its democratic and pluralist states, which defend fundamental liberty and human rights, and is committed to the consolidation of democracy, legal security, combating poverty and economic and social development with equity.”⁴⁸ However, this expression of shared values serving as the basis for what, first and foremost, is an

⁴⁶ Structural couplings are institutions which link two or several systems together, like e.g., a research council being a coupling between politics and science (see Luhmann 1998: 163-166).

⁴⁷ By politicians, and therefore politically legitimized.

⁴⁸ Los cuatro Estados Partes que conforman el MERCOSUR comparten una comunión de valores que encuentra expresión en sus sociedades democráticas, pluralistas, defensoras de las libertades fundamentales, de los derechos humanos, de la protección del medio ambiente y del desarrollo sustentable, así como su compromiso con la consolidación de la democracia, la seguridad jurídica, el combate a la pobreza y el desarrollo económico y social con equidad (mercosur.int 2012).

economic and political union is the result of a regional sense of shared interests, and of pressure from outside. Global forces, particularly of an economic kind, have created an environment where regional thinking and organisations seem to be the best solution for protecting local interests. As stated on the above-mentioned official MERCOSUR-site: “The new common trade policy tends to strengthen and reinforce the processes of liberalisation and integration into world markets. MERCOSUR was conceived of as a more appropriate body for upholding human rights, protecting the environment, and promoting sustainable development, and as an instrument for inserting our countries into the outside world.” This statement serves as an attempt to satisfy parties from a wide range of (sub)spheres and operates on a multi-compatibility level.

In 2004, a new and larger regional union was formed, UNASUR, consisting of the former MERCOSUR nations together with the former members of the Andean Community of Nations, CAN (Comunidad Andina de Naciones – Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela). A treaty was signed and ratified by eight of the above-mentioned countries in 2008 (missing Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay). The capital is Quito, Ecuador, the central bank in Caracas, Venezuela, and a South American parliament will be established in Cochabamba, Bolivia. The integration process has barely started, but one goal has been the removal of customs for intangible and tangible goods by 2019. The union’s structure is regarded by many to be modelled on the European Union (Flannery 2012). Argentina has been strongly involved in all these processes of regional integration, and former President Néstor Kirchner, who was especially devoted to this work, was head of UNASUR when he passed away on the 27 October 2010.

One of the main issues of interest in this global-local discourse within the economic sphere is the relationship between Argentina and the IMF. This has been a “hot” topic from the very beginning of the processes of re-democratisation and particularly so since the early 1990s when the convertibility plan, which fixed the Argentinean peso at parity with the US dollar, was implemented (IMF-IEO report 2003).⁴⁹ IMF was heavily involved in the economic politics of the country throughout that decade, which led to the crisis of 2001. In an article published by IEO, it is stated that during the 1990s the country “had been widely praised for its achievements in stabilization, economic growth and market-oriented reforms under IMF-supported programs” (ibid.: 1). Because of the strong involvement

⁴⁹ Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the IMF. July 2003.

of IMF, the Argentinean case has had international influence, both as an example of how badly things can turn out if a country is controlled by neo-liberal economists, and as an example for the international community to learn from. “While ultimate accountability for a member country’s economic policy must rest with its national authorities, since the crisis, a number of observers have raised questions about the effectiveness and quality of financing and policy advice provided by the IMF” (ibid.: 1).

Without intending to blame neither the Argentinean political system nor IMF’s ideologically based system of economics, I consider it important to highlight this relationship, which perhaps better than anything else illustrates the difficulties Argentineans face in creating a viable democratic nation within the limits set, both by its own history and by the contemporary globalising challenges to any locally based initiative of that kind. In 2001 the leader of IMF in Argentina suggested that the entire nation needed psychoanalysis, alluding to the harsh climate of the time and the fact that there were many psychologists in the country (Rømer 2001).

After the crisis in 2001, the convertibility project was put aside and the peso has been floating. Argentina has experienced considerable economic growth, but a sense of tension nevertheless characterises its relationship with IMF, particularly when “Article 4” is mentioned. Argentina is now a member of G20 (the club of the largest economies in the world), and Article 4 specifically mentions some measurements that are required and expected by the countries which have received aid or support from IMF. These state that the IMF can overrule a national budget and prescribe a certain economic policy, if it deems this necessary to promote the country’s ability to pay its debts and fix its economy. IMF policies are very much in accordance with the liberal economic ideology of the global establishment – and perhaps more than anything else illustrate the translocal character of the economic sphere in the world today (imf.org 2013).⁵⁰

The public sphere

The public sphere is “a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment” (Hauser 1998). The concept of the “public sphere” was

⁵⁰ “Recognizing that the essential purpose of the international monetary system is to provide a framework that facilitates the exchange of goods, services, and capital among countries, and that sustains sound economic growth, and that a principal objective is the continuing development of the orderly underlying conditions that are necessary for financial and economic stability” (IMF article IV).

first formulated by Jürgen Habermas in 1962. He set out to illustrate the foundation and development of the public sphere as a core element in the formation of public, political and societal opinions in Europe from the 18th century onwards (Habermas 1989). This period corresponds with the industrial revolution and the emergence of civil societies with liberal ideas, including the notion of reasonable citizens who make independent judgments. This could serve as a basis for the public spheres to operate as spaces for critical formation of public opinion as a corrective to state power.

Habermas diagnosed the developments in the following centuries in a “negative” way, as he observed a transformation from liberal to regulated capitalism, which is organised around interaction between state bureaucracies, parties, organisations and powerful private companies. “Public spheres have increasingly turned into fora of acclamation for the managers of power instead of being spheres for open and common reasoning and formation of public opinion(s)” (Andersen 2007: 369). Nevertheless, whether or not we agree with the limitations to the public sphere as described in Habermas’ diagnosis, the understanding of public spheres as important elements of modern democratic societies has become increasingly important in recent decades.⁵¹ It can be understood either as a central part of any democracy, as something that needs to be established for democracy to develop, or as something that needs to be protected and nourished for the sake of securing citizens’ access to the formation of public opinion and implementing those opinions through political action.

All the different spheres influence one another in various ways. Politicians try to control and direct economies. The judicial sphere tries to control politics. The Pentecostals try to control science. The public sphere is an arena used by the other spheres in order to reduce “noise”. It serves as a structural coupling, an arena “treated” differently by the different spheres – a meeting place and a battle ground for the diverse modes of communication. Moreover, the public sphere is driven by its own mode of communication – public interest vs. not public interest. When considering these different spheres or systems, one often fall into monistic attempts to reveal *the* driving force behind each one, sometimes concluding that *it* is “all politics”, or “really about money”, or “those in power maintaining control”. Is it like the old “which came first – the chicken or the egg” debate? Or, is it possible

⁵¹ The discussion of *how* the public sphere works is often mixed with the discussion of how it *should* work. A main reason for the increased focus on the importance of the public sphere is a direct result of the fact that so many today *want* it to be like Habermas described it from the start.

to actually accept that the different spheres are expressions of particular interests and motivations, communications and actions that do not necessarily represent one basic truth, or that “everything” belongs in one sphere? Following the line of arguments put forward in this thesis, they should be understood as “catch-all” (holistic) spheres; they all (try to) encompass society (at large), but at the same time they “only” represent themselves.

As globalisation has accelerated in recent decades, the public spheres of Western origin have expanded rapidly, whether as spaces for people to participate in societal decision-making or as instruments for mass media or various powers to influence or maintain control over people as voters, believers, consumers, soldiers, etc. The public sphere may be considered, both substantially and analytically, a different category or type of sphere than the other spheres mentioned here. Although this may be the case, and that the contents of the public sphere consist of various systems of communication (and therefore various codes) and it therefore does not have a particular introvert (or auto-poietic) function, I treat this sphere more or less as the same as the others. This is because I find it analytically helpful to look at this sphere, considered in its broadest sense, as having a primary binary code: public interest vs. no public interest.

The global(ising) public sphere

In October 2010 the “world” was united in a public celebration of the rescue of 33 Chilean miners who had been trapped for 69 days in the San José mine near Copiapo in northern Chile. This is, presumably, the second most watched television event in the world, after the 2008 Olympic opening ceremony in Beijing (worldlistmania.com 2013). I was in Argentina at the time, and one evening I counted 26 TV-channels that were broadcasting live TV from the rescue operation. Several other happenings of different kinds can today be considered global events because they are displayed on TV, radio and Internet for “everyone” to see, more or less simultaneously.

In addition to the communication of international events, the availability of global media and Internet provides an opportunity for alternative voices to be heard and formerly “marginal” events to be seen. Wikileaks has attracted considerable attention for its publication of secret documents concerning diplomatic and inter- or intra-state affairs, and in so doing has contributed to challenging established borders between official and public interests. Social media like Twitter and Facebook are at the same time breaking down, or at least stretching the borders between the private and the

public sphere. However, the role of mass media as mediator and platform for public formation of opinion is not solely one of interest for the common good. Commercial interests use mass media to promote their products, while various interests manipulate public opinion through media in order to sell a message. Coca Cola, McDonalds, Heineken and others are examples of the first kind. Al-Qaida promotes its cause through spectacular terrorist actions. The “American dream” is cunningly woven into a number of Hollywood films that circulate the globe, and personal freedom and initiative are being presented as a core value in films and books. In addition to this, there is a certain standard repertoire of mediators that dominate the global public sphere: BBC World “represents” Europe, CNN the USA, Al-Jazeera the Middle East and CCTV China. Gaining access to these global media corporations is of vital interest for many actors who wish to be heard or seen in the global community. However, since the *lingua franca* of the public sphere is public interest vs. not public interest, and no clear definition of what is in the interests of the global public yet exists, it is to a large degree up to the dominating mass media to “decide” the contents of these media.

The local public sphere in Argentina

“I was only doing my job as a journalist” (Cox 2010), said Robert Cox when he was awarded the Bicentenary Commemorative Medal by the Argentinian senate in 2010 for his “unconditioned commitment to democracy, freedom of expression and human rights” during the years of the last MD in Argentina. In an emotional article in the leading Anglophone newspaper in the country (*Buenos Aires Herald*), Cox reflects upon the conditions for the free press during the “Dirty War” and also on the years that have gone by and the developments that have taken place in Argentina since then. “Democracy has taken root”, he states before continuing: “Human rights are now enshrined in Argentinean society” (ibid.). Cox writes as a journalist and first and foremost is concerned about the mass media and their opportunity to work in a free public space where nobody informs you what to write or not to write. But, whether or not one agrees with Cox, there is no doubt that the public sphere in Argentina has changed since the last MD. It is by no means “free”, in the sense that no interests groups or people in powerful commercial, political and religious positions with particular agendas (as is the case in most other countries as well) work to get their opinion heard. The difference from before is that it does play an increasingly impor-

tant role as a space for formation of public opinion – for political parties, workers' associations, industrialists, the financial community and religions.

When Ceferino Namuncurá was beatified in October 2007, as the first person of indigenous origin in Argentina, it was presented as a national public media event. Leading TV channels broadcasted live throughout the day, and the Catholic Church was on display, presenting itself as a church for all the people of Argentina, the majority as well as the minorities, and as a vital bearer of the Argentinean cultural tradition. The Catholic Church's understanding of the importance of the public sphere was also highlighted at a Latin American conference held at UCA (Universidad Católica Argentina, the Catholic University of Argentina) titled "The Catholics in Public Life". The public sphere is not only important for the formation of public opinion but also of religiosity.

The religious sphere

When globalisation accelerated, in the late 1970s, and opened up new horizons, things happening far away from home became of local concern. This opened the eyes of many scholars, particularly within the social sciences. They began to realize that religion, contrary to what they previously had thought, would not go away (Berger 1999: 2). Religion now "re-appeared" on the academic agenda of scholars outside the borders of the disciplines which had studied religion. For many academics, Ayatollah Khomeini's seizure of power from the Shah of Iran in 1979 represented a "new era", not only for Iran but also for the role of religion in international and global community. It turned out that religion was not "dead", and the eyes of Western scholars once again turned toward religion – and they saw it! For a long time, "every" book on religion and globalisation, or religion and politics, began by referring to this event as a turning point.

The religious sphere has probably been subjected to greater pressure than any of the other spheres. The idea that religion does not represent something of its own comes mainly from the centuries old opposition between faith and reason, science and religion.⁵² It is no wonder that scholars studying religion – be they theologians, sociologists, anthropologists or others – have wanted, and maybe needed to approach the religious (phenomenon) as something particular, with an essence of its own. However, a

⁵² Following typical secular arguments like: Because there are no gods it must be the case that religion, or religious individuals and/or institutions must represent something else; they want power, money, meaning, help, etc.

problem arose when trying to explain religion in relation to other human phenomena. When Emile Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912) analysed religion as a social phenomenon, he concluded: “A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into a single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.” This represented a new way of understanding religion. It was not only about God or gods, not only about the superhuman or life and death, religion was also about the constitution of a (moral) community, that which makes people pull in the same direction and respect the same rules. This functional understanding of religion, however, became a convenient explanation for the non-believer, who could claim that authorities “use” religion to maintain the (to them favourable) power balance. But, this and other functional definitions seemed to ignore a crucial part of what religion is, particularly for the believer. What about life and death? What about cosmos and chaos? What about God? In the wake of the sociological explanation of religion, did so many aspects disappear that it was stripped of all its essence? This was the claim of Mircea Eliade, a Rumanian historian of religion who accepted that religion had implications for “the social man, the economic man, and so forth”. He, however, also stated that this was not enough to explain religion: “all these conditioning factors together do not, of themselves, add up to the life of the spirit” (Eliade 1991: 32). His understanding of religion was intended to be anti-reductionist, and he wanted religion to be understood as a unique phenomenon (*sui generis*).

The differing foci, on what religion is (Eliade) and what it does (Durkheim), are no obstacles to the elaboration of a theory about communicative differentiation. However, when discussing a theory of social spheres and communication it is important to bear in mind that how religion is understood depends on one’s perspective. Durkheim and Eliade can both be right, as far as my theory is concerned. It is not the individual experience of “grace” or “gifts” that is of primary concern here. The religious sphere is viewed as a social system, in relation to other social systems as well as society at large. Luhmann’s main project, as mentioned above, was to produce a comprehensive theory of society, which again was the main object of the study of sociology. He experienced the lack of such a comprehensive theory as a crisis because the discipline’s gaze at its own object was blurred. However, acknowledging Luhmann’s constructivist project, I think it is better to view his work as one theory among others, especially in relation to the challenge of making an all-encompassing theory (including the position of the

academic). It is *together* that these theories contribute to increased knowledge. Many of the same issues are at the heart of the study of religion.⁵³ The long-lasting and on-going attempts to construct, within the discipline(s), a comprehensive theory of religion reflect the flexible and contingent nature of its object: religion. Therefore, I apply the following “working definition” of religion: Religion is that which scholars of religion study. Thus, the negotiations that are constantly going on, within the discipline, about what religion is and is not, should be seen as the constitutive element of the discipline’s object. Just as society is not only one thing, and cannot be captured by one single theory, so religion is not one thing that can be captured by one theory; the social and the psychological, the mythologies and the rituals, the theological and the anthropological live side by side, presenting different perspectives of a complex phenomenon and the practices that accompany it.

If communication constitutes a social system, then let us for the sake of the argument construct a preliminary family tree (or bush, some may say) of religion, where I list the binary codes that give meaning to the communication within each social system. This can be called the genealogy of Pentecostalism. It is not meant to be a general theory of religion, and the location and choice of the first binary pair, sacred and profane, is intended to illustrate my argument.⁵⁴ However, it would be interesting, in due time, to elaborate on this genealogy for more general purposes as well.

Religion

Binary code: sacred vs. profane

Christianity

Binary code: biblical vs. not biblical

Catholicism

Protestantism

Binary code:

Binary code:

tradition vs. not tradition

scripture vs. not scripture

Catholic Charismatic renewal movement Pentecostalism

Binary code:

Binary code:

Spirit vs. not Spirit

Spirit vs. not Spirit

⁵³ Or religious studies, history of religions or *Religionswissenschaft* and, some would add, theology.

⁵⁴ Or divine vs. not divine.

Now, if we consider Pentecostals and Catholic Charismatic or otherwise, it is the combination of codes that makes their communication meaningful. The genealogy of Pentecostal communication goes from the sacred to the Bible, on to the *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), and finally to the Holy Spirit. All these *together* are what constitute the basis of the Pentecostal sphere (or social system). They have a great deal in common with the Charismatics, but the two movements do not agree on the importance of Catholic tradition and Protestant emphasis on Scripture.

The global aspect of religion

Within the Western model of differentiation, religion has a place as a sphere of its own. As stated above, according to Niklas Luhmann, the binary code around which religious communication revolves is immanent vs. transcendent (Luhmann 1977: 46). This code then constitutes the mode of communication, the *lingua franca*, of the religious sub-system, a code which also Peter Beyer applies. He states (1994: 82):

In comparison with other functional domains, the situation for religion is complicated by its holistic view. Just as religious commitment implies the whole person, so the religious dichotomy uses the whole of perceptible reality as its positive term, immanence. [...] However, since the whole cannot as such be the topic of communication – that is, it does not distinguish itself from anything that is not itself – the transcendent functions to give it definition.

This is a somewhat problematic dichotomy, for several reasons, but particularly because it implies the use of concepts like holism and commitment. First, I will argue that the communication in each sphere is “holistic” if one takes the autopoiesis of Luhmann seriously. It is exactly because the systems are closed that this is the case. Secondly, a scientist or a politician may be *as* committed to his or her “calling” as a Catholic or a Protestant. I find it better to not get too hung up in the construction of general definitions and dichotomies. Moreover, because I am concerned with Pentecostalism and to some degree Catholicism, I think it will be more fruitful to apply the codes and family trees outlined above. They serve, analytically, in order to present a chain of arguments about social spheres (not understood as closed, like Luhmann’s sub-systems) and communication within them as well as with their environment. Faith vs. no faith has been suggested as another general binary code for religion. Religions, however, are interwoven into cultures

and societies in so many ways that it is almost impossible to speak of faith in a non-Protestant context, and because there are so many other religions and cultures in the world, this binary code is not quite operational. In addition, faith could also be applied to the other spheres: faith in the economics, faith in an ideology, faith in science, etc. If Luhmann is right about autopoietic sub-systems being a trade mark of modern society, then “faith” should apply to all modern societies, Christian or not (any religion). But faith could easily be replaced by “knowing”, and it would be the same (system-wise). As mentioned above, instead of “faith” I suggest as an analytical tool, postulating another code as constituting the mode of communication for religion in general: sacred vs. profane. This, very general, binary code is, however, little helpful, since its applicability rests on there being an essential similarity between the variety of religious traditions and creeds. Religions, however, differ in outlook and content in time and place, and form and practices. Therefore it seems necessary to find more precise codes for each religion (for each individual person one may claim – but then the social dimension is lost). From this reasoning follows, for example, that family trees, like the one above, are made for each religion in order to understand their mode of communication, for the outsider in particular but also for the insider.⁵⁵ This implies that communication and actions on behalf of a religion or a religious person have to be legitimised and authorised as applying to the binary code(s) to be noted as such. “Jesus died for my sins” is only meaningful within Christianity,⁵⁶ whereas “Muhammad is Allah’s prophet” is meaningful only within Muslim communication. The compatibility of a religion is tested in confrontation with other spheres or other religions.

Every religion came into existence at a specific time and place, and some of them have grown in numbers as well as spread geographically. With about 2.1 billion adherents, Christianity is now the largest religion in the world, followed by Islam with 1.5 billion, and secular/non-religious/atheists, 1.1 billion, Hinduism, 900 million, and Buddhism, 376 million (ad-

⁵⁵ That is, the insider does not need to know the religion’s history, or what makes it different from another religion. He or she learns this from being a part of the religious community (like you do need to know grammar on a theoretical level in order to speak a language perfectly).

⁵⁶ Jesus is sacred and holy in Christianity, but is also considered sacred in other religions, like Islam, and among some Hindus. For this reason, communication between, for example Christians and Hindus on this topic could be thought of as more feasible than between Christians and someone who does not consider Jesus to be sacred. On the other hand, communication regarding “anything” sacred vs. “anything” profane could be thought of as more feasible between people of “any” religion than between people of a religion and someone without any religion.

herents.com 2013). All of these, except the non-religious, are “global” religions, but Hinduism can be thought of as “Indian” because its followers are mainly found in India or amongst the Indian diaspora. Religions are found in all corners of the world, but some religions, mainly those with missionary strivings, are more active than others. It is impossible to say if Buddhism would have been the largest religion in the world had it had the same missionary calling as Pentecostalism. A question to ask is if all religions, within the globalising and homogenising world community, will have to follow nearly the same rules? And how will they have to test their compatibility skills within the differentiated system of spheres? How compatible is Islam or Hinduism with communicatively differentiated systems, and how compatible are the other spheres (e.g., science and economics) in relation to, for instance, Islam or Buddhism? How compatible is Buddhism with capitalism and vice versa? How compatible is Pentecostalism with constitutional democracy, legal protection, liberal economics, human rights and vice versa?

Whereas the latter question is of major concern in the coming chapters, let us for the time being briefly consider how the Catholic Church and the (Protestant/Evangelical/Pentecostal) Lausanne Movement, both global religious organisations, relate to democracy, globalisation and the role of religion in society. The overview presented here does not represent a thorough analysis of their attitudes toward this matter, but is based on a review of some central documents. The Catholic Church has produced three encyclicals which together represent the most important documents of Catholic social teaching: *Populorum Progressio* (Paul VI 1967), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (John Paul II 1987) and Benedict XVI’s (2009) *Caritas Veritae* (all www.vatican 2012).

Moreover, those nations which have recently gained independence find that political freedom is not enough. They must also acquire the social and economic structures and processes that accord with man’s nature and activity, if their citizens are to achieve personal growth and if their country is to take its rightful place in the international community (*Populorum Progressio* 1967: 6.2).

In the three documents on social development, three different popes elaborate on the Catholic Church’s view or attitude towards its role in society, politics and a globalising world. The understanding of the world as one single place (globalisation) is already present in the reflections on what is needed for “personal growth and if their country is to take its rightful place in the international community”. More than anything, these documents

represent a wish for social engagement at the same time as they try to balance this as a “natural” sub-concern of the spiritual:

13. In the present day, however, individual and group effort within these countries is no longer enough. The world situation requires the concerted effort of everyone, a thorough examination of every facet of the problem – social, economic, cultural and spiritual.

The Church, which has long experience in human affairs and has no desire to be involved in the political activities of any nation, “seeks but one goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth; to save, not to judge; to serve, not to be served.” (12) (*Populorum Progressio* 1967:13).

Surely it is a delicate matter to aspire to engage in politics and society at the same time as you must avoid being a “regular” political body or supporting anyone in particular. Is this the case because the political and the Catholic are two different social spheres with different modes of communication? Furthermore, is not what we see here an example of the problems of compatibility? I think the answer is yes, and this theme will be followed up throughout the text. Moreover, as we shall see, this balancing of social engagement, integralism and holism, is also a highly relevant issue for many Pentecostal churches (and the whole Pentecostal movement) today. The Lausanne movement has produced three main documents, which to some degree correspond to the Vatican’s documents (in time): the *Lausanne Covenant* (1974), the *Manila Manifesto* (1989) and the *Cape Town Commitment* (2010) (all Lausanne.org 23.02.2013). Unlike the papal encyclicals, the Lausanne documents are not mainly concerned with social issues. Also, whereas the encyclicals supposedly are written by the Pope,⁵⁷ the documents are based on the joint efforts of several thousand delegates from almost 200 countries. Nevertheless there are passages that bear a striking similarity to the encyclicals, both in terms of themes and approaches.

5. CHRISTIAN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all people. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic

⁵⁷ It is clear that several “ghost-writers” are involved in the production of these texts.

sic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. **Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty.** For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead (*Lausanne covenant* 1974: 5).

We can see that in the *Lausanne covenant* there is also a strong effort to balance social and political involvement and awareness with concerns of faith. In both *Populorum Progressio* and the *Lausanne covenant* it is explicitly stated that religion comes first, but that they both seek compatibility. However, and following a general interpretation of the results of this study of how religious communities/groups deal with politics: religion trumps politics, i.e., it is the political that needs to be made compatible with the religious first, before one can move on in attempts at establishing double or multiple compatibility.

In order to present the development of certain themes related to globalisation and politics as important topics in these publications, I made a mini-survey of these, and some related themes like democracy and pluralism:

Populorum Progressio (1967): Integral (0), Political (7), Global (1), Pluralism (0), Democracy (0).⁵⁸

Solicitudo Rei Socialis (1987): Integral (5), Political (37), Global (1), Pluralism (0), Democracy (0)

Caritas Veritate (2009): Integral (33), Political (55), Global (54), Pluralism (3), Democracy (7).

⁵⁸ Search words were: Integral(ism), Global(isation), Politic(ian-al-ally), Pluralism (plural world), Democra(cy-tic-tisation).

Lausanne Covenant (1974): Integral (0), Political (3), Global (2), Pluralism (0), Democracy (0).

Manila Manifesto (1989): Integral (1), Political (5), Global (5), Pluralism (0), Democracy (1).

Cape Town Commitment (2010): Integral (7), Political (11), Global (20), Pluralism (0), Democracy (0).

If not the processes, then at least the very word global (globalisation) itself was something of a neologism in 1967, and it was not frequently used in any documents at that time. Words and concepts follow trends, but at the same time their use (or omittance) can reveal something about what the authors are concerned with. Even if politics *per se* has not become more prominent in the documents, then at least the use of the word has increased. In addition, it must have been more explicit in the consciousness of the authors and the organisations they represent. Finally, by using different words it sends out a different signal to the adherents and other readers. The explicit use of the term global has increased even more. This word has become something of a buzz-word in many circles and has also clearly entered the thinking and agenda of the pope and, to a lesser degree it seems, the Lausanne movement. Hence, not only the organisations themselves, their range and scope as global actors, but also the way they perceive “the world” have changed. Whereas the Catholic Church has long “experience in human affairs”, the Lausanne movement is a very recent contender. While differing in history and tradition, they both seem to take social responsibility seriously. However, how that responsibility is to be manifested, in political, judicial and human rights thinking and action, and/or as taking the form of integralism or ideology, seems to represent something of a problem for both. As we shall see, particularly when it comes to the Pentecostal scene, the same processes can be observed in the Argentinean context. The way into or out of the political and judicial spheres is first and foremost a question of compatibility; the political and the judicial engagement must be “grounded” in the religious.

*Transforming the individual, the family and society*⁵⁹

In focusing more specifically on Argentina and the recent history of Pentecostalism in the country, it is problems of exactly this kind that will be pre-

⁵⁹ A slogan ACIERA has used, particularly in announcements for the *ExpoValores* (value-expo) in 2010.

sented and elaborated on. There have been no previous scholarly attempts to study the relationships between globalisation and the local history and development of Pentecostalism there, as Davies also notes (Davies 2010: 62).

Since democracy was restored in 1983, Argentina has tried to determine its own post-dictatorship direction, while at the same time adapting to the Western model. This model has expanded, thus putting pressure on the internal processes of restructuring. Pentecostalism in Argentina has seen, and to an increasing degree contributed to, an emerging national or local religious sphere in which they now “feel at home”. The Pentecostal movement in Argentina during the latest 30 years has experienced a period of growth and consolidation, as well as of religio-political fumbling. The Pentecostals seem to see their place as being a force promoting *certain values* they view as central for the transformation of society. Their concern for the poor and for justice is strong in many areas, and they can possibly be a vital source of change, given that the “political” actions required are being religiously legitimised and authorised, i.e. made compatible. If the political does not receive such an authorisation, then the Pentecostals will be more reluctant. They are not yet an established political and public force in Argentinean society, and therefore have limited opportunities to influence matters. Moreover, they are still something of an invisible force, not taken seriously by the established mass media, and therefore somewhat insecure about their role in society. On a local basis they are doing much to help poor people by providing clothing and food, doing hard work in prisons to save the helpless in a double sense, and focusing on core values in relation to environmental issues and other international political concerns. Argentinean Pentecostals were more “Argentinean” 30 years ago than they are today. Then they had a particular local focus, but as the Argentinean nation as well as the Pentecostal movement have gradually become more integrated into international or global affairs, many of them now look more like Pentecostals in other parts of the world. The Pentecostals’ plan for transformation of the individual, by converting and disciplining individuals and “multitudes”, is the first step in their preparation for the second coming of Christ. The second step is the transformation (or restoration) of the (nuclear) family, a crucial matter these days. When it comes to the conversion of as many people as possible and the transformation of society, the Pentecostals approach the core obstacles for continued success first and foremost through evangelisation and as matters of a judicial and/or with a performance character: religious freedom

and equality (legally), and (positive) presence in the public sphere.⁶⁰ The (Pentecostal) family with correct values is perceived as the central building block of society. Any threat to the nuclear family is a threat to God's natural order. The main forces to be fought in order to secure the nuclear family are a general moral decay (divorce and no respect for the holy matrimony), the LGTP-community⁶¹ and left-wing liberals who seek, according to the Pentecostals, to challenge the holiness of the matrimony, but also its requiring of a man and a woman. These challenges are confronted in the public sphere (demonstrations, debates in the press, the broadcasting of attitudes on their own TV channels, etc.) and in the judicial and political spheres. Last of all comes the transformation of society. This is as much a wish as a practical plan. The above-mentioned balancing of the political and the religious, the judicial and the religious, the performance in the public sphere and the religious all rely on compatibility. However, what is compatible is a matter of negotiation and interpretation. Hence, it is not yet clear how this urge to transform society, the third step, will be manifested. The development of this self-understanding and the path that has led to it from the period of spiritual warfare and *iglecrecimiento* (church-growth) in the 1980s, through the political "failure" of the 1990s, and to the focus on values and societal transformation in the most recent decade, will be the main focus of the following chapters.

⁶⁰ Performance is not understood in the same way as by Peter Beyer and Niklas Luhmann, who see this performance as occurring: "when religion is 'applied' to problems generated in other systems but not solved there, or simply not addressed elsewhere [cf. Luhmann, 1977: 54ff.; 1982: 238-242]" (Beyer 1994: 80). I restrict performance to the public and semi-public spheres (churches, meetings, social media) where public interest vs. no public interest constitutes the binary code.

⁶¹ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community.

3. From negative to positive dualism

The current move of God began in March 1983, when Carlos Annacondia, less than two years old in the Lord, began to preach with tremendous boldness and led 40 000 people to public decision. That was so unusual that the church debated whether it was from God or the Devil (Ed Silvoso 1998).

Iglecrecimiento (church growth)

In the early 1980s, a Pentecostal revival started off in Argentina. This revival and the events of the decade have been given several nicknames: *iglecrecimiento* (church growth), *la renovación* (the renovation) and *avivamiento* (revival). Each of these nicknames was chosen to capture the exceptional nature of the period. These were the formative years of the “new” Argentinean Pentecostalism, with its more open character, the development of what I call a positive dualism, and the years of substantial numerical growth. As indicated in the previous chapter, one of the main prerequisites for the church growth (*iglecrecimiento*) was a thorough structural transformation of Argentinean society. Other important factors were how Pentecostalism in many ways resonated with “folk-religion” or religiosity, and the skill with which Pentecostal pastors like Carlos Annacondia, Omar Cabrera, Héctor Giménez, Ed Silvoso and others communicated their message. In this chapter I will discuss this new Pentecostalism with a particular focus on its contents and message.

The Falklands War and the fall of the dictatorship in 1982–83 led to some serious changes that restructured the socio-political conditions of the country and paved the way for new religious spaces – in short, created a new religious sphere. Socio-politically, some specific changes were observed:

1. The military was taking on a new role. They had played a significant part in the history of the country, especially during the turbulent years since the first coup in 1930. This function of the military, as a tool for internal (national) use, controlled by various politically conservative,¹ Catholic, and financial interests, had escalated with the oppressive hardships of the last dictatorship. From now on, the military functioned as an instrument for elected governments and presidents to use as a national defence against foreign threats, rather than as an instrument for various domestic political interests.
2. Democracy was established, and elected members of governments, congress, senate and the presidency began to function as the political apparatus of the country.
3. A party system that could serve as a basis for the democratic institutions had to be constructed on the ruins of Peronism and the heritage of the dictatorships.
4. The Catholic Church could no longer expect to play a key role in policy-making. Its links to direct power were cut, and from now on it would have to find new ways to make its voice heard: by expressing of opinions in the public sphere, lobbying, or finding alternative channels to influence decision-making.

What in fact was (and still is) happening, was that the country appeared more and more like a Western democracy, and a communicative differentiation of the kind one finds in other Western countries was (and is) being established. None of this happened overnight. The processes of democratisation are still going on. Old ties still exist, and the culture of Argentina did not change in the blink of an eye. However, with the benefit of hindsight, one can argue that there really was no going back. The old system (or lack thereof) had run its course, and people were tired and wanted change.

To understand the Pentecostal growth during the 1980s, and the structural changes that made it possible, it is important to study its forms and contents as well as its peculiarities. Two aspects of Argentinean Pentecostalism in particular stood out during these years: *unity* (among the various Protestant groups) and *spiritual warfare*.

In the following, I will first present two of the key figures of the Pentecostal revival of the 1980s, in addition to another in the diaspora, so to speak, who is more loosely connected with contemporary Argentinean Pen-

¹ One could argue that the liberal elites of the 19th century transformed into the conservative elites of the 20th.

tecostalism. I will focus on how they present themselves and Argentinean Pentecostalism, and how they are portrayed in books and on the web pages of their congregations or denominations. I will then take a closer look at two salient features of Argentinean Pentecostalism. The first is spiritual warfare, which has been framed as something of a specific contribution to global Pentecostalism from the Argentinean scene. Spiritual warfare was particularly important in the campaigns of Carlos Annacondia in the 1980s and to a lesser degree in the 1990s. Today this form of evangelism is not prominent, but it is definitely still present and has had a major impact on Argentinean Pentecostalism. The second is the strong focus on unity that dominated the evangelistic campaigns throughout the 1980s. Unity still means a great deal to many meta-denominations, denominations and pastors, although in my experience, particularly based on interviews with some key figures within the movement like Pablo Deiros, Norberto Saracco, César Deragabadian and Ruben Salomone, as well as my reading of books and articles by Protestant/Penteostal authors like Pablo Deiros, Hilario Wynarczyk, Norberto Saracco and others, unity is under pressure for two main reasons: (1) There is a certain distance in content and style between some neo-Pentecostals preaching the “prosperity gospel” and traditional Pentecostals focusing more on social responsibility and commitment; (2) Old tensions between “classical” Protestant immigrant churches like the Lutheran and the Anglican, on the one hand, and (new) Pentecostals, on the other hand, are surfacing in the wake of the increased socio-political presence of these groups.²

Three key figures

Omar Cabrera

Omar Cabrera worked with Reverend Morris Cerullo at the beginning of the 70s, but his wife Marfa used to find him praying on his knees crying out for his beloved Argentina on the living-room carpet. One of those nights he heard a voice from the Cosmos that told him: ‘Visión de Futuro’ (Vision of the Future) (VisióndeFuturo, 2011).

This quotation, from the website of the Argentinean Pentecostal Church Visión de Futuro (VDF), reveals several changes that have taken place in the

² This will be more thoroughly discussed in later chapters.

recent history of Argentinean Pentecostalism. In the 1970s, a new kind of evangelisation, a new type of proselytisation, and a new understanding of the role of Pentecostalism in Argentinean society emerged. The origins can best be observed in the ministry of “Reverend” Omar Cabrera. This new style, however, did not mean a complete rupture with the past. On the contrary, the specific traits that came to characterise Argentinean Pentecostalism, and especially from the 1980s onward were a mixture of elements produced in the tensions between its historic roots and local and translocal influences.

Cabrera graduated in 1956 from the Instituto Bíblico Río de la Plata (Rio de la Plata Biblical Institute), founded by the Assemblies of God in Buenos Aires, and was the National Youth President and also the National Secretary of the Union of the AoG.³ Beginning in 1961 he studied theology and Christian education at Holms Theological Seminary in the USA. In the late 1960s, Cabrera and his wife and partner Marfa “came back to Argentina to prove that God can be manifested in the middle of incredulity and limitations. During that period, our country seemed to be one of the toughest places to preach the gospel” (*Visión de futuro*). In October 1969 Cabrera decided to hold an evangelistic campaign, which he called *Cruzada de la Fe* (Crusade of Faith). The campaign was planned to last for 15 days, but since the crowd of people increased every day, the campaign continued for altogether 540 days.

The new method that Cabrera introduced consisted of a particular mixture of form and content. His style of preaching and working was similar to how famous healing evangelists operated in the USA. They held mass meetings that involved the ingredient of testimony and healing. Cabrera did not link his ministry to any particular denomination, and he made no distinction between Evangelical and Roman Catholic churches. In a way, his type of ministry can be called meta-Pentecostal. This form of Pentecostalism is boundless in the sense that Cabrera was “out of reach” of any particular congregation or denomination, and he defended a universal message. Furthermore, this boundlessness was combined with the inherent convertibility of “everything” and “everyone”. He thus paved the way for a positive dualism (all is convertible), leaving the negative dualism (the “other” side is dangerous and should be avoided) behind. Furthermore, Cabrera can rightfully be called the “Godfather” of the new Argentinean Pentecostalism: “Omar Cabrera was the forerunner of the revival. He had been doing every-

³ According to Norberto Saracco, the Bible Institute, established in 1948, was “the first attempt at formal theological education in Argentinean Pentecostalism. Several contemporary denominational leaders studied there” (Sarocco 1989).

thing that Annacondia is doing but was rejected by the establishment. Eventually he was embraced again and was able to bring a lot of solid teaching to Annacondia” (Silvoso 1998). According to Norberto Saracco, this attitude created more problems than it solved, because the Pentecostals found it difficult to understand how Cabrera could let anyone who had converted return to the Catholic Church. Catholic priests on their part, were suspicious of his “ecumenicity” and thought he might be concealing his real motives (Saracco 1989: 225).

Cabrera wanted to convert thousands. His “crusades” were open to being mediated through any channel available, be it a stadium, a park, a church building or a radio station. Cabrera was not bound by membership in any particular denomination. He called himself Reverend, and his “Kairos-moments” were many. In addition to this, he dressed in a Roman Catholic collar. His ministry was “boundless” and therefore to a certain degree “free”. He represented a new form of evangelisation that would come to have a major impact on Argentinean Pentecostalism in the years that followed. Although VDF eventually came to brand itself as a Church, it has not become a denomination in a traditional sense, but rather serves as a somewhat more loose umbrella organisation or meta-church. It is affiliated to other churches and its policy towards the seeker of faith reflects an attitude of “open doors”.

Ed Silvoso

Being a born-again Christian in Argentina in 1958 was like being a Christian in Mecca, that’s how tough it was (Silvoso 1998).

Argentinean-born Ed Silvoso is the founder and current president of Harvest Evangelism, an “inter-denominational ministry committed to the fulfilment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20)” (Harvest Evangelism, 2011).⁴ Harvest Evangelism has a global agenda and currently operates in several countries. It is somewhat anachronistic to present Silvoso as one of the leading pastors of the 1980s, since for a long time he has lived and worked as a “global” preacher with his base in the USA. However, he has always been concerned with what is happening in Argentina, and has

⁴ Matthew 28:19–20 (New International Version): “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

been a sort of hero there. A friend of Billy Graham, he is a man who still draws huge crowds when he returns “home”. In many ways he represents the same “new” attitude towards evangelisation and campaigning as Cabrera and Annacondia, in addition to being a Pentecostal with an explicit interpretation of the church-growth of the 1980s.

Moreover, Silvosó is brother-in-law with Luis Palau, another globally important Argentinean pastor. Palau draws even larger crowds when he returns to Argentina these days, and has for a long time been influential in the USA, where he has befriended both Presidents Bush as well as been considered to be Billy Graham’s successor as leader figure for the global Pentecostal – Evangelical community. However, it seems that Silvosó’s links to Argentina are somewhat stronger than Palau’s; he has operated there for a longer period and established the basis for his own Harvest Evangelism there. In an interview with pastor Noel Stanton on the 1 January 1998, Silvosó tells about his early days as a Pentecostal in Argentina: “I came to the Lord at 13. I was the first born-again Christian in the High School in a city of 100 000” (Silvosó 1998). His other statement (above), about what it was like to be a born-again Christian in Argentina in the 1950s reveals some of the difficulties and hostilities this new form of Protestantism experienced in the early years. Not only were the state and the Catholic Church working hard to stop them, even their own adherents were not convinced:

I was led to the Lord by a Brethren⁵ pastor who became a Pentecostal. His wife was dying of an incurable disease and she was healed by the Lord. When he reported that to the Assembly, they told him that God doesn’t heal, so it had to be the Devil and told him to renounce it. He said, ‘I can’t do that! It would mean death to my wife.’ They asked him to leave and then he opened up to the Spirit, but he remained Brethren in his allegiance to the Bible. The Lord gave him both extremes (Silvosó 1998).

In this story, moulded in the fabric of mythology as it is, we can see that the new Pentecostalism was not easily accepted in the Protestant/Evangelical communities of the time. Moreover, we can also see how the process of “Pentecostalisation” began: The pastor did not leave his Brethren denomination, but stayed and contributed to its transformation. I assume, though without having explicit documentation, that 30 years later very few within that denomination would argue that God does not heal.

⁵ Several Protestant bodies are called Brethren: Plymouth, Anabaptists, Methodists and Evangelicals.

In a brief article, “When God Came to Argentina” (accessed 2008), Silvosso claims that “three hopes had to be shattered before the proud Argentineans would hear the voice of God” (Silvosso 2005). First there was *the political hope*; when Perón returned to Argentina after 18 years in exile, the nation was in a state of “deep political and social longing, and almost every Argentine expected him to perform a political miracle” (Silvosso 2005). When Perón failed to deliver, dying after only one year “the nation grieved” (ibid.). Secondly, there was *the economic hope* that was shattered when the military junta that ousted Isabel Perón failed to deliver an economic “miracle”, and finally there was *the military hope*, for conquest through the invasion of the Falkland Islands, which was shattered when the Argentineans suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the British forces. Politically, economically and militarily, the nation was down on its knees: “The announcement was so devastating that the bulk of people lost faith in the government, the army and the Catholic Church”, Silvosso continues. A “vacuum” was thus created that needed to be “filled with something”. Continuing his explanation of what created the vacuum, and explaining how evil forces had entered the nation, Silvosso mentions in particular the Minister of Social Welfare in the government of Isabel Perón, José López Rega, whom he claims was a high priest of the Macumba⁶ religion who had used his influence over the Peróns to “propagate witchcraft all over Argentina. As a result during the 1980s, the population was constantly exposed to witches and warlocks, many of them prominent national figures, ‘testifying’ on television and radio” (ibid.).

Silvosso’s explanation of how the three hopes (political, economic and military) were shattered for the Argentineans does not differ very much from the ones one might find in history books. It is his interpretation, that the problems of the nation were caused by evil spirits and demons, that they were something coming from the outside, like the Macumba religion from Brazil, that steers away from the explanation of historians. By so doing he contributes to the reproduction of a *narrative* that has played a significant role in the ministries of several Pentecostal pastors and reverends in Argentina. More prominent than any other was, and is, Carlos Annacondia whose personal conversion and whose opinions on unity, spiritual warfare and ministry I will examine more closely in the following.

⁶ Macumba is an Afro-Brazilian religion.

Carlos Annacondia

During the first years after having known Christ, I felt a very heavy burden upon my heart. My deepest prayer was for my country because I felt that Argentina was losing. Every day I wept over the map of this nation putting my hands over one of its provinces praying for the lost souls. Like that I spent hours claiming Argentina for Christ⁷ (Annacondia 1997).

Carlos Annacondia was a successful business owner when he and his wife Maria, on 19 May 1979, in the city of San Justo, a province of Buenos Aires, at an evangelistic crusade with Rev. Manuel A. Ruiz from Panama, are said to have “found” God. In his book *¡Oime Bien, Satanás!* (Listen to Me, Satan),⁸ Annacondia explains how prior to his conversion, in spite of living a “normal supposed-to-be-good life”, he had fear in his heart, a fear he could not quite explain. He was afraid of death and illness, of losing security and that something would happen to his children. He felt guilty for bringing them into this world with its wars and drugs and violence. And as time went by, he only felt worse (Annacondia 1997: 28). But then, in May 1979, he was invited to listen to the Reverend Ruiz, and it was during his preaching that God, according to Annacondia, spoke to him in his heart. After first making his presence known, God acknowledged his sense of remorse and fear, and spoke directly to him: “There I realised that God loved me, that he had remembered me”,⁹ he states (Annacondia 1997: 30).

After this, “everything” changed for Annacondia. Money and success in business had never given him peace of heart, and he stopped smoking and drinking, which had caused him “nothing but trouble anyway”. Together with some other families, who also had “encountered” God during the same campaign, they began to look for a suitable pastor to guide them. No one in the group had any theological training, Bible-school experience or knowledge of homiletics.¹⁰ When they founded their Church in 1979, Mensaje de

⁷ “Durante el primer año después de haber conocido Cristo, una carga muy fuerte sentí en mi corazón. Mi ruego más profundo era por mi país porque sentía que Argentina se estaba perdiendo. Cada día lloraba sobre el mapa de esta nación y ponía mis manos sobre una de sus provincias rogando por las almas perdidas de esos lugares. Así pasaba horas reclamando a Argentina para Cristo.”

⁸ Translation of the title of the book. Another translation would be: “Listen to me well, satans (or demons)”.

⁹ “Allí me di cuenta de que Dios me amaba, que se había acordado de mí.”

¹⁰ The art of preaching, the branch of practical theology that concerns homilies or sermons (dictionary.reference.com 2011).

Salvacion, Message of Salvation (MDS), they were all new converts from a small group of families and various employees from their businesses, in addition to a few others.

A week after his conversion, Annacondia received “the promise of Baptism in the Holy Spirit through the signal of speaking in other tongues” (Annacondia 1997: 31).¹¹ Moreover, he also explains that God gave him a vision of a stadium filled with people, where preaching was taking place in a language he did not understand. After this, Annacondia maintains that he continued having encounters with God who shared with him much of his knowledge and opened his eyes to the problems of the poor people of the *villas miseria* (shanty towns) of Argentina and made him realise he had to sell everything and set out to preach God’s word. In April 1982, God told him to read Ezekiel 37, which tells how Ezekiel was led by the hand and the Spirit of God to a valley full of dry bones. Ezekiel was told to prophesy to the bones and by the Spirit bring life back to them. So he did, and the bones came together and life was restored to them.

Annacondia understood this as an answer from God about what he should do in his name and Spirit: go out and prophesy to the people of Argentina. He interpreted it as a metaphor for how the people of Argentina had been left without instructions from God, so they had dried out, spiritually. What the people of Argentina and the world needed was for him to shoulder the legacy of Ezekiel as a messenger of God – and save the people from damnation. The crusade, in the form of large campaigns, on which Annacondia was then to embark coincided in an emblematic fashion with the Falklands War, which had started only 10 days prior to his revelation “*Argentina para Cristo*” (Argentina for Christ). Moreover, according to Peter Wagner, the day of the launching of the first crusade, 2 May 1982, was the same day as a British submarine sank the Argentinean light cruiser ARA General Belgrano and 323 people were killed (Wagner 2011). The direct consequence of this, apart from the many lives that were lost, was that the Argentinean naval fleet returned to its ports where it remained for the rest of the war, never again to be a threat to the British forces. The incident, or coincidence, is not referred to in Annacondia’s book, but Peter Wagner, himself a close observer of Argentinean Pentecostalism and an international “theologian” of spiritual warfare, could certainly understand and “appreciate” such a concurrence of defining events.

¹¹ “La promesa del bautismo en el Espíritu Santo con su señal de hablar en nuevas lenguas.”

In the following I will take a brief look at Annacondia's presentation of his conversion, his relationship with the divine powers, and his mission. First, Annacondia starts by telling his personal history without explicitly linking it to the political, social and cultural conditions of his country. This style of testimony of conversion, highlighting the role of the individual, exemplifies a slight shift of focus from that of a traditional Pentecostal style or attitude, where a conversion is important for the person at hand, but the role of the individual is downplayed. Cabrera, Silvoso and Annacondia all tell powerful stories about their own encounters with God and describe how divine forces intervene in their lives to make them particularly strong instruments for the Church of Jesus in a crusade against evil forces. The quotation by Annacondia in the introduction to this section illustrates how, after his personal conversion, he links his faith and destiny to that of the Argentinean nation. By so doing, the importance of "Carlos the man" is reduced, while the importance of "Carlos the Pentecostal" increases. He is being transformed into a member of God's church on Earth and enters a particular community. Margareth M. Poloma and John Clifford Green (2007) argue that Progressive Pentecostals,¹² i.e. those with "an approach that stresses care-love, especially as it pertains to social welfare programmes": "...represent a departure from the traditional Pentecostal individualism long exemplified by the AoG (Assemblies of God)". The personal conversion, and the story and mythology that surround it, have "always" been important to Pentecostals. However, in traditional Pentecostalism one's own role in the greater scheme of events was not *as* prominent as it seemingly came to be, at least within so-called prosperity churches. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind the role of the religious leaders vs. the role of the "ordinary" Pentecostal. The leader motif is strong in many (if not most?) denominations, and "global" pastors like Annacondia, Yoido, Hinn and others are often seen as, or see themselves as, particularly important and powerful tools in the battle for the Church of Christ. I believe, however, that when it comes to understanding how Pentecostals (as individuals and communities) relate to society at large, the community-society nexus is at least as, or even more, important than the individual-society nexus. The "power" of the Pentecostal community, its shared religious space and communication, has often been downplayed in favour of an emphasis on individualism. The "individualism", supposedly inherent in Protestantism (and

¹² Pentecostalism and social commitment and politics will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 5.

therefore also Pentecostalism), of Toqueville, Alberdi, Willems and Martin can rather be seen as a particular form of communitarianism,¹³ a community of “like-minded individuals” (Martin 1990), which “criticises” society, explicitly or implicitly.

The form of Pentecostalism that Annacondia represents can be called meta-Pentecostalism. It is boundless and open to Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Charismatics and whoever feels the “power of the Spirit”. And it is open to all kinds of congregations and denominations. However, some preachers seem to be “stronger” and “better” tools than others. The likes of Annacondia and Billy Graham and Yonggi Cho are not (portrayed as) “selfish” pastors who bask in the glory of God. They are just very powerful tools, doing their job on earth against the mightiest opponents there are: the Devil and the demons. Thus, the individual is not reduced to fit categories such as nation, class or gender, but rather serves as the fundamental being before God – and therefore as the fundamental (Christian-Pentecostal) foundation of a society, culture or community.¹⁴ The role of the strong pastor, the master of the martial art of spiritual warfare, is excellently illustrated in this brief excerpt from a text on Prayer Evangelism¹⁵ written by Ed Silviso (2011):

Soon we found ourselves involved in more than a hundred cities on five continents...Things could not have gone better. People were being saved, lives were being changed and entire cities were undergoing transformation...But the intensity of these efforts had taken their toll and had exposed us to spiritual attacks and I was feeling pain. I began to tell the Lord how badly wounded I was...The Lord’s reply shocked me: Ed, you should see the other guy! He is the one who looks really bad. You’re on the winning team! If you think you look pathetic, just imagine how awful the loser must look...Just then, a scene from the movie Rocky II came to my mind...Rocky and Apollo have slugged it out to the point of total exhaustion. Both of them are lying down...Rocky’s manager is frantically shouting “get up you bum. Get uuuup!”.

¹³ I do not intend to enter a discussion on definitions of this concept here. For the purpose of this chapter “communitarianism” is employed to reflect the strong sense of community, or bonding/feelings/rules/communication, inherent in Pentecostalism. As such it does not promote individualism but rather joint ventures.

¹⁴ However, these categories seem to matter, one way or the other, especially for women, who are almost totally excluded from being such powerful preachers.

¹⁵ Winning souls and combating the devil through prayer. This is a method applied by Ed Silviso on a global scale.

Finally, Rocky is victorious... The hero stands for a few seconds totally exhausted (as was Silvosio himself). He is the winner, the strong man fighting for God's team. The story switches between plural and singular form: we and I. The Pentecostals are a team, but the captain is the pastor, and the coach is God himself.

The kind of individualism/communitarianism practised in the Pentecostalism of Cabrera, Silvosio and Annacondia turned out to be a crucial ingredient in their recipe for success in the 1980s. The country was ripe for change, old structures of class, religion, profession, etc. were being remoulded, and an emphasis on the salvation and conversion of individuals, by the thousands, would prove to be successful in the evangelistic campaigns.

Obeying what he regarded as the will of God, Annacondia set out on a long "crusade" that, in the form of campaigns, came to set an example of evangelisation not only in Argentina but also throughout the world. What has been framed as a particular feature and special contribution to world evangelism is his way of using spiritual warfare as a major element in his crusades.

Spiritual Warfare

The occult has always been prominent in the Caribbean islands and throughout Mexico and the South American countries. Satanic control had its headquarters in Argentina. Is it any wonder that the Lord God used that ground to produce the longest and greatest revival of our time? (Pietro, 2011).

Both as a phenomenon and as a method used by certain Pentecostals to cast out "evil spirits", spiritual warfare was relatively new when it became a prominent feature of Argentinean Pentecostalism, especially through the ministry of Carlos Annacondia in the 1980s. According to William K. Kay, the origins of the practice of spiritual warfare are difficult to pinpoint, but he estimates that it was started by travelling evangelising teachers in the 1970s, when they began circulating recordings of their teachings, and "expositions of the book of Daniel began to explain that there were angelic beings assigned to particular territories" (Kay 2009: 274). Allan Anderson points out that deliverance from demons, or exorcism, has always been a part of Pentecostal praxis, but was mostly conducted in private contexts or in the "inner" rooms of the congregations, and that "most Pentecostals and Charismatics believe in a personal devil (Satan) and his messengers known as demons or evil spirits" (Anderson 2004: 233). However, when it comes to

SW, Anderson adds: “These issues remain controversial and there is no agreement among Pentecostals and Charismatics about the details” (ibid.). Keith Warrington, on the other hand, states that “Pentecostals also believe in the possibility of spiritual warfare” (Warrington 2008: 293), and that in support of this they often refer to Ephesians 6:11–12.¹⁶

In the *Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, James M. Henderson observes that independent Pentecostal churches always appear to have practised exorcism, but that they “have downplayed the ministry of exorcism during most of the twentieth century” (Henderson 2006: 189). He speculates about the reason for this, and emphasises that an understanding of the devil and his companions as being too powerful would call into question the power of God. “The exception to such reluctance to ‘give glory’ to the devil would be in the cases of [...] diseases [...] which are often seen as caused by demons.”

It should also be noted that Pentecostals reject the idea that only the ordained can perform exorcism. Every Christian, as a member of the “anointed church” and receiver of the shield of the Holy Spirit, possesses the powers to be a “soldier” of God, and to perform exorcism and engage in spiritual warfare. However, people like Peter Wagner, John Dawson, Cindy Jacobs, Carlos Annacondia and Ed Silvano belong to a (not homogeneous) group of people (to which others certainly could be added) who in practice are considered to have exceptional powers – not by nature but by training, experience and gifts. They are “masters” of the “martial art” of spiritual warfare and provide guidelines and manuals in seminaries and training courses throughout the world. They do, however, express an ambiguous attitude towards their own role in spiritual warfare. On the one hand, “everyone” can be a “soldier”, but on the other hand God has chosen them as mediums of special power. It could certainly be added that a sense of being special is a universal and an individual feeling that any true Christian should or could experience.

To understand the ambiguities concerning the concept of spiritual warfare, I think it is necessary to decipher its contents and study it from different perspectives: as *cosmovision*, as a *method*, and finally as a *metaphor*.

The *cosmovision* refers to an interpretation of the world (with or without demons and angels) that a person, or a group such as a church, may hold. In

¹⁶ Ephesians 6:11–12 (King James Version): “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (biblegateway.com 2012).

the dominant spiritual warfare cosmivision, the mundane and spiritual realms are separate, but gateways exist that allow the powers of the spiritual realm to enter the mundane world and possess people and places. The cosmivision is supported by a narrative. This is the story of the world, how it came to be and how it works. Even though it represents the mythology of a community or a culture, it is open to interpretation by individuals, whose own “mythologies” are interwoven into the larger narrative. The basic concept of spiritual warfare is that there is a war going on in the world, a war between God and Satan, angels and demons – a war between good and evil. This war stems from the history of the “fallen angel” and the creation of Heaven, Earth, Water and the Abyss (hell). According to the main narrative, the angels reside in heaven with God, while the demons reside in hell with Satan. When Lucifer approaches Adam and Eve, and tricks them into eating the forbidden fruit of “the tree of knowledge”, sin enters the lives of human beings, and henceforth they must live in a world between heaven and hell. This starts the plan for salvation and the history of the relationship between humans and God. The demons are infesting the world, and humans participate in the regeneration of God’s creation (Wynarczyk 1995: 149). Awaiting Jesus Christ’s return, the kingdom of heaven has begun its regeneration with the help of the Church, or the “people of God”. The Church was given the spiritual authority in the heavenly realms from the day of Pentecost. “This is what the preacher Carlos Annacondia talks about when he says ‘the anointed Church’ that shall fight the demons.”¹⁷ According to this narrative, the demons can enter an individual, a territory or a culture through a “gate”. These gates may be opened by sins or traumas suffered by a person or a collective group in the present or the past.

The *method* refers to how spiritual warfare is implemented and used as a strategy to win adherents by conquering the evil that possesses them or the territory they inhabit, or by telling people what evil forces surround them and what torments await them if they do not convert.

The *metaphor* is meant to evoke the image of the Creation and how sin came into the world, and serves as a symbol for understanding the existence of good and evil in the world.

It seems as if this topic is somewhat unclear to many Pentecostals, as well as to Christians of other denominations. Since a version of spiritual warfare was a main ingredient in the ministries of several of the leading Pentecostal

¹⁷ “Es lo que predicador Carlos Annacondia llama ‘la iglesia ungida’ que debe guerrear a Satanás.”

pastors in Argentina, one might claim that it has been a main vehicle for the Pentecostal success; and indeed the acceptance of spiritual warfare among the different Pentecostal, Evangelical and historical Protestant churches has been higher there than anywhere else, at least when it comes to Latin American countries. For Cabrera, Silvos, Annacondia and many other present-day Pentecostals in Argentina, the movement experienced a “Kairos moment” when the *iglecrecimiento* (church growth) began in the early 1980s. Their interpretation of their own history as linked to the nation’s history, to the democratisation processes, and to the major socio-political, as well as religious and cultural changes that occurred in this period reflects an image of the church growth as a part of God’s divine plan – for the nation as well as for all the peoples of the earth. At a workshop on spiritual warfare in Argentina, held at the Lausanne II meeting in Manila in 1989, Silvos is said to have stated, after remarking on the Argentinean contribution to the development of methodology and evangelism through spiritual warfare: “It is an awareness that the struggle is not against a political or a social system [...] [it is] against those in authority in the spiritual realm” (Wagner 2011). And, this struggle, which might be fought via the conversion of an individual, the exorcising of a demon from a possessed person or group of people, or the cleansing of a particular region, city or nation, is essentially universal and global – it concerns every human being and all life on earth. A question to ask is to what degree the struggle against those in authority in the spiritual realm will influence the lives and social conditions of those who are not in the spiritual realm? This concerns, to a significant degree, the so-called dualism of the Pentecostals and, although it is not the main theme here, it is discussed throughout the text – explicitly (positive vs. negative dualism) and implicitly (religion vs. politics/social concern).

Carlos Annacondia’s demonology

Annacondia states that it is a reality that we meet people who are possessed by demons every day. Furthermore, he claims that many Christians experience these encounters in two distinct ways; either they underestimate the demon(s) or they overestimate them. However, he continues, God tells us exactly how to deal with the problem. “We know” that Satan breathes like a roaring lion, and for those who believe, the signs will be clear: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils;

they shall speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17)¹⁸ (Annacondia 1997: 74). A true believer will know this, so do not despair but have faith in God, Annacondia continues.

The demons or diabolic creatures that possess human beings are numerous and diverse, but their presence in a person can, according to Annacondia, be detected by looking at some behavioural characteristics that the possessed individual displays:

1. The oppressed (*el oprimido*). It is very common to see oppressed people, and the oppression manifests itself through temptation and persecution. This is a typical way for the devil to make Christians return to their old sinful lives. For this, we say the Word, so that we do not fall back to the devil.
2. The tormented (*el atormentado*). This is also a common character, according to Annacondia. The unclean spirit (*espíritu*) is inside a person and acts from there. The afflicted suffers from fear, depression and grief. But the tormented person is not necessarily demonised – he or she has a struggle in life that is influenced by the devil because the tormented person has not met Jesus or has hatred or resentment in his or her heart. When such feelings are nourished, we have an open gate into our heart for the devil to enter and cause a disaster.
3. The possessed (*el poseído*). The possessed person momentarily loses control over his or her body and mind and tries to destroy objects and everything that is in his or her surroundings. After being released, the possessed does not remember what happened during the possession.
4. The estranged (*el enajenado*). This kind of manifestation indicates a permanent possession. The devil has taken control of the body, the soul and the spirit. It is the diametric opposite of the person who is filled with the Holy Spirit. It is like the Gadarene¹⁹ but, as in his case, Jesus can release anyone from the torments of the devil.

¹⁸ According to King James Version. Original: “Estas señales seguirán a los que creen: En mi nombre, echarán fuera demonios” (Marcos 16:17).

¹⁹ Matthew 8: 28 – 34: When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way.²⁹ “What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”³⁰ Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding.³¹ The demons begged Jesus: “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.”³² He said to them, “Go!” So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.³³ Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.³⁴ Then the whole town went

These types and categories of possessions and its characteristics can, Annacondia maintains, help Christians recognise the various manifestations of demons so that they can act upon them properly and “cast out” the evil spirits.

Apart from addressing this problem of possession, Annacondia deals with the aetiology (which is also linked to the four types mentioned above) of illnesses interpreted as caused by demons. Exorcism was frequently practised in Annacondia’s crusades. When the sick and possessed persons were located, they were sent to a special tent where designated personnel undertook the exercise of casting out the evil spirits.

Why has Carlos Annacondia’s campaigns and preaching style been so successful in Argentina that his ministry is looked upon as an example to follow in many other countries? In my view, the explanation can be found in several factors that together shed light on the phenomenon. However, more than anything else it was his focus on spiritual warfare through the practice of casting out evil spirits, as well as his strong focus on unity amongst the different Protestant congregations and denominations, that stood out. He was a man of the new age; his approach was meta-denominational, meta-Pentecostal, direct in style, aggressive and confident, and ultimately individualistic and unifying at the same time.

1. Meta-denominational. Annacondia had no biblical training and no background in the Pentecostal community. He defied being categorised according to the traditional patterns inherited within the existing Pentecostal community. He started his own meta-church (MDS).
2. Meta-Pentecostal. Considering the now relatively established interpretation of Pentecostalism as a phenomenon that has evolved in “waves”, it is not very easy to characterise the style and contents of Annacondia’s preaching as belonging to only one of the three categories: the (classical) Pentecostal, the Charismatic or Neo-Pentecostal, and the Neo-Charismatic wave (see Burgess 2006). Both Joaquín Algranti (2010) and Hilario Wynarczyk (2009) classify MDS, as well as many other pastors and churches that fuelled the *iglecrecimiento* during the 1980s, as neo-Pentecostals, but that term seems to have become too closely linked to what has been framed the “prosperity gospel” to fit the Argentinean context. Furthermore, Algranti adopts Paul Freston’s understanding of the Pentecostals’ relationship to culture. According to Freston, waves

out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region (biblegateway.com 2012).

represent moments when a re-articulation of the Pentecostal connection with culture takes place – a connection forms and slowly drifts apart before connecting again (Freston 1999). Clear elements of the so-called prosperity gospel are surely to be found in Argentinean Pentecostalism, but that is not its trademark. Annacondia's ministry, the style and contents of his preaching, seem to "bypass" any of these waves or currents. Its ingredients come from various Pentecostal traditions that are mixed together, and given a form that might best be understood as meta-Pentecostal. Freston's idea of the waves as Pentecostalism re-connecting with culture could perhaps be thought of as just as valid if tested on any other culture than the Argentinean, but I do not think that this is what is happening there. However, on a certain level there is a connection or reordering (but not re-connection) of the relationship(s) with society at large. As I argue for in this study, Pentecostalism, when it grows (in Argentina but perhaps also in other contexts), starts to relate to society at large in a new way; it integrates and connects as it moves from being "outside" of society to being "inside".

3. Direct in style. Annacondia and other Argentinean pastors of the 1980s, like Héctor Giménez, had direct encounters with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, as well as with the people who attended their meetings. Giménez (an ex-convict and drug addict) popularised the events by using theatres, stadiums and concert stages as revival arenas. For him, as well as for Annacondia, popular music and popular jargon were part of the performance.²⁰ Moreover, they experienced what they regarded as direct and confrontational encounters with the evil spirits that they cast out.
4. Confident. Another characteristic of the charismatic pastor is his self-confident attitude towards both the audience and demonic powers. This is a confidence that stems from the experience of having prophetic access to God's command and of doing His work as a continuation of the deeds of Jesus while awaiting his return. In a way this makes the charismatic pastor *untouchable*.
5. Individualistic. As mentioned above, Annacondia emphasised his personal encounter with God, his personal experience of divine presence and his role as a soldier of Christ. This gives him a personal responsibility to act properly in response to the command of God, and therefore instils a sort of individualism in the newly converted, even though this

²⁰ Giménez founded one of the most successful Pentecostal denominations in Argentina, Ondas de amor y paz (Waves of love and peace), a *mega-iglesia* (mega-church) with more than 340 000 members (ca 2000). This denomination had by then become an international entity.

may only be acted out in an indirect sense. However, the shared common experience of personal encounters with God, which gives a number of individuals a shared purpose and joint “baggage”, may just as well encourage the foundation of strong group identities: insider-outsider, us-them, we the (“free”) individualists-you the (“unfree”) group member.

Unity

Unity is another characteristic of Argentinean Pentecostalism that, in addition to its focus on spiritual warfare and the casting out of evil spirits, has gained recognition within the global Pentecostal community. Throughout the 1980s, there was great emphasis on unity and cohesion.

In the 1950s Tommy Hicks opened the eyes of many Argentineans, and especially the Pentecostal community, to the potential for mass evangelisation to win support and adherents on a large scale, but his campaigns abruptly came to an end. The growth that was eventually to come could have occurred 30 years earlier than it actually did had it not been strangled in its infancy. The socio-political system at that time was controlled from above and those in hegemonic positions could stop it before it really got started. It was Perón who permitted Tommy Hicks to lead his rallies, and it was also Perón who put a stop to them.

In the 1970s, when Omar Cabrera and his VDF started their “crusades”, the Argentinean system was not yet ready for them, but they did open some doors and some eyes to a new style and a new focus on evangelisation. Many Pentecostals at that time found it difficult to associate themselves with Cabrera because of his independent (individualistic) style, which they could not easily reconcile with traditional Pentecostal values. Saracco refers to Cabrera’s model of evangelism in this way: “It is a church whose *raison d’être* is to evangelise” (Saracco 1989: 241). This differs from the traditional Pentecostal churches whose final objective was “to form an alternative community in the world – whether by a strict ethical code, or an overemphasis on activism or an understanding of the church as a community of refuge. In the VDF model, there are a number of people together but no community” (ibid.).

This observation, that the traditional Pentecostal communities constituted refuges or retreats, coincides with the idea of these churches as marginalised, not necessarily in a cultural but rather in a societal sense. The

many years they spent in the margins of society, as an excluded and partly persecuted community, had made many Pentecostals nourish the idea of being chosen and persecuted – in suffering lies salvation. But now, the coming of “holy” men from the USA could be seen as a step towards the second coming of Christ. “At last” something was happening! In addition, starting with Carlos Annacondia, and with the end of the long period of dictatorship and war, the “borders” between outsiders and insiders in Argentinean society were breaking down in a double sense: from the inside and from the outside. When the structure of Argentinean society transformed, new spaces opened up and a public as well as a religious “sphere” that were not available before began to take shape. At the same time this re-structuring paved the way for increased influence from the outside, so that transnational economics, religion, politics, science/academia, and law could have more autonomous and substantial influence.

Not only did many of the new pastors and churches that entered the scene in the 1980s display a meta-denominational attitude towards the Pentecostal community, they even challenged the boundaries between the traditional Evangelical churches and the other Protestant churches in the country; all this while “flirting” with Catholic charismatics and Catholic style (as with Cabrerás’ Catholic collar). Annacondia was a driving force in this process. His main concern was to get all the Protestant churches to join his campaigns. He sometimes refused to continue unless all of them supported him. And it was a success! The campaigns were supported and even sponsored by classical Protestant denominations of all kinds: Baptists, Free Brethren, Methodists, Reformed, Mennonite, Congregationalist, Evangelical Union churches, etc. This made such a deep impact on the Argentinean Pentecostal/Evangelical/Protestant scene that one can truly speak of revival and “Pentecostalisation” at the same time.

In almost all my interviews with prominent figures within the Argentinean Pentecostal movement (Saracco, Deiros, Salomone, etc.), I began by asking them who the Pentecostals are and how they differ from Evangelicals and other Protestant denominations. The answer to this has more or less been that the Pentecostals are “very different”, have a completely different history and theology – and thus that they are not the same at all (this is the traditional story – learned and repeated in the curriculum of the “who are we” narratives). But when we start to talk about the movement and its history over the last three decades they all accept the narrative of “Pentecostalisation” in one way or another. This is not surprising considering the huge proportion of Pentecostals who today make up the bulk of Protestants in

the country. In a recent census (2008) it was revealed that approximately 10 per cent of the population (about 4 million) were Protestant and that 90 per cent of the Protestants were Pentecostals. Hence the Pentecostals totally dominate the picture, making it difficult for anyone to stay outside.²¹ It is also important to remember that it was Anacondia, Giménez, Cabrera and others who caused the Pentecostal explosion, and many old Pentecostal as well as Evangelical churches profited greatly from their campaigns. The consequences of the expansion in the 1980s, in terms of the unity and organisation of various groupings and constellations, will be looked into further below, in a more thorough discussion of the attempts to consolidate and further evolve during the 1990s.

The Pentecostals of the 1980s seen from the “outside”

But first, a few words about the impression that the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in the 1980s made on those who did not support this new religious presence on the public and the religious scene. Two distinctly negative reactions to the Pentecostal growth can be discerned. The first comes from the Catholic Church. Initially it appears that Catholics considered the Pentecostals to be peculiar but harmless. The Pentecostals were not very numerous, and the Catholics had “stopped” them before. Besides, the Catholic leadership had more than enough to do consolidating their own forces and healing their own wounds after their disgraceful deeds as a collaborator of the MD. Eventually, however, as the Pentecostals grew in number and their presence was felt in the public arena, many Catholic authorities started denouncing them. In addition, they dusted off an old accusation with a long history within the nationalist as well the socialist movement: they claimed that the Pentecostals were working on behalf of North American interests and therefore were undermining the project of building a democratic nation state. Within the discourse about the relationship between Protestantism and Catholicism, there is a tenacious idea that Catholicism represents a hierarchic, anti-democratic and repressive attitude, whereas Protestantism represents egalitarian, democratic and liberal sentiments (David Martin, Alberdi, Tocqueville). This idea contains the intrinsic assumption that the colonisation of a perceived Catholic Latin America by some Protestant

²¹ That is, most Protestants also “want” to be part of the new Evangelical/Pentecostal scene – they want to be part of the success story, and most of them feel as they are a big “family” one way or the other.

Western powers will lead to liberation. This narrative has been “instrumentally” reproduced both in a negative as well as in a positive way; those who believe in the narrative will use it to support the promotion of North American interests, while those who do not believe it will use it as an example of the attitude of superiority inherent in the North American culture.

The Catholic Church, which itself was accused of supporting North American interests during the 1970s, and particularly so through their support of right-wing dictatorships, who again were “helped” by various interests from the USA,²² now saw it fit to blame the Pentecostal expansion on the same interests. They referred to the Pentecostal churches as *sectas* (sects). In its original sense, and in sociological contexts, this term is applied to religious groups that are created outside of the cultural (or national) norm. A sect is a group whose members are personally converted, as opposed to the church, which accepts baptised infants as members (Weber, Trolsch). This understanding was adopted by the Catholic Church throughout Latin America, and the meaning “foreign, lower, and threatening” was added. This attitude was particularly prevalent among Catholics, although it originally also existed in the historic Protestant churches (Soneira 2005: 76).²³

The other negative response to the Pentecostals during the 1980s came from various people and organisation that were concerned about what they perceived as an aggressive form of evangelisation. This could be worried parents who had “lost” their children to a Pentecostal denomination, it could be organisations of sceptics who promoted so-called critical thinking and saw religious “fundamentalism” in Pentecostalism, or it could be secular interest groups working for the right to abortion, women’s rights, same-sex marriage, etc. This negative attitude, influenced at least in part by the above-mentioned groups, resulted in overwhelmingly negative press coverage.

When the 1990s arrived, Argentinean society had changed substantially. The role and position of the Catholic Church had changed, and people in the Pentecostal movement were both happy and bewildered by the new environment and their new situation. Where should they go from there? How should they cultivate (or harvest – as they often say themselves) their congregations and expand? A period of consolidation and experimentation

²² Like through Operation Condor, a campaign against left wing opposition and political dissidents in general, instigated by several countries in the southern part of South America, with material and human support from the USA.

²³ “La dimensión contracultos reconoce una clara influencia católica, aunque en sus orígenes abarcó también a las Iglesias protestantes históricas.”

followed during the two next decades. What stands out are their new evangelising methods, their struggle for religious freedom and equality, and their advances into the political, judicial and public spheres. These will be studied in the following chapters.

4. The struggle for religious freedom and equality

We thank God for ending this century with a democratic system that opens up the doors for an increased genuine participation.¹

In this chapter I will present the “consolidation” of the religious sphere, which had evolved during the 1980s, from the early 1990s, and especially the role and place of Pentecostalism within it.² The framework for this new sphere was set by the structural changes that began to evolve after the reintroduction of democracy in 1983. During the 1980s, the socio-political landscape was reconstructed, democracy was tested and the Pentecostals entered the stage, based on their substantial numerical growth and new attitude towards society at large. As of the 1990s, however, this “new” society seems to have gone through a period of consolidation. Democracy was established as *the* form of government and differentiation processes were tested, for instance in conflicts between the executive and the judicial powers and between the political and the economic spheres. Finally, the religious sphere developed into a situation marked primarily by competition and/or coexistence between the Catholic Church and the Pentecostals.³

In order to comprehend the evolvement and contents of the religious sphere, I will present four “components” that together (in tension or in tandem) informed its construction: A) the socio-political landscape and the restructuring of society that took place; B) the Catholic Church’s loss of

¹ “Agradecemos a Dios el poder terminar este siglo con un sistema democrático, que abre puertas para una mayor y real participación.” ACIERA, Mensaje a la Nación Argentina, 11.09.1999.

² Much of what is discussed in this chapter seems to concern events that occurred in the 1990s. However, while that is true, their continued unfolding is also viewed through the first decade of the 21st century and has historic roots further back in time. Hence, the chapter is not exclusively limited to the 1990s.

³ In addition to the reconstruction of the relationship between the Catholic Church and Pentecostals, the religious sphere “opened” up making the conglomerate of Argentinean religious and ethnic life become more visible and recognised.

structural power, which forced it to redefine its role in Argentinean (and Latin American) society; C) the integration of the Pentecostals into Argentinean society, most notably through their struggle for religious freedom and equality (RFE) and tentative attempts to enter the political sphere;⁴ D) the Pentecostal experimentation with new methods of evangelisation.

All these components have in common the Pentecostals' concern with the "other", that is, the world outside of, or the "borders" of, the Pentecostal community.⁵ C and D, that is, RFE and the new methods of evangelisation, are both linked to evangelism and the positive dualism which, perhaps more than anything else, define the "new" Argentinean Pentecostalism that emerged in this period.⁶ Evangelism, RFE and political involvement (which will be discussed in the next chapter) frame the new characteristics of Argentinean Pentecostalism and particularly its approach to non-Pentecostal sectors of society since the early 1990s. A and B, the socio-political landscape and the weakened Catholic Church, are what this new Pentecostalism has to relate to, in one way or the other, and which influence and constrain the Pentecostals mobility as a societal force.

It is almost impossible to say how many Pentecostals there were in the early 1990s. Hilario Wynarczyk (2009) and Daniel Míguez (2003) refer to two different estimates produced by Graciela Roemers and Hugo Haime. According to Roemers, 5 per cent of the population were Protestants and 5 per cent *Evangélicos* in Argentina in 1992. Haime suggests 8.3 per cent *Evangélicos* and 1 per cent Protestants in the province of Buenos Aires in 1994 (Wynarczyk 2009: 167–168).⁷ By 2001, the number of Pentecostals was estimated to be around 10–13 per cent of the population, or between 3.6 and 4.6 million people, according to Wynarczyk. When I was in Buenos

⁴ Pentecostalism and politics will be examined in the next chapter, and is only mentioned briefly here.

⁵ What is inside or outside of these communities varies depending on one's perspective and the very understanding of what it means to be, for instance, a Pentecostal or a Catholic or Muslim. This will be further problematised later in this chapter, particularly in a brief discussion of Bruce Lincoln's maximalist-minimalist nexus. This issue strikes at the heart of the general discussion in this text: the boundaries between religion and politics, religion and law, religion and society.

⁶ I would prefer to call this new Pentecostalism "Neo-Pentecostalism", but since that term is often associated with the so-called prosperity gospel, I chose to avoid it. What characterizes the new Pentecostalism in Argentina, and in many other countries, is rather the positive dualism I refer to, or even holism (God in everything).

⁷ Wynarczyk argues that this was a clear division between Pentecostals and 'non-Pentecostals' or Evangelicals. His survey reveals that the amount of Pentecostals (in per cent) out of the total Protestant population was: 1920, 4%, 1950, 10%, 1970, 20%, 1980, 33%, 1985, 46% and 1992, 57%.

Aires in 2001, I received some estimates from the Secretaría de Culto de la Nación. According to them there were around 5 million Protestants, of which 4.2 million were Pentecostals.⁸ Since it is impossible to confirm or deny these figures, we need to treat them carefully. Considering the figures from the 1990s and 2001 in relation to the figures presented in the “First survey of beliefs and religious attitudes in Argentina” (Mallimaci 2008),⁹ a certain decline of adherents has occurred during the 2000s. From this we may conclude, albeit without certainty, that the Pentecostals experienced steady growth during the 1980s and 1990s, but that their growth levelled off or even reversed in the 2000s.

Reflecting on the development of Argentinean Pentecostalism during the 1980s, Norberto Saracco pointed out as early as 1989 that “a distinctive ministry came to be seen. It is characterised by marked activism and a preference for everything tending toward evangelism” (Saracco 1989: 303). This new evangelism which began to dominate the Pentecostals’ relations to society outside of the Pentecostal communities, was a clear indicator of the turn from a negative to a positive dualism, including a change in the mode of communication, internally (within the Pentecostal community) as well as externally (in relation to society).

In the following, I will first give a brief overview of the socio-political conditions in Argentina in the period. I then discuss the new outlook of the Catholic Church, before turning to a presentation of the main actors and the main claims set forth in the Pentecostals’ struggle for RFE. Finally, I move on to a discussion of two evangelising methods: G12 (a pyramid-like cell group method) and the so-called 4–14 window (targeting children between 4 and 14 years).

The socio-political landscape

The differentiation processes continued in Argentinean society throughout the 1990s. By many standards, the nation became even more integrated into the global weave, with the Western model developing as the dominant

⁸ At first the Secretaría de Culto (Ministry of Religion) and INDEC (the Argentinean statistical bureau) denied the existence of statistics about this. They actually complained about this fact and the lack of funding to conduct surveys about this. However, when I met with officials at the Secretaría, it turned out that some statistics did exist and I received a copy. They could not, or would not tell me, how they had gathered the information, but said it was “reliable”.

⁹ *Primera Encuesta sobre creencias y actitudes religiosas en Argentina.*

structure of society. “El Menemismo”, the nick-name for the so-called neo-liberal politics and economics of the Carlos Menem administration, paved the way for continued differentiation between the political and the economic spheres. Moreover, neo-liberalism in the form outlined in the “Washington consensus”,¹⁰ and promoted by the World Bank and the IMF, has not only influenced Argentinean and international finance; it contains, or shall we say, implies on a general level, a “surrender” of political power to the economic and financial spheres. Thus, it represents an attempted “colonisation” of the political sphere to the benefit of the economic sphere; the economic system claims that freedom from political interference is the optimal model for economic growth and societal development. The communication of economics, pay vs. not-pay, increasingly influences the political lingua franca. Moreover, the contingency of democracy, that is, its various possible policies, is being further constrained by a particular understanding of how and who and in what way politics and economics are to be organised, echoing the ideology of neo-liberalism: Public spending is expensive and should, as far as possible, be avoided; the economic strength of a nation is based on its private sectors’ productivity; finance trumps welfare.

When Menem liberalised the economy in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the “Washington-consensus”, he privatised national industries like oil and gas, water, the postal service, telecommunications, electricity and land resources. In addition, the public services and the public sector in general were reduced (Rapoport 2008: 799). As much as approximately 10 per cent (270 000 square kilometres) of the land area of the country, with substantial amounts of natural resources, were sold to foreign (and private) interests during the Menem period (Seoane 2010: 3). From 1991, with Domingo Cavallo as Minister of Finance, the peso was pegged to the US dollar in an attempt to control inflation. All this led to an “artificial” recovery of the national economy at the same time as unemployment increased. However, what seemed to be the solution to the hyperinflation and collapse of the peso in 1989 turned out to produce an economic bubble. This paved the way for another economic downturn in the year 2000, which resulted in a financial and political crisis that once more put strain on the hope for a better, more secure and socially stable life for the Argentinean people, at least for some time. However, apart from the economic and political ups

¹⁰ “Williamson originally coined the phrase in 1990 ‘to refer to the lowest common denominator of policy advice being addressed by the Washington-based institutions to Latin American countries as of 1989’” (cid.harvard 2012). However, the Washington consensus is frequently used as a synonym for so-called neo-liberal politics.

and down, the 1990s were the period when the drift away from dictatorship and intermingling between military, political, judicial and religious powers and interests reached the point where it was a longer way back than ahead. The late 1980s and early 1990s, and particularly during the Menem years, democratic structures and differentiation were tested. For instance, only three months after taking office, in October 1989, Menem pardoned almost 400 people who had been sentenced to prison for human rights abuses, and in 1990 he pardoned “dirty war” generals like Videla, Massera, Agosti, Lambruschini and Camps, and other high-ranking military personnel from the dictatorship of 1976–83. In addition, he pardoned 60 *Montoneros* (Christian and left-wing guerrillas). His argument was that it was time to move on, and implement a sort of “forgive and forget” policy. These were actions that overruled the decisions of the Supreme Court and seemed to represent a break with the human rights policy of former president Alfonsín. They also illustrated the fact that the executive was still able to take control of the judiciary (Skaar 2011: 54). A further example of the dynamics of tensions in the differentiation processes was Menem’s manoeuvring to increase the number of Supreme Court members in his favour: “Indeed, the court ruled in the chief executive’s favour in every controversial decision.” (Romero 2006: 296). Moreover, there is no doubt that corruption and overlapping of interests still existed and that forces within the different spheres still wanted to influence each other in various ways. With the establishment of democracy, however, and the important introduction of free elections, as well as a more free press and a public sphere that was not controlled by the military, new possibilities to influence political processes and governance were opening up.

A new role for the Catholic Church

In the post-dictatorship years, the Catholic Church experienced challenges of a similar nature to what they had experienced in other Latin American countries. They were losing adherents to Protestantism (mainly Pentecostalism) and seeing a decline in regular church-goers (Carriquiry 2005: 262; Delamar in interview 2001). In these years, and particularly from the 1990s, a new religious sphere was being formed within which the Catholic Church, not only in Argentina but in Latin America in general, was beginning to find it increasingly difficult to secure its interests as a part of “society in

society”¹¹ or as a “natural” part of the hegemonic power. Instead it felt that it needed to legitimise its status and presence in a new way.

Hence, it began emphasising its role as a vital bearer of the Argentinean cultural heritage and an important moral contributor to society. First and foremost this was expressed through an increased emphasis on its stance against secularisation and relativisation. The Catholic intellectual and “first lay-person appointed to a high position in the Catholic Church, by Pope Paul VI” (Carriquiry 2005: cover), Guzmán Carriquiry, tries to sum up the challenges of the day in Latin America, and how the Catholic Church should respond, in the book “Betting on Latin America” from 2005.¹² The foreword is written by Cardinal and Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Bergoglio – now Pope Francis. Carriquiry emphasises that more than half of the world’s Catholic population¹³ lives in Latin America, and that the historical role of the Catholic Church on the continent gives it not only a strong position in the culture but also the responsibility to provide solutions to contemporary challenges (Carriquiry 2005: 262). What is at stake is the genuine Latin American culture, rooted in Catholicism. This culture is being challenged by imperialistic forces (North American, European and now also other economic powers) in addition to Protestant expansion and secularisation. Hence, as a response to these challenges, he advocates Latin American integration. This stance is supported by Bergoglio: “Alone, separated we have little and are not going anywhere” (Bergoglio 2005: 8). The road ahead for the continent, he continues, goes through Latin American integration based on a common Catholic foundation. This understanding, of the Catholic Church as the vital creator of culture and civilisation, as well as the protector of humanism and ethics, is strong within the Church. Bergoglio claims there is a correlation between Catholicism and the Latin American peoples’ heartfelt understanding of truth and justice as being part of an authentic culture. The roots of this are to be found in the evangelisation and civilisation that the Catholic Church has provided throughout the centuries (Bergoglio 2005: 9–10). However, this opinion, that the Catholic Church represents something authentic, true and ethically superior, is not completely new. One can trace tendencies of this way of thinking back to the period of independence from colonial rule and the re-negotiation of the Patronato Real, but this was certainly part of the argument in the fight

¹¹ To use a Luhmannian term.

¹² *Una Apuesta por América Latina*.

¹³ This estimate looks like an exaggeration. A more sober estimate would be around 30–40 per cent of the total number of Catholics.

against liberalism in the 19th century and an important ingredient in the “national Catholicism” of the 20th century. The main difference in the latter period was the focus on nationalism instead of Latin American integration. As has been pointed out by Argentinean sociologist María Soledad Catoggio, referring to the military dictatorships in Argentina, Chile and Brazil 1966–1989 (Catoggio 2011: 25):

Given the supposed prevalence of Catholicism in Latin American societies, these military powers sought to endow their goals with a messianic character, appropriating the national-security doctrine and redefining it in theological and political terms with firm intention of restoring the values of Western Christian morality.

But then again the difference between the “old” and the “new” focus on Catholicism as being the core ingredient of Latin American culture, be it on a national or a Latin American level, can best be viewed in terms of their being two sides of the same coin, given that the nationalism of the years of dictatorship was constructed on the basis of a pan-nationalist sentiment which permeated dominant segments of the Catholic Church in several Latin American countries.¹⁴ As a matter of fact, the newly elected Pope Francis, in his first conversation with Argentinean President Cristina Kirchner after being elected Pope, “praised the ‘great role’ and ‘unity’ that Latin American leaders are showing in order to build ‘La Patria Grande’” (Gambarotta 2013).¹⁵

The trajectories of the Catholic Church’s positioning in society, as well as its image of itself, go too far back in time to be dealt with properly here.¹⁶ However, its more recent history, during the dictatorship years, should provide us with some clues to the (re)positioning that is taking place in the new democracy. Hence, Pablo R. Andiñach and Daniel Bruno (2001: 22–23)

¹⁴ Even liberation theology with its class- and poverty-based foundation for the building of consciousness and structural changes had more of a Latin American and even “global” approach than a national one. That said, the liberation theologians and the base communities worked in various local contexts, and in so doing also had local flavours and impact.

¹⁵ *Patria Grande* literally means the Great Fatherland. The term has its origin in the struggle for independence from colonial rule in Latin America (particularly from Spain). *Patria Grande* accordingly describes the common struggle of all Latin Americans to be free from foreign dominance. Today it has been taken up by several democratically elected leaders on the continent as part of rhetoric meant to depict integration and economic and political independence as a common cause.

¹⁶ This has been more thoroughly discussed in the introductory chapter.

claim that, when looking at the MD in the years of 1976–1983, one could find three main positions within the Argentinean Catholic Church. First, the ultraconservative and antidemocratic use of torture and suppression, which was legitimated with references to Thomas Aquinas’ “levels of evils”,¹⁷ which allegedly suggested that evil actions may be necessary to prevent a greater evil or to produce something good in itself. This position was supported by powerful ecclesiastical circles and among military clergy. They spoke of the “tree of subversion”, which constituted the main threat to Catholic influence with its three roots: masonry, Protestantism and critical philosophy (Andinañach and Bruno 2001: 23). Second, there was a “moderate” group whose members for opportunistic reasons wanted to protect the Church’s interest, its position and its role in society, and who aligned with, or at least did not officially oppose, those in power. It could be argued that Bergoglio (current Pope Francis), while serving as leader of the Jesuit order in Buenos Aires in the 1970s, fitted into this category.¹⁸ Finally, there was liberation theology, which was not very strong within the Argentinean Catholic Church but definitely present.

It seems as if the actual position of the Catholic Church and its self-image have been in and out of synch with reality throughout Argentinean history. The reasons for this are mainly to be found in the very strong position it held during colonial rule, its function as the “natural” religion of the independent states, and its role within the constitutional frameworks of the Latin American countries. The Catholic leaders’ interpretation of Latin American and Argentinean history and culture was not and still is not shared by Protestants in general or Pentecostals in particular. To them, the Catholic Church has always been a competitor that has been met with sus-

¹⁷ *Niveles de males*.

¹⁸ Pope Francis’ role and activities during the turbulent 1970s have been a topic of debate since he was elected Pope. His testimony was, in any case, heard during the judicial tribunal in 2010. Of particular interest was his role in the abduction of two Jesuit priests. He was then Provincial leader of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) in Buenos Aires. He gave “evasive, sometimes absurdist, answers to their pointed questions about his knowledge about who might have identified the young priests as possible subversives” (Scheper-Hughes 2013: 29). It is still not clear what he knew and what he did or did not do, but he was not himself a “subversive”, an activist against the military regimes. It is rather more likely that he was to be found among the group of people who witnessed what was happening, who were not too “happy” with the liberation theologians’ flirtation with Marxism, and who could, through their lack of political action, be accused of silently supporting the regimes. On the other hand, he may have understood his position, then as now, as one of acting as a role model, as a spiritual leader, as a man of God and not of politics.

picion, distrust and envy, but also admiration (first and foremost because of its success and size). As was briefly mentioned in Chapter 1 (historical background), the delegates who met at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 did not regard Latin America as a missionary field (Bianchi 2004: 81).¹⁹ Latin America, like Europe, was considered to be Christianised already and therefore not in need of missionary efforts. The Pentecostals, however, had a different opinion about Latin America. To them, it was “the neglected continent” and “a ‘Romanist’ stronghold, and their letters and reports abounded with allusions to the ‘darkness’ and ‘delusion’ of popular Catholicism in the region” (Anderson 2007: 191). This very negative image of Catholicism in Latin America has changed during the century that has passed since the Edinburgh conference. Today the Pentecostals are generally more open, or at least less hostile, to Catholicism; although there are still those who consider Catholics to be infidels and who see in the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church an image of the Devil himself. An example of a contemporary Pentecostal outlook on Latin American history and the role of Catholicism can be found in a short text entitled “The Roots of Latin American Underdevelopment” (“Roots”) published by Semilla (Spanish for seed). Semilla presents itself as:

A Latin American Christian leadership development organisation founded in Virginia in 1986 by José L. González, the first Latin American citizen to graduate from Regent University. Its aim is to accelerate the transformation of the Latin culture by the Word of God through the application of Biblical principles by godly and competent leaders (semilla.org 2012).

Semilla trains Latin American leaders and cooperates with several Latin American Pentecostal and Evangelical organisations and churches. These represent a trend that seems to be growing in scope and impact, and whose evangelism combines mission and socio-political work and involvement. This trend, which I will refer to as Mission Integral,²⁰ will be presented more fully in the next chapter (Pentecostalism and politics). However, in order to

¹⁹ More than 1200 Protestant delegates gathered, mainly from North America and Northern Europe.

²⁰ Integral mission, as it was formulated by its founder René Padilla, had a rather explicit social commitment to work for the poor and weak, for the needy and the marginalised. I think, however, that this concept could be used to describe all groups within Pentecostal and Evangelical *Evangelicalism* who seek to transform society as well as to convert individuals.

get a clearer picture of how Catholics and Pentecostals view themselves and each other, historically and in contemporary society, I will present a few excerpts from “Roots” here. The text is not more than one and a half pages long, and it is of course not representative for all Pentecostals. It starts by establishing a “mythology” of the Latin American people:

Originally we were a mixture of Spanish, Indian and African cultures, creatively blended and adapted to survive the local circumstances. Traditional Iberian Catholicism accommodated the ‘popular religion’ suited to the local customs, superstitions and many varieties of the Marian cult.

As we can see, Semilla shares Bergoglio’s understanding of Latin American history as beginning with the *colonisation*, that is, as beginning with the coming of the Spanish and the African slaves. However, although history began with this mixture, the Latin American culture did not develop as well as it could and should have, and the reason is mainly to be found in Catholicism:

Lack of a Covenant Theology and Biblical illiteracy are, I believe, the main reasons why our cultural character is flawed. Our culture does not prepare us for responsibility or fit us for government, because our Hispanic American philosophy of church and state are tutelary in nature, Mother Church and the Benefactor Ruler ‘taking care’ of the flock and of the citizenry. From that perspective, our culture is the cause of our underdevelopment and our falling behind in comparison with other nations of the world (ibid.).

Little is left of the “delusions” and “darkness” that were reported a century ago. Instead we see a more “sociological” explanation of the lack of development. It is this “sociology” of Pentecostalism that ultimately will be instrumental in the transformation of society.

However, in the last century, the seed of a new, biblical faith has been widely sown:

“It began, it is true, as a Gospel of Salvation, initially very Pietistic, but it included several strains of Pentecostalism and promoted widely the word of God”.

Pentecostalism, then, is the answer to the misery inflicted upon the continent mainly by “Traditional Catholicism”. Pentecostalism not only provides a “spiritual” answer, it also gives a transformative and sociological answer.

Finally, alluding to a view on Pentecostalism that can be observed in Argentina,²¹ “Roots” concludes:

Personal and marital transformation will overflow into relational and leadership transformation... and... social and cultural transformation. Transformed lives... will change the ‘rules of the game’ for all gender, generation, class and ethnic relationships in Latin America. Nine years away from the fifth Centenary of the Reformation (2017) THAT is the kind of ‘Reformation’ that we seek, a holistic and full-orbed transformation, first personal, then social, that will transform the culture by the Word of God”.

Argentinean pastors Rubén Salomone, the leading pastor in Iglesia de Dios and current (2013) President of Fecep, and Mario Morano of Príncipe de Paz, both expressed a certain openmindedness toward the Catholic Church when I interviewed them in 2008. However, when asked about the role of the Catholic Church historically in Latin America, they were both quite negative. They both blamed the misfortune and lack of prosperity in the continent on the Catholic Church, and they both were of the opinion that the Church had been an obstacle to development. Now, on the other hand, Salomone and Morano had seen how Pentecostals and Catholics could work together and felt that they in many ways shared a great deal of the same faith.

In the 1980s the Pentecostals “mobilized to conquer Argentina for Christ” (Wynarczyk 2009: 2). This focus on the nation as a geographical and cultural space for conquest was shared by Pentecostal movements in several countries. An example of the Pentecostal rhetoric on the national theme comes from Argentinean-born and US-based pastor Luis Palau, who on several occasions has “advised” both George and George W. Bush on spiritual and political matters.²² While travelling in Latin America in the 1970s he focused on conversion, and while visiting the Dominican Republic this “handsome, wavy-haired spellbinder named Luis Palau took the microphones and thundered about an impending ‘climax of history’ (*Time Magazine* 1977).” According to an article in *NoticiaCristiana* (2008), Palau cooperated with Hugo Banzer, the Bolivian dictator of the 1970s. In the article, Palau is accused, by Mexican Catholics, of fronting North American interests and also, together with Banzer, wanting to “Christianise” the Bolivian

²¹ ACIERA’s motto: Pentecostalism as the transformation of the individual, the family and society.

²² “Never has someone born in Buenos Aires been to the White House so many times” (Seselovsky 2008).

population. Moreover, Banzer is said to have used the expression “God is a nationalist” as a result of meeting Palau. And it is this idea, that God is nationalist and that the well-being of the nation depends on having a good relationship with God that converges in time with the idea of a Catholic nationalism. That is, rhetoric alluding to national(ist) sentiments could be found in both Catholicism and Pentecostalism – and what is more – it is transnational in the sense that it could be found in many Latin American countries at that time. The “healing of the nation” has been, and still is, though to a lesser extent, an important rhetorical strategy among Pentecostals. In Argentina, Carlos Annacondia became the most prominent proponent of such a strategy. This national “theme”, as a strategy and a sentiment, was not too distant from the Catholics’ focus on nationalism in the previous decades. After all the misery inflicted by the dictatorships and the misfortune of a should-be-prosperous nation, the Pentecostal focus on healing and recovery (by turning to Christ) resonated well with the experiences and traumas of many people.

Integration and a new evangelism

The socio-political changes and the new position of the Catholic Church were all part of the structural changes which paved the way for the new spheres that were filled with various contents during the 1990s. That is, the Catholic Church *could* have taken a different route. It could have, within the new religious sphere, manoeuvred in such a way as to meet the Pentecostals with “open arms”, and thereby trying to include them as part of its own ongoing mission. Or, it could have continued portraying the Pentecostals as “*sectas*” or brainwashers. However, and this is crucial, there was no room within the new sphere, for the Catholic Church to stop the Pentecostals by introducing new laws or forbidding them to freely proselytise and carry out their evangelistic campaigns. Those days were over, and could only return with yet another restructuring of society. In the same way, the socio-political landscape was informed by the rules of the political, public and judicial spheres. The political sphere *could* have been filled with various political projects like socialism or fascism. However, proponents of such political projects would have had to find their way within the restricted

boundaries of the new spheres as well.²³ A coup d'état seemed to be “out of the question”.

Two important institutions were established in this period: INADI²⁴ in 1995 and CALIR²⁵ in 2000. INADI was founded in order to monitor Argentinean society and prevent discrimination, racism and xenophobia. CALIR was a government-initiated project with the task of reflecting upon and providing knowledge about the present situation of religious freedom in Argentina. In the introduction to the first book they published, *La libertad religiosa en la Argentina*, editor Roberto Bosca observes that the issue of religious freedom has been well investigated in many parts of the world, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries, but that Argentina almost completely lacks literature on the subject (Bosca 2003: 11). CALIR has subsequently produced several articles, held conferences and published at least one more book on the subject (2007), but their work has not yet resulted in any changes in the laws. Both CALIR and INADI are, without necessarily stating it explicitly, protecting and to a certain degree promoting pluralism and/or multiculturalism.²⁶

Furthermore, in the early 1990s Argentina experienced how a local conflict with global scope, when the tensions in the Middle East could strike close to home. The Israeli Embassy was bombed in 1992, killing 29 and leaving 242 injured, followed by AMIA-building in 1994, killing 85 and injuring hundreds.²⁷ This was a very shocking event for a country where Muslims and Jews had been proud of the friendly environment that they shared, as opposed to what often was portrayed as hostile conditions in other parts of the world.

In general, both the Catholic Church and the Pentecostal movement have become less national and more “regionalised”, and even “globalised”, during the 1990s and early 2000s. The battle for the nation has become the battle

²³ Is it at all possible, that socialism (or shall we say communism) or fascism is compatible with democracy? Some would say yes and some would say no. However, whether one holds this or that opinion, as the “climate” in the so-called world community has evolved, and particularly since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, there seems to be little room (or at least acceptance) for alternative organisational forms to the ones discussed in Chapter 2, unless you are China maybe?

²⁴ Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenofobia y el Racismo.

²⁵ Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa.

²⁶ Multiculturalism and pluralism are highly contested concepts, in academia and in political life. Since it is a main claim of this thesis that the Western model only allows for a limited pluralism/multiculturalism, it follows that there is no room for all cultures or any culture in its most comprehensive sense, within this model.

²⁷ AMIA: Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina.

for the continent and even a battle for the world. Both Catholics and Pentecostals want to play a central role in the “transformation” of Latin American culture. Many, particularly Catholic Charismatics and mainstream Pentecostals, are involved in extensive cooperation. They very often find common ground in shared neo-conservative “values” and social commitment. On the other hand, there are large segments of people within both camps who are highly sceptical of one another. These may also share some traditional values, but they see in the other a competitor, a “brain-washer”, a Marxist, or simply a “fake”. This, then, makes up the evolving scenery in which the Argentinean Pentecostals in the 1990s begin the journey to integrate their community in society. In the next decades, the most prominent and visible overtures they made to the state and to the public, judicial and political spheres were in the context of the struggle for religious freedom, and later equality. This is a struggle for recognition, for social space, and against the dominance of the Catholic Church, as well as for increased influence in society, but more than anything else, it reflects the inherent evangelism of Pentecostalism. Moreover, the focus on RFE as a judicial, political and religious right corresponds to international and global trends. This is partly connected to the increased presence of religion in the public sphere and as a political force in general. It also relates to migration, globalisation and the pluralisation of formerly more homogeneous societies and/or the homogenisation of transnational judicial regimes and the conformation of societies to the Western democratic model. In the following, I will present the Argentinean Pentecostals’ RFE, and the national history of religion as related to constitutions and law, before I turn to a more global outlook on the question of freedom of religion and its implications as a judicial, societal and religious issue.

The struggle for RFE

For a long time the *evangélicos* lived under the illusion that it was possible to remain neutral to politics. They only were interested in politics during elections, and more so because voting is mandatory, or if the government did something to hinder religious freedom or evangelization (Padilla 2009: 1).

In 1992, the Pentecostal and Evangelical organisations FAIE,²⁸ FECEP²⁹ and ACIERA³⁰ formed CNCE,³¹ as an institution meant to represent their common interests in relation to the official authorities and the Catholic Church. They soon started advocating what turned out to be their most important common cause: the removal or amendment of decree 21.745 (from 1978), which regulates the relations between the state and minor (non-Catholic) denominations or religions. This is the only decree (or law) remaining from the last MD. Decree 21.745 states that to enjoy legal capacity one needs to register at the Registro Nacional de Cultos (National Register for Cults/Religions), as civil associations as far as the state is concerned. This regulation concerns all religious organisations other than the Catholic Church. “The forced use of this legal mould, often in disagreement with the very structure of churches and communities, raises several practical hindrances” (Navarro: 2011). In addition to being seen as a discriminatory law in the post-dictatorship years, it has been interpreted as having been introduced to control religious manifestations.³² According to Dr. Christian Hooft, Vice-President of ACIERA, it was inspired by the so-called National Security Doctrine (NSD)³³ and is characterised by a profound mistrust of religious freedom. This view is supported by Argentinean sociologist María Soledad Catoggio, who states that the law had an explicit political goal: to control the religious groups who, from an NSD-perspective, were seen as constituting a possible threat to national security (Catoggio 2008: 112–113).

However, we will not see the full picture if we focus only on this law. RFE comprises other aspects and dimensions that need to be taken into consideration. Hence, from the very beginning, four main aspects informed or structured the RFE:

1. Freedom to exist and operate in Argentinean society without having to accept a derogatory attitude from the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was not too fond of the competition from the Pentecostal

²⁸ Federación Argentina de Iglesias Evangélicas – traditionally Evangelical.

²⁹ Federación Confraternidad Evangélica Pentecostal – Pentecostal/Neo-Pentecostal.

³⁰ Alianza Cristiana de Iglesias Evangélicas de Republica Argentina – traditionally mainstream Pentecostal.

³¹ Consejo Nacional Cristiano Evangélico.

³² Hooft, Vice-President in ACIERA. PDF from Internet, undated, but after 2008.

³³ There has been disagreement as to what degree NSD really was a fixed doctrine with specific political means and ends. David Pion-Berlin claims that, in the case of Argentina, “the military practised selective vision, magnifying certain elements of the NSD while losing sight of the rest” (Pion-Berlin 1988: 382).

- movement, in addition to being negative toward what it perceived as a “North American” religion representing North American interests and culture.
2. Freedom from suspicion and “persecution” from the secular mass media, which often aligned with the Catholic Church and condemned the Pentecostals as “brainwashers” and populists whose real interest was to steal money from the poor.
 3. Religious equality in the sense that no single religion shall be favoured in law and praxis.
 4. Freedom to evangelise.

As a joint venture through CNCE, RFE did not develop for real before 11 September 1999, when more than 100 000 Pentecostals were reported to have participated in a Pentecostal rally at the Obelisk in the heart of Buenos Aires. This was another “Kairos-moment” for the Argentinean Pentecostals, and they gained confidence and a new sense of “belonging” in society. The manifestation was reported in several newspapers (peniel-argentina.org 2013). In *Diario La Prensa* the headline was “Massive act of Evangelical faith around the obelisk” (12.09.1999). In the article, excerpts from some of the speeches are quoted (but often without naming the speaker): “Heal our nation”, “Demand equality before the law. Stop being discriminated. Proclaim for all that through Jesus, Argentina can change”. *Diario Crónica* emphasises questions of justice and religious equality as well as quoting slogans against corruption, violence and poverty. Furthermore, *Diario Crónica* quotes pastor Rubén Proietti of ACIERA, who highlighted how the manifestation itself made Argentines aware of the Pentecostal presence. Finally, attention was given to the traditional family and values in general, anticipating the road ahead.³⁴ However, no laws were changed, and a new rally was planned for the autumn of 2001. Again, the RFE was the main issue, and this time even more Pentecostals showed up. At that time the socio-economic crisis in Argentina had come to a point where “everyone” was affected in one way or another, and at the last minute the main theme of the rally was changed from RFE to a general expression of concern for the state of affairs.

This time it was reported that as many as 300 000 Pentecostals turned up (*La Nación* 2001). The main slogan was “Jesus Christ, by all and for all”.

³⁴ Values as a basis for religio-political engagement will be discussed in the next chapter.

Pastor Emilio Monti, then President of FAIE, read the message from CNCE (I have shortened the text here):

The situation we are facing has seriously worsened. The family, the basis of society, is threatened by a culture of consumerism. We as a nation have removed ourselves from God. We know that the transformation of individuals, families and society is possible through God.

Even though it was not the (explicit) intention, by this action the Pentecostals became even more “aware” of themselves as an integrated part of society and understood that the battle for souls also includes a battle for a transformed society. Clearly the three aspects mentioned above were not the only developments going on within the Pentecostal family in the 1990s. There were also the efforts of FAIE, FECEP and ACIERA to work together to create a common platform for various dealings with the state or any other official body. These organisations have been particularly important in the struggle for religious freedom and equality. However, given the history of Pentecostalism as a religion of free and independent denominations, echoing the Pentecostal pioneer in Argentina Fransescon’s statement “no hierarchy and no anarchy”, everyone I have interviewed and most of the written sources stress that these organisations must not function as, or be seen as, churches or denominations. They must not interfere in the churches’ internal affairs, but rather operate as meeting places for denominations and churches with common interests regarding society at large.

RFE in Argentina: a brief history

Freedom of religion as such was not exactly on the agenda of the early colonisers. The patronage secured close ties between the Catholic Church and other colonial powers (the Spanish crown, landholders and entrepreneurs of all kinds). However, when the slide towards a break with the Spanish crown was reaching the point of no return, the national authorities that were established in the new nations had to take into consideration their dealings with people of non-Catholic creeds and make sure that those whom they wanted to befriend (usually trade partners) did not feel threatened or marginalised in or because of ethno-religious affairs. Thus, in 1813 the Asamblea General Constituyente established a principle of religious freedom for the first time, stating:

No foreigner or his family and servants (...) will be bothered due to religious matters as long as public order is respected, and they will be allowed to worship God within their homes according to their customs (INADI, 2005).

This was followed up in 1825 when the “Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation” was agreed upon with the English. Here it was stated that British citizens were

not to be troubled, persecuted or bothered for religious reasons, they will furthermore enjoy a perfect freedom of conscience celebrating the divine practice within their own houses and or particular churches and chapels (ibid.).

These two regulations guarantee the right to personal religious beliefs and practices, but only in private or “closed” contexts. The public and official religion is Catholicism.

The Argentinean constitution grants the Catholic Church specific privileges.³⁵ The Civil Code of 1869, Article 33, recognises: “The full legal standing of ‘the Church’, considering it a ‘legal entity’ (*persona jurídica*)” (Frigerio and Wyncarczyk 2004: 2–3). The Civil Code was reformed in 1968, Law 17.771, where it now is stated in Article 33 that the Catholic Church is one of the “public legal entities” (*persona judicial de carácter público*) (ibid.). Finally, the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Argentinean nation and state is formalised in the agreement with the Vatican from 1966 (*Acuerdo con la Santa Sede del 10/10/66*).³⁶ After independence in 1816 tensions between the Catholic Church and the new Argentinean powers increased, and in 1821–22 the provincial government of Buenos Aires confiscated ecclesiastical lands and goods. Even though the national government decided to compensate the Church for this loss, the incident is still used as a main argument for why the national government should contribute economically to the sustenance of the Catholic Church, as stated in Article 2 of the constitution from 1853: “the federal government supports the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion”. This formulation did not, however, come about without debate. When it was decided to write an Argentinean constitution, Juan Bautista Alberdi sent a manuscript called *Bases* (basis), a

³⁵ The first in 1853, and an amended version in 1994.

³⁶ The validity of this agreement has been questioned due to the fact that Onganía, the military dictator, was de facto President at the time and as such represented an illegitimate regime

sort of suggestion, to the constitutional assembly.³⁷ Many of his proposals were accepted and he suggested that “the Confederation adopt and support the Catholic religion and guarantees the freedom of all the others”. Several other proposals maintained that the Roman Apostolic Catholic Church had to be declared the established religion, but after some debate the above-mentioned formulation was accepted.

The Argentinean constitution was not written in a vacuum, and the men who were responsible for the outcome were well aware of European and North American legislation at the time. Article 10 in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen had already stated in 1789 that: “No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law”; and the First Amendment of the United States Constitution stated that: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” and that Congress shall make no law “prohibiting the free exercise of religion”.³⁸

In addition to displaying a “liberal” attitude in the making of the Argentinean constitution, immigration from Protestant countries was promoted, or at least to some degree desired. Alberdi held the opinion that the children of Protestant immigrants raised in Argentina would contribute to the democratisation of the country, and the leading intellectual, and President from 1868 to 1874, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, promoted education “by hiring North American Protestant teachers from 1869” (INADI 2005: 201).

According to INADI, three (later) controversial formulations were adopted in the 1853 constitution and repealed in the 1994 constitution: Article 67, clause 15, which obliged Congress “to preserve pacific treatment of natives and to promote the conversion of them to Catholicism”; Article 72, clause 2, which stated: “to be chosen president or vice-president of the Nation it is required (...) to belong to the Roman Catholic Apostolic community”; and, finally, the aforementioned question of the Patronage.

The indigenous population, whose cultures and/or religions were not taken seriously, had long been victims of imperialistic evangelisation. The formalisation, in the constitution, of the legal duty to “promote” their conversion to Catholicism, might best serve as an example of the limited scope of the so-called liberal and modern mind-sets of the time, something that applies not only to Argentineans but to most Western expansionistic cul-

³⁷ “Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina” (Basis and starting point for the political organisation of the Republic of Argentina).

³⁸ Written in 1789 but ratified in 1791.

tures wherever they set foot around the globe. The “understanding” of the indigenous population as constituting a fertile ground for missionary projects is also reflected in the fact that the first Protestant groups to come to Argentina established themselves among the Wichí (Anglicans), the Toba (Pentecostals) and the Mapuche (various Evangelicals).

Regarding the requirement for presidents and vice-presidents to belong to the Catholic community, the 1994 constitution eliminated this and also stressed that the oath before the Congress should be taken in respect of their own beliefs. In the constitution from 1853, it was stated that Argentina “vested in herself the rights of Patronage enjoyed by the kings of Spain; the right to appoint bishops, the recognition [...] of ecclesiastical documents and other” (Navarro 2011). It is important to bear in mind that the Patronage was an institution that the Catholic Church at one time saw as invasive and a violation of its autonomy. In 1966 a Concordat was agreed upon between the Vatican and the *de facto* government of Dictator Juan Carlos Onganía. The concordat stated that the Argentinean state recognises and guarantees the full and free rights of the Catholic Church to exercise its spiritual powers, its cult and its sovereign jurisdiction in internal and/or theological matters for the realisation of its specific goals. In addition to this, the agreement with the Holy See from 1957 was upheld.³⁹ In accordance with that agreement, the Catholic Church provided a bishop and other Catholic personnel for the military.⁴⁰ Furthermore, close ties exist between the Catholic Church and the state in such matters as the calling of priests to hospitals (whenever people should be in need of it). For Pentecostal pastors to be summoned, they need to legitimate their visits (something that makes them feel inferior or unwanted by the “system”).

Article 14 of the constitution from 1853 remains unaltered in the constitution of 1994 and states that all inhabitants of the nation may freely practise their religion. It is, therefore, not primarily *freedom* of religious practice as such that the Pentecostals are dissatisfied with but rather the lack of *equality* in the system. Moreover, since Argentina is a federal state, the constituent states can have different legal formulations about these issues. Today only the province of Santa Fé, a traditional stronghold of the confederates and a centre for opposition against the dominance of Buenos Aires, officially holds Catholicism to be the “religion of the province”.⁴¹

³⁹ Acuerdo con la Santa Sede del 10/10/66 (aprobado por Ley N° 17.032).

⁴⁰ Acuerdo con la Santa Sede del 28/06/57.

⁴¹ La religión de la provincia es la católica, apostólica y romana, a la que le prestará

RFE: global outlook

Corresponding with accelerating processes of globalisation there has been a growing awareness in academia of the tensions between local and translocal legal regimes (Goodale 2007). In particular, human rights are viewed as universal rights, individual rights, group rights or cultural rights (Cowan 2009), which exceed the boundaries of national legal regimes and the unwritten “laws” of communities. The rights of religions, religious groups, communities and individuals to practise and worship, as well as to believe, constitute particular challenges to judicial systems, since all religions are protected in international conventions at the same time as particular religions are often favoured in national constitutions; the pluralisation of societies challenges the status of any specific culture or religion. Even though freedom of religion is established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international treaties, it is not specified in those same conventions *how* religion is to be practised and how states should deal with many religious people’s urge to maintain or expand their spaces of influence. In addition, it should be highlighted that international human rights in general are not, yet, “above” politics. Why do some people, movements or states focus on some of these human rights and not others (see e.g. Clifford Bob 2009)? Why are religious groups seemingly more concerned with the issue of religious freedom than, for instance, the issue of poverty or war crimes? Are these groups of people advocates of freedom of religion as such because it is a crucial value in its own right in any society, or because it is instrumental in order to maintain or expand their own *modus vivendi*? Such questions, and the more or less qualified interpretations and speculations about the answers, easily take us into the muddy waters of normativity. However, this should not lead to the conclusion that such speculation should be avoided. On the contrary, it should be encouraged. In my view, both Pentecostal and Catholic institutions⁴² that work for, or show concern for freedom of religion, at home or abroad, have particular self-interests: they are protecting their spaces of influence or trying to expand those spaces. Hence, the Pentecostals’ concern for freedom and equality of religion as such is related to their own *modus vivendi*, which again is dominated by an urge to expand through evangelism.

su protección más decidida, sin perjuicio de la libertad religiosa que gozan sus habitantes (Constitución de la Provincia de Santa Fé, 18.04.1962).

⁴² I could add several other religious groups, but since my main focus here is on Pentecostals and Catholics I limit the discussion to these two here.

There is a growing body of scholarly works dealing with the issue of religious freedom and equality, historically (Gill 2007), in international conventions (Taylor 2005), in relation to tensions between groups and the individual (Scolnicov 2011) and in case studies (Oomen 2011). However, little attention has been given to how the religious groups or individuals themselves are adapting and legitimising their “religiously” based arguments for or against religious freedom and equality in societies that are increasingly influenced by trans-societal (global) interests and in which the public, political and judicial spheres become increasingly important arenas for battles and negotiations between religions as well as between religions and “society”.

In globalised and partly multicultural and multi-religious societies, like Argentina, it is becoming difficult to maintain a legal regime solely defined by a national constitution, since international laws are given priority over national laws.⁴³ At the same time as secular interests are promoting individual and group rights (like freedom of speech or same-sex marriage), increasingly referring to international conventions, religious individuals and communities are turning to the judicial system, to secure their rights as well as challenge age-old regimes. Thus there is a convergence of reference, particularly concerning judicial and other “universal” rights. A question that calls for some educated speculation is as follows: By referring to the same judicial or rights authorities, are these seemingly very differing interests (e.g. LGBT and Pentecostals), “accepting” these authorities’ status as valid “instruments” for settling disputes? Pentecostal and “secular” interests in Argentina are no exceptions to this “dilemma” and hopefully, by looking at the Argentinean case, we will be able to provide a tentative answer to the question.

A few Argentinean scholars have done research related to this field (e.g. Bosca 2003; Wymarzcyk 2009; Algranti 2010), but none has focused on the individual–community or the national–global nexus. None has observed the shifts and changes in argumentation and self-reflection that often are the result of the negotiations about these issues. To the best of my knowledge, almost nothing has been written on how the Catholic Church responds to this in Argentina apart from the general observation that a strong Catholic lobby is working within the political and judicial establishments to prevent changes that might further jeopardise the Catholic hegemony (Wymarzcyk 2009). In my own research I have found that the Catholic Church also en-

⁴³ International conventions that are ratified by countries are normally given hierarchical position over national law. However, the international laws are not necessarily implemented and followed up by the national juridical system.

counters the Pentecostal challenge in other arenas than the judicial, and focus on how to win the battle for “souls” in the public sphere, often by emphasising its social concern for the poor, its role as a protector of “tradition” or its record of being a constant opponent of liberalism and socialism. This again may reflect a certain understanding of a Pentecostal attitude towards politics, particularly the idea that social justice and political and ideological conscience may be things that the Pentecostals are lacking.

The claims of René Padilla (in the introduction to this chapter) and others that the Pentecostals have been too occupied with the RFE at the expense of social concerns are also shared by various scholars. Keith Warrington refers to a Pentecostal educator (D. Allen) who describes a Pentecostal as a “glossolalic ostrich” before stating: “There are sometimes understandable reasons for this”. He continues by referring to the Pentecostal pastor La Poorta, who observes that topics he calls moral issues (as do many other Pentecostals and Evangelicals) like homosexuality, alcohol abuse, abortion and pornography have received greater attention and condemnation than other issues, particularly social injustice (Warrington 2008: 226).

Individual, community, society and the global

When Ferdinand Tönnies first highlighted the difference and tension between *Gemeinschaft* (society) and *Gesellschaft* (community) in the late 19th century, it reflected a particular understanding of the modernising nation states of Europe at that time (Tönnies 2001). Tensions between various individuals, communities and societies created conflicts which often led to oppression and discrimination, and in many cases forced people to leave their country of origin and settle in the “new world” – as was the case for many religious and ethnic individuals or groups. For religious communities this could be a way to survive, an opportunity to nurture their faith free from persecution. In Argentina, people often grouped together in religious congregations that constituted “ethnic retreats” (Bianchi 2004: 80), where English Anglicans, Russian Orthodox, German Lutherans and others upheld their religious beliefs without being persecuted, and without spending time working for the removal of laws that favoured the Catholic Church.

During the time that has passed since Ferdinand Tönnies introduced his dichotomy of the two societal entities, (national) *society* and *community*, another two entities have come to play an increasingly important role: the *individual* and the *global*. These two represent *systems* (as do communities and societies) that constitute entities that can be thought of as bearers of

rights. There is growing concern for the fundamental character of the individual as the entity which actually should have rights, as opposed to communities (Anat Scolnicov 2011: 24). Scolnicov further argues that: “Rights cannot be said to belong to groups because there is no undisputed way in which the bearer of the right (the group) may exercise the right”. Moreover, he argues that even if a right like religious freedom can be attributed to groups, this should only be interpreted in relation to the overriding emphasis on rights as attributed to individuals first. However, this is a particularly “tricky” issue as far as religious rights are concerned, since those rights more often than not are claimed on behalf of, for instance, a Muslim or Pentecostal community. This might be because religion generally is not considered to be a personal or individual attribute, but is rather seen as embedded in a cultural, societal or national context.

Another aspect of this is that in many countries, particularly those with regulated religion(s), in order to be officially recognised a religion must have a minimum number of adherents. The number varies from country to country, but as far as the national level is concerned, and as a direct consequence of the need to have numerous adherents, a single person cannot (in legal terms) claim to have his or her own religion. However, as far as international human rights are concerned, freedom of religion is an individual and universal right. The “complication” is that we are dealing with, at least, four levels: the individual, the community, the state and the international (treaties) which are not directly compatible. The global refers to the increasing influence of transnational forces, and as far as the discussions addressed here are concerned, this concerns international laws, conventions and treaties like: 1) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (UDHR); 2) the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1990 (CRC); 3) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 (ICCPR); 4) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 (ICESCR); 5) the Declaration on the elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief of 1981 (DEAFIDBRB).

Although attention is given to all four levels mentioned, the focus in this thesis is on the *community-society* nexus and the implications of the transnational or global aspects. The reason for this is that being Pentecostal is not only a private concern. Pentecostals are not hermits; they do not go to remote islands to contemplate the essence of God. Pentecostals fight for rights on behalf of a particular religious community. This community is the community of the Church, within which the individual members serve as

witnesses and bearers of the message of God, bridge the gap between the sacred and profane world, and “harvest” souls for Christ. They participate in a community, which again is a “construction” based on a *cosmovisión*, an ordering of the spiritual and mundane worlds constituted by a certain Pentecostal system of communication in which God’s order and plan are superior to national and international laws. Hence, in order to secure religious freedom and equality in, say, Argentinean society, they refer to international laws and rights (also) out of an instrumental motive. In that way, a mundane legitimisation supports their claims for religious freedom.

As early as 1964, Kenneth Strachan described in an article how the leadership of the Latin American mission tried to identify trends in the Protestant churches and concluded that the success of the whole movement could be measured by the continued witnessing of Christians and churches (Escobar 2011: 238). Hence, how and why the demands for religious freedom can be interpreted as having an instrumental character must be seen in relation to a central characteristic of the Pentecostal *modus vivendi*, namely: evangelisation. Evangelisation is based on the idea that the Great Commission is crucial for the Pentecostal community, and functions as the vehicle for their expansion as well as hallmark of their self-understanding. This is particularly so on an institutional and a leadership level, where one finds the people who are (or feel) particularly “responsible” for the expansion of the churches.

In Argentina, the Catholic Church has historically been represented or understood itself not as a separate community (a societal sub-category), but rather as an integral part of society. Although the rights of Catholics as religious individuals are enshrined (in the same sense as the rights of any other religious individuals) in international conventions, their particular privileges are further secured by the national constitution: “The Federal Government supports the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion” (Article 2). Hence, officially, Catholicism, like many other religions around the globe, is in a favourable position on a state and constitutional level. In addition, the Concordat with the Vatican from 1966 reflects the particular position of the Catholic Church. Hence, individual Catholics have a specific relationship with the state, as members of the Catholic Church, and at the same time have the same right as any other religious people in Argentina, according to Article 14 in the constitution, “to profess freely their religion”. Furthermore, the individual Catholic, like any other religious individual in Argentina, is protected by international conventions like Article 18 in the UDHR:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Therefore, when it comes to the judicial aspect of religious freedom, the difference between the Catholics and the Pentecostals, or any other religious minority, is that a specific constitutional status secures the Catholic legal supremacy over other religions. A number of other countries have formalised a relationship between the state and an official or semi-official religion. England, Norway, Denmark, Finland and China⁴⁴ have established religions, whereas countries like, for example, Argentina, Italy, Spain and Poland “give special recognition to Catholicism in their constitutions despite not making it the state religion” (pediaview.com 2012). Hence the latter countries could be said to have semi-official religions. What is lacking in the judicial dimension is the protection of religious communities as such. Article 18 in the UDHR, as well as DEAFIDBRB’s Article 1, mention “community” in order to secure the right of a group to “manifest, practice, worship and observe” but, as Scolnicov hinted at above, it is difficult to see how a community, which is not a fixed entity, could exercise such a right.

During the period of Pentecostal growth and increased influence in Argentinean society, the Catholic Church has maintained its official status and legal position. Some of the questions that arise from this are as follows: Will the Catholic Church continue to lose influence and privileges, and eventually become more “communalised” and have to accept being one religion among many others? Will globalisation, brought about through the practical implementation of international conventions that supersede national constitutions, lead to increased religious pluralisation, and will that too lead to the end of state-favoured religion? Finally, how are the Catholics themselves dealing with these developments? Are they prepared to defend their privileges? How do they justify arguing for religious freedom in China and India but not in Argentina? Furthermore, how are these developments made compatible with their religious doctrine, scripture and tradition? The Episcopal council actually pushed for Article 2 being amended in the 1994

⁴⁴ In the People’s Republic of China, there are two branches of state-operated churches; the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association and Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Pastors are trained at state-approved seminaries and are appointed by the government (pediaview 2013).

constitution, but today many of the (conservative) Catholics want to preserve the close ties between state and church in order to at least maintain their judicial dominance.

RFE in the Western model

In so-called modern, democratic and structurally differentiated societies (Brekke 2003, Luhmann 1995) it is a general perception that the function of the judicial sphere is to regulate and control the activities of the other spheres, like the political, the economic, the scientific and the religious. It is the flexibility of the law, its interpretations, its praxis and not least its character as an independent institution, tasked with securing legal protection and rights for all, that makes it the centre of disputes and negotiations concerning questions that at first sight seem to belong to some other spheres, like the religious, the political or the public. This very understanding of human beings as “free”, on the basis of rule of law formulated in judicial principles is particularly specified in Article 29, paragraph 2 of the UDHR:

In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

This article is of particular interest because it not only establishes “the law” as the regulating tool of all the other rights formulated in the declaration, but also because it connects human rights with democracy. Hence it is the function of Article 29 to secure the implementation of Article 18 in the UDHR.

In 1994, a revised version of the Argentinean constitution was formulated, and Article 75, section 22 states that “treaties and concordats have a higher hierarchy than laws” (Argentinean constitution 1994), with UDHR, ICESCR, ICCPR and CRC being listed as some of those treaties. What should be noted is that Article 18 does not mention *equality*, but refers to *freedom* of religion. This might be the reason why Pentecostals do not refer to the UDHR in this matter, since *freedom* is also secured by Article 14 in the Argentinean constitution: “All the inhabitants of the Nation are entitled to... profess freely their religion”. However, highlighting the instrumentality of the arguments, the UDHR is referred to for support and legitimisation of the arguments concerning the protection of *the family* as the basic building

block of society.⁴⁵ However, there are other principles and “truths” that also might legitimise arguments for the right to believe and act according to religious or other convictions. These arguments could be the product of religion, ideology, world view, culture, etc. However, as indicated by the questions proposed above, it may be the case that different religious groups refer to the laws that suit them best when fighting for a particular position, and these tensions between “secular” and “religious” laws, and between national and international laws, frequently lie at the heart of the negotiations that a religious community must engage in. Globalisation has accelerated to such a degree that challenges of this kind, similar in fashion and often strikingly similar in content, surface in such (until recently) different countries as Argentina, Sri Lanka,⁴⁶ Indonesia⁴⁷ and France.⁴⁸

Providing a model for the role of religion in society, Bruce Lincoln advances the minimalist-maximalist dichotomy (Lincoln 2003: 59). At the maximalist end of the spectrum religion constitutes the central domain of culture, whereas at the minimalist end, religion is restricted to the private sphere and dealing with metaphysical concerns. Lincoln provides us with a decent starting-point for the observation of the role/place of religion in societies: Does the religious individual, community or society “accept” that religions (or religiously based authorities) “decide” what is right or best in politics, science, law, etc.? Or, on the other hand, do they accept that other authorities (judicial, political and scientific) make decisions based on the knowledge and discourses within those other domains? Concerning the Argentinean context: Where in the maximalist-minimalist nexus is the Pentecostal community located, and where are the Catholics and the Catholic Church to be found? A problem with Lincoln’s theory is that it does not take into account *compatibility*; i.e., from the perspective of a “religion” both a so-called secular and a so-called religious society can either be maximalist or minimalist. It depends on how a particular religion perceives society and vice versa. Hence, by applying the analytical concept of compatibility, outlined in Chapter 2, any position within the nexus could be said to be maximalist or minimalist. For example: *I am a Norwegian Protestant*

⁴⁵ Article 16, 3 (in particular): “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State”.

⁴⁶ In Sri Lanka, Buddhists want to prohibit proselytising (particularly from Pentecostals).

⁴⁷ In Indonesia, there are debates on how religious groups and issues are to be referred to (or not) in the constitution.

⁴⁸ In France, the discussion about the secular character of the state and public spaces is not new, but it is religious clothing in schools in particular (especially the Muslim veil) that has been an issue lately.

and believe that it is in accordance with my religious conviction that questions of faith and reading of the Bible belong to the private sphere. The non-private spheres are therefore “sanctified” by my belief and understood within the religiously founded framework. This kind of understanding could also be referred to as holistic in the sense that “everything” is interpreted or understood in such a manner that it is compatible with the religious, but this does not mean that religious institutions or religious authorities should “run” everything.

As we have seen, Niklas Luhmann, on the other hand, understands modern societies as being structurally differentiated to the point that self-referential auto-poietic sub-systems have evolved, whose function it is to maintain their own existence, so to speak. A modern society is accordingly divided into sub-systems like the economic, the religious, the scientific and the judicial. All the systems are constituted by communication, which encircles binary codes. The religious sub-system’s code, according to Luhmann, is immanent – transcendent (or faith – no faith), and all communication within the system must be understood within that framework. This means that for communication to belong to the religious sub-system, it has to be structured in such a way that it is “understood” by the recipient as religious. For example: *I am in favour of religious freedom because it is good for humankind, and God wants what is good for humankind.* This argument is “religiously” based and belongs to the religious sub-system (or sphere). The following example is different: *I argue for religious freedom because every human being has the right to decide what her or his faith should be.* This argument also supports religious freedom, but is based on the idea of universal rights and therefore belongs to a universal-rights sub-system. The “problem” with communication is that it is coded, restricted, contextual and blurred. People do not always say what they mean, know what they mean, and say all that they mean, and so on. Hence a certain hermeneutics of suspicion is needed to detect what is meant. Yet, what can be observed is how people argue and act. Whether or not the religious sphere is “shrinking” or “expanding” can hopefully be observed in use of UDHR and Concordat references, national constitution references, history and tradition references, biblical references and so on by the Argentinean Pentecostals and Catholics.

RFE and evangelism

The question of religious freedom (RFE) is too often treated as a judicial issue only, i.e., as something that concerns the right of individuals to express or maintain their religious convictions in nation states (but increasingly also transcending the nation state in the form of international and universal treaties). As important as that might be, I find it urgent to stress that RFE can mean several things. I here want to differentiate the elements of this concept in order to shed light on its complexity. 1) Freedom to believe what you want, to think what you want (RFE as a private concern). 2) Freedom to believe whatever you want, and to practise your religion, alone or with others in private and semi-public spaces⁴⁹ (RFE as a group or community concern). 3) Freedom to believe, practise, share and proselytise your religion, individually or with others (RFE as a public concern). These three levels of RFE illustrate that there can be greater or lesser recognition and acceptance of RFE, and that there is room for different interpretations. The three levels may in varying degrees come into conflict with other human rights. By looking at the Argentinean constitution, international conventions on human rights ratified by Argentina and various practices, I will discuss in particular how definition 3 poses a challenge to both national and international conventions in this field. Moreover, whereas definitions 1 and 2 defend the rights of a particular believer or particular believers (e.g. Pentecostals, Muslims, Buddhists or Mapuche), definition 3 allows for interaction with the “other” – the non-Pentecostal, non-Catholic etc. – and it is here that problems or obstacles may arise. We have seen above how the Argentinean Pentecostals have focused their struggle for religious freedom and equality on the removal or amendment of national laws and decrees. Now, after a brief review of national and international jurisdiction, I will present two evangelising methods that have become popular among Argentinean Pentecostals in the 1990s and the early 2000s. Finally, I will discuss how conflicts between religious rights and other human rights might occur.

Two Argentinean Pentecostal churches

In the following, after describing two Pentecostal churches in Buenos Aires and their efforts to grow and expand, I will present G12 and the so-called 4–

⁴⁹ Semi-public spaces refers to churches, mosques and synagogues – “holy places” designated for rituals, ceremonies and worship that are open and closed at the same time: anyone can come, but normally only the followers of the relevant faith do come.

14 Window. G12 is a missionary method that is becoming more and more popular, particularly in neo-Pentecostal circles around the globe. It has gained a great deal of support in Argentina, and will be discussed in relation to the significance of the Great Commission for the Pentecostals and the growing importance of global networks. The latter considerations also apply to the second method of evangelisation presently being emphasised by Pentecostals worldwide, the so-called Window 4–14, which is directed at children between 4 and 14 years of age.

Iglesia Príncipe de Paz

In the *barrio* of San Telmo, on Bolívar Street in Buenos Aires, a rather small Pentecostal church, Príncipe de Paz (PP), is located. It is affiliated with the Iglesia Asamblea de Dios en Argentina (IADA, Church Assembly of God), which is the largest Pentecostal denomination in Argentina with more than 1000 affiliated congregations throughout the country (pastor Altamira, in interview). This denomination is not the same as, or related to, Unión Asamblea de Dios, which is associated with the US Assemblies of God, the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world (Anderson 2007: 284). The history of IADA goes back to 1920–21 when the Swedish missionaries Axel Severin, Gustav Flood, Albino Gustafson and Cristian Nilson came to Argentina. They first went to visit the Norwegian Pentecostal missionary Berger Johnson in Embarcación, where he was evangelising among the Tobas, but they soon split up and moved to other areas of South America. Severin returned to Buenos Aires where in 1922 he started the first IADA church (Cruzue 2008: 1–2). The denomination's history continued with strong Swedish influence, and their pastors in the first 35 years were people like Gunnar Svensson, Sture Andersson and Nils Abraham Kastberg. This did not change until 1958 when Pascual Crudo became the first Argentinean pastor in an IADA church.

In 2001, I made my first visit to Argentina, and Príncipe de Paz was the first Pentecostal church I saw there, located as it was only 50 meters from the first hotel a taxi-driver brought me to. The people there were very welcoming, and Pastor Marco Altamira in 2001 and Mario Morano in 2007 were more than willing to answer to my questions. Altamira told me that PP was founded in 1982. He had begun as an assistant to a US pastor, but after participating in Carlos Annacondia's campaigns he started PP during a period when many other Pentecostal churches were also being founded. Like many other Pentecostals Altamira called the church growth period of

the 1980s “*la renovación*” – the renovation. This designation referred to the need to “cleanse” the country after the military dictatorship, mainly spiritually but also socially and politically. PP participated in two large campaigns, in 1982 and in 1986, and experienced steady growth in the 1980s. In the early 1990s, however, the growth slowed to the point of stagnation. As of 1997, membership began increasing again. This was explained as due to a restructuring of the church. Before 1997, PP had one main pastor (*Pastor General*) and three assistants, but as the church grew bigger, a gap arose between the leadership and the members and more loosely affiliated people, and something “had to be done”. A new organisational model was introduced. Responsibility was delegated to a greater extent and people were trained to operate on different levels. Every group or cell on the different levels has leaders, and there is close contact between the leaders and the cell groups. The aim of the cells is to motivate recruitment, and the groups are increasingly organised by and in private homes, which resemble how Pentecostals always have been willing to meet in homes, partly reflecting their lack of belief in sacred buildings (Kay 2009: 293). The criteria for being chosen as a leader were “strong faith and Christian experience”.

Four years after the restructuring, the church still had one main pastor and 3–4 assistants, but now they had 60 leaders. According to Altamira this kind of restructuring had taken place in 4–5 other churches as well, and they all had experienced such “explosive growth” that in 2001, the cell groups counted 600–700 members altogether in addition to just as many more loosely affiliated members. PP is still growing, and the cell group method has developed and become even more sophisticated. The need to grow, evangelise and get as many people as possible under the “canopy” of the church is a crucial ingredient in the Pentecostal attitude towards “the world”, as well as being central to their self-image as far as their mission on earth is concerned. This has led not only “pure” Pentecostal churches like PP but also Argentinean Baptists being drawn into the Pentecostal understanding of how divine forces are active in the world today and that there are really very few (if any) limits to how the Great Commission should be fulfilled.

Unión Evangélica Argentina Bautista y Hermanos Libres (UEB)

In 2001, I met Alejandro Arabica, a Baptist in a UEB local church founded in 1994 in a working- and middle-class neighbourhood in Buenos Aires. Arabica and his wife gave my wife and me a warm welcome and were sur-

prised and somewhat startled by the attention they received from a couple of Norwegians. But it soon became clear that they had their own explanation for this. Just one year before, the church still only had the same 25 or so members as when it started seven years earlier, but then something happened, they told us. “Since we were so few, had so few members, we sat down and prayed.” The answer to the prayers came in the form of a revelation: “Jesus had 12 disciples! What did he do? He went out and proselytised, and talked to people. He met them one by one, and in groups.” So the answer was for them to do the same as PP had done: restructure the church and meet people where they are located, with friends and in homes. “One must take care of every person, visit people at home and involve family and friends.” The result of this new evangelising method was that they now had 50 members and were beginning to think about expanding the church. On the other hand, UEB was a very typical small local church in Argentina. They arranged activities in the streets and participated in ecumenical projects. They were represented on the hospital board, and in addition they were involved in municipal activities and were active in the local community. But they were also a Baptist church community strongly influenced by the Pentecostal growth since the 1980s. Hence, they were, as many of these older denominations, sceptical of the mega-churches and the neo-Pentecostal focus on prosperity and were more concerned with evangelisation and the presence of the Holy Spirit here and now.

US Baptist Steve Wilkes has described how shocked he and other US Baptists were when they came to Argentina and saw how the Baptist faith was practised there. He referred in particular to Lorenzo Klink, who had been an Argentinean Baptist pastor for more than 40 years, and still was among the most respected Baptist leaders in Argentina and abroad at that time. Klink broke with Baptist tradition when he claimed that “much of what they were doing today is not written in the Bible and that we are in a time of revelation” (Wilkes 2002). I asked Arabica what the difference was between them and other Pentecostal and Evangelical churches of “the renovation”. The answer was, not surprisingly, of the ambiguous kind: “We are not doctrinaire, but have not changed doctrine since we started more than 100 years ago”.⁵⁰ When asked to elaborate on their relations to the Pentecostals, Arabica added that they, the UEB, “could not vouch for all that they were up to, as Pentecostals displayed a more charismatic style and, most

⁵⁰ Although UEB was a new church, the members considered themselves to be part of a more than 100-year-old tradition.

importantly, that the Baptists could not fall from grace as could the Pentecostals". It seems that these older "Pentecostalized" churches have had a rather ambiguous journey during the last 20–30 years. On the one hand, they experienced tremendous growth combined with becoming involved in spiritual and societal matters formerly off-limits to them. However, on the other hand, they feel they have lost something along the way, their heritage and part of their "essence". What to bring along, and what parts of all this new stuff to accept are questions they must consider. This has also come up in my conversations with institutional leaders like Ruben Salomone (FEC-CEP, 2007), Norberto Sarraco (ACIERA, 2008 and 2010) of ACIERA, and Pablo Deiros (ISEDET, 2006).⁵¹ When I asked them to describe the Pentecostal movement – if one could speak of it being a movement at all – and its relations to Evangelicals and other Protestants, they all began by describing the "big" differences between the various groups and churches. But as the conversations progressed, it turned out that these differences were more of a historical character; as they came to present-day topics the differences became more difficult to explain. They all ended up agreeing that more or less all of the Protestants in Argentina today would accept being called Pentecostals, and that the similarities are much more apparent than the differences. Because these three hold top positions and are working for the common cause of the Pentecostals, they might describe the unity as greater than it actually is. They are all "unifying" personalities, trying to hold together a movement that was born out of denominationalism and the idea of meeting in assemblies rather than cathedrals. This practice, which has proven quite successful, especially when one looks at the growth of the last 30–40 years, has also been criticised, for example by Catholic intellectual Guzmán Carriquiry, who observed their organisational model and stated that they were practising a "hara-kiri of denominationalism" (Carriquiry 2005: 273).

Cell groups and G12

As we have seen, PP and UEB represent different strands of the contemporary history of Argentinean Pentecostalism. PP was established in 1982, when the *Iglecrecimiento* commenced. It joined a traditional denomination and developed into a "moderate" neo-Pentecostal church. UEB represented an older history of Protestantism in Argentina going back to the 1880s,

⁵¹ ISEDET: Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos.

when Methodists, Baptists, Free Brethren and others were the first non-ethnic and proselytising churches to enter the country (Bianchi 2004: 80). What they had in common, though, was that they both were lifted by the spirit of “the renovation” and that they both adopted similar methods of evangelisation by using cell groups. The Pentecostal communities in Argentina have much in common, both with each other (in Argentina) and with Pentecostals worldwide. But if any feature stands out apart from the experience of revelation in our time, it is the “need” to spread the message or, as Wilson quoted by Warrington, concludes: “The missionary task for many came close to being their movement’s organisational reason for being” (Wilson in Warrington 2008: 246). Hence, in order to get a fuller picture of how the Pentecostals relate to society at large and/or the “other”, we need to look at several aspects at the same time. RFE is one way of approaching the political, the judicial and the public sphere; evangelisation and proselytisation are another. Moreover, with “the missionary task” being the “organisational reason for being”, the urge to expand takes various forms and follows different paths. So, after this presentation of two Pentecostal churches in Buenos Aires, where we saw that new evangelising methods had been very successful, we will now take a closer look at this method, followed by a brief presentation of the so-called 4–14 window.

Cell groups, as a “modern” evangelising method, are usually said to have been founded by Yonggi Cho in South Korea in the 1960s (Kay 2009: 293). He introduced home groups in a systematic manner in order to reach as many people as possible in Seoul.⁵² The reason why the groups came to be known as cells is supposedly based on a biblical metaphor. In the New Testament, the church is seen as the “body of Christ”. Thus, since all living things are made up of cells, the church became cellular. In 1965, Cho divided Seoul into 20 regions or cells, and sent leaders to each of them. These started home groups, invited people who had not converted to join, and started training young adults to become leaders themselves in new groups (Cox 2001: 231). The pyramid-like structure was an immediate success. In just three years, the church welcomed 8000 new members; and in 1973, their church, Yoido, had to be relocated to accommodate the rising number of adherents. In 1984, the church had 400 000 members, and in 2006 it counted more than 750 000 members, including 136 600 cell leaders (Kim 2009: 137).

⁵² Notice the correspondence in time of Omar Cabrera’s and Ed Silvano’s “visions” of preaching for multitudes.

G12 is a concept, a particular version of cell groups and a missionary method and strategy based on a vision that Columbian pastor César Castellanos had in 1983. “Pastor Castellanos felt God spoke to him about building a church that would have so many people that he would be unable to count them all” (G12-Internet-site). After this revelation he and his wife Claudia (the two are normally presented together) moved to Bogotá where they founded a church “starting with only eight people in the living room of their home. Today the church has hundreds of thousands of members” (G12-Internet-site).

The so-called G12-vision has influenced churches all over the world, and today a global network of churches and organisations are utilising this method and arranging conferences in countries like the USA., the Philippines, Sweden and Bolivia, just to mention a few. G12 means the Government of Twelve. “It is a strategy for evangelism and multiplication, based on the believer’s love for Jesus... It was born out of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19–20” (What is G12 - website). The G12 vision, “the ladder of success”, has four steps: Win, Consolidate, Disciple and Send. The twelve disciples are all leaders of cell groups, and the goal is to always teach new leaders to form new groups of twelve. Below is an excerpt from “What is G12?”

12 Advantages of a G12 Meeting

1. Each leader follows the vision of the Pastor by making disciples.
2. Each leader motivates his disciples to grow and truly work for God.
3. Everyone is motivated when the Vision is correctly implemented.
4. It allows everyone to work in the ministry.
5. It gives the leader an opportunity to share goals with the team.
6. It fulfils the purpose of God.
7. The leader trains the disciples to minister to their disciples.
8. Friendships are formed.
9. It allows everyone to understand and speak the same language.
10. The leader works hard to see his disciples become successful.
11. It strengthens the ministry and unifies the vision of the church.
12. It creates an atmosphere that encourages growth based on hard work and trust in each other.

G12 groups help to:

Strengthen the unity of the church.

Strengthen the vision of the church.

Establish a working and honest relationship with each team member.

Create an atmosphere that encourages growth.

Omar Cabrera Jr, the son of the famous Pentecostal pioneer in Argentina Omar Cabrera, and his wife Alejandra are now the leading pastors of the neo-Pentecostal church Vision of the Future (Visión de Futuro). They have adopted the G12 model and present “the vision” on their homepage. The first step is to win souls for Christ. This is primarily the task of the cell groups: “The salvation of souls is God’s heart’s burning desire” (Visiondefuturo – the vision). Then follows consolidation:

The Process of consolidation has begun when the new believer makes a decision to follow Christ. This is a process that was present in the early church. *“Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God”* (Acts 14:22).

Consolidation is the key to making sure that the newly converted remain in the church and that their faith is strengthened. A manual, listing things to do in order to hold on to the converted includes:

Let the convert be part of a group as close to where he or she lives as possible. Make a phone call within the first 48 hours after conversion. Make a home-visit and prepare the convert for the “pre-encounter” and “encounter”. The encounter is a three-day spiritual retreat where a new believer can first experience a confrontation with Jesus. The new believer comes face to face with God, with His Word, with himself and with his past. There he will obtain the grace of God to completely remove sin from his life. Also, he will be able to reflect daily and be able to move forward in faith to conquer a better future.⁵³

Objectives of an Encounter:

- be completely sure of their salvation
- experience genuine repentance
- break bondages that bind them to their past

⁵³ I have selected some excerpts from the manual and partly summarised them in my own words but without omitting or re-writing important phrases.

- receive inner healing in their heart
- receive and experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their Lives
- clearly understand the Vision

Then it is the task to turn the disciple into a believer. Yet, not everyone has what it takes: “Choose mouldable men” (visiondefuturo) as candidates for leader positions. And, finally, when the disciple is ready, he or she can become a group leader and repeat the process with new members. Several other steps are listed on the G-12 Internet site, showing that it is a rather formalised and tactical form of evangelisation. G12 is not the only method that has been developed in order to fulfil the Great Commission. As mentioned above, both RFE and, as will be discussed in the next chapter, social and political commitment may be (or should be) seen in relation to this. Another new “global” missionary method that is being used in Argentina is directed at children. The viewing of children as objects of evangelisation is a rather new phenomenon within Pentecostalism. Raising the children of Pentecostals with Pentecostal beliefs, traditions and customs is not new. Neither is proselytisation directed at young adults down to the age of 14–15. But, the targeting of younger children is something new. I phoned Jan Eilert Aakre, administrative leader of the Norwegian Pentecostal Movement, and asked him whether or not they imposed or recommended a minimum age: How old do you have to be, to be “born again”? His answer was that they normally considered 13–14 years to be the minimum age for making a decision about this, and he claimed not to be aware of anyone who operated with an age limit below 10 years. Nevertheless, through “mission focuses” like the 4–14 Window, Pentecostals *are* targeting children, and in the following the contents, the method and some of the initiators behind this are presented.

The 4–14 Window

It is crucial that mission efforts be re-prioritized and re-directed toward the 4/14 age group worldwide (4–14 Window Booklet).⁵⁴

A global network of Pentecostal churches and organisations is working hard to unite the Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelical forces in the world. Evangelisation is one of several, and perhaps the main goal of these net-

⁵⁴ All quotes in this section are from the 4–14 Window booklet (unless otherwise indicated).

works. Transform the World (TW) is an organisation that consists of a great number of churches and organisations that are either members or affiliated members. They cooperate with the Lausanne movement, perhaps the largest Evangelical-Pentecostal movement/organisation in the world today, and with One Hope, just to mention a few. TW is founded and based on the assumption that the world is changing radically, that a new epoch of mission is unfolding and that “transformation has become a unifying vision of the Church’s mission” (Transformtheworld.net). The Argentinean Pentecostal umbrella organisation ACIERA is affiliated with TW and is promoting the 4–14 Window in Argentina, a strategy of evangelisation directed at children between 4 and 14 years of age. Between 1990 and 2005 the focus was on the so-called 10–40 Window. This refers to a geographical area of the world, between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator and include Asia, Africa and Europe. In these regions, the Pentecostals calculated there to be the most potential new converts, and large campaigns were instigated in order to reach their people. Now the focus is on children, and Luis Bush, one of the campaign’s leading figures, has written a booklet entitled *Raising up a new generation from the 4–14 Window to transform the world* (Bush 2009). This booklet has been translated into Spanish and is presented, together with other 4–14 materials, on the main website of ACIERA. In the booklet, Bush states that it is urgent to consider “the strategic importance and potential of the 1.2 billion children”, who have calculated as possible converts in this age-group. This generation can be reached, he continues, and “experience a personal transformation and can be mobilized as agents of transformation throughout the world”. Transformation is the key word, and the instrumentality of children as “God’s agents of transformation under the head of Jesus Christ” is quite explicit. In order to make this evangelisation project as successful as possible, a large-scale investigation has been carried out in several countries to map the religiosity and values among children. This is used strategically to undertake targeted evangelising campaigns. Bush visited Argentina in 2010, and that visit is mentioned with great enthusiasm on ACIERA’s website (2011).

The targeting of children for evangelisation purposes raises several questions. To what degree are such efforts in accordance with national and international legislation? To what extent are children capable of making their own (religious) choices before they turn 15? What does the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) say about children and religion? And, last but not least, according to Bush, the 10–40 and the 4–14 Windows intersect because of the vast number of children in this poorest regions in the world.

How then to interpret this targeting of the most vulnerable for the purpose of converting them? There is no doubt that the Pentecostals care about children and that they love children and want what they believe is best for them. But where is the dividing line between, on the one hand, love and care, and on the other hand, of proselytising? The answer to the first question, why children, is to be found in two particular aspects of contemporary and global Pentecostalism, evangelisation and transformation. As stated several times above, evangelisation is highly important to the Pentecostals, and their constant need to grow and expand make them seek out new areas for the “harvesting” of potential followers. They find a lot of “support” for the focus on children in the Bible.

From the 4-14 Window booklet:

In both the Old and the New Testaments we frequently see God using children and young people to transform their world. The cast of 4/14ers used by God in the Bible includes some fascinating individuals:

Samuel was the child through whom God delivered a needful but difficult message to the high priest, Eli. Samuel’s sensitivity to God’s leading and his ready obedience were exemplary. (1 Samuel 3)

David was only a boy when God began speaking to him. As the youngest of eight brothers,

David’s own father didn’t even consider him when Samuel came seeking the one whom God had chosen to be the next king. And while he was still a teenager, David slew the giant Goliath and inspired his nation to rout their enemies, the dreaded Philistines. (1 Samuel 17)

Josiah was a boy-king through whom God reformed the religious and social state of his country (2 Kings 22). When the dramatic reforms began, he was a mere eight years old (2 Chronicles 34).

Esther, an orphan girl who was likely in her early teens, became a queen whom God used to save the Jewish people from annihilation. (Esther 2)

Jeremiah was chosen by God, though he was “only a child” (Jeremiah 1). “It is not just that these people happened to be children,” writes Keith White, founder and director of the Child Theology Movement, “but that some of the most significant acts and revelations of God were through these children. Their faith and actions are critically important in the unfolding and outworking of God’s purposes.”¹¹ Throughout Scripture, we see God entrusting special truths to children or using them as His special messenger or instruments.

Hence, it seems to be possible to legitimise child-evangelisation in scripture. However, it is not as easily legitimised in tradition, so the advocates of this focus need to make sure this new method is compatible with Pentecostalism. This they do, in the booklet and in other web-material, by constant reference to the Bible and by showing how Pentecostals need to seek out new fields for continued growth. Then, although child-evangelisation is not tradition, evangelisation in itself is. Furthermore, the development of new ways to spread the word has been something of a hallmark of global Pentecostalism, ever since it first started moving around. So by showing how this is legitimised and authorised in scripture and tradition, the 4–14 window movement has an evangelising project that is communicable in the Pentecostal sphere; compatibility is achieved. In addition it fits with a global trend, where transformation of individuals, families and society are on the agenda. If children is “frequently used by god” to transform the world, then what better to do than to join Him in this work?

To the second question, where is the dividing line between love and care, and proselytising? Or, who old do you need to be to be “born again”? It seems as if the members of the 4–14 movement, and most other Pentecostals, for the time being are not thinking of this as a problem. ACIERA’s members, who are running the campaign in Argentina, complain about the discriminatory laws there. They want, or so it seems, to be treated on equal terms with any other religion (particularly the Catholics). But they also want to send their missionaries abroad. Will they respect religious freedom and equality in the countries they enter? And what is more, will they respect a different interpretation of what religious liberties mean, like not the freedom to proselytise but the freedom to believe and practise (even in public places)? My point here is not that the Pentecostals *should* do this or that (it is not for me as a doctoral student to make such normative statements). However, I ask these seemingly normative questions in order to draw attention to what *I* consider to be crucial for understanding both the RFE and missionary methods like G12 and the 4–14 Window: the intersection between different ways of “being in the world” as related to the Great Commission. In addition to a “conflict” between the RFE and proselytising for

children,⁵⁵ this reveals possible conflicts between these missionary methods and some international human rights.⁵⁶

The Preamble of the CRC states that:

Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.

Article 13: “The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds”.

Article 17: “State parties...shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of [...] sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being.”

Article 18: Parents [...] have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child.”

These articles are meant to protect children from abuse and oppression as well as to secure their basic rights as human beings who do not yet have the ability to fully take care of themselves. The 4–14 Window seems to be in conflict with the CRC and other international conventions on some points, and particularly Article 18. Pentecostals are eager to focus on the importance of the family as a basic building block of society, and often opt for private (Christian) schools – as they consider a Christian/Pentecostal upbringing to be superior to any other. But, alas, for them the family is not just *any* family. Will the families of the children they are targeting have a say in this “intervention” in their children’s upbringing? Moreover, since Pentecostals are eager to portray the family as the basic building block of society, and often claim their rights as parents to teach and preach their own lessons to their children. Does this not apply to others’ children as well? If FECEP is going to continue to complain about discriminatory laws in Argentina and demand respect as a religious community in a democracy (Volpe 2009: 1), should not its supporters then also have to explicitly reveal how they envis-

⁵⁵ Or at least reveals that the struggle for religious freedom and equality is but one step on the way towards the second coming of Christ, and that as many people as possible must be saved before that happens.

⁵⁶ Since I am not a lawyer and because it is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will not go into legislation issues – Argentinean or otherwise – in detail.

age religious freedom and equality? The latter obviously should also apply to Catholics or any other individuals, communities or states that draw support from international conventions on human rights. Questions concerning these topics are particularly difficult to approach, because although the laws might be (almost) clear enough, it is still a long way from a revival meeting in a shanty town of Buenos Aires to an international supreme court. In addition, it is a tricky field because the international conventions, well formulated and with the best of intentions as they may be, are written with the smallest common denominator, the individual as their point of departure. Hence, individual rights based on free will are the result. However, since individuals are social beings and because free will is always conditioned on social constructions,⁵⁷ there will have to be long debates about this in the future.

Some concluding remarks

When FAIE states its main objectives and fundamental priorities, the first thing on the list is “to act in favour of religious freedom and against all forms of discrimination and exclusion” (FAIE 2013). This indicates the importance of this issue to the members of FAIE. In addition, they have the goal to establish a new law for religions (and amend or remove the old ones) in 2016, which is the bicentennial of the Argentinean independence. As we have seen in this chapter, they share the struggle for RFE with the two other umbrella organisations, ACIERA and FECEP. The latter states that “4 million constitutes a religion”, alluding to the praxis of having to register as a civil organisation at the Registro de Cultos. The three organisations are also very much concerned with ecumenical work and unity within the Protestant sector. However, this unity is put to the test now and then. FAIE is not as preoccupied as the others with same-sex marriage and “values”.⁵⁸ Their main public issue has been, and still is, the struggle for RFE, and on

⁵⁷ Free will is always conditional; i.e., choices made will have to be based on something (either this, or that). Furthermore free will is contextual; I could choose to set up a tent downtown and try to live like a hunter-gatherer, but I would definitely be considered to be mentally ill. Apart from the choices one can think of, there are an enormously vast number of options/choices one cannot think of – due to who one is, where one is (spatially and temporally) and who one is not and where one is not. That said, maybe it is better to conceive of this as a will that is more or less free, having no choices diminishes human beings and strips them of dignity, whereas too many choices “individualise” human beings beyond the confines of social culture.

⁵⁸ This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

the 10 January 2013 they met with President Cristina Kirchner at the Casa Rosada (the residence and office of the Argentinean president at Plaza de Mayo). The event was reported in mass media, and newspapers referred to the meeting as “the first time an organisation representing the most important Iglesias Evangélicas in the country” (Urranga 2013) had such a meeting with the head of state. They talked about their proposal to reform the Código Civil (Civil code or law) and about religious pluralism, and FAIE emphasised the need for a new Ley de Cultos (law for religions).

ACIERA’s reaction to the meeting reveals some of the tensions that have developed between the organisations in recent years, and particularly since the controversy over same-sex marriage, on which ACIERA and FAIE diverged (at least to some extent). According to ACIERA: “Only one sector of the Pentecostals met with the president”.⁵⁹ Although the members endorsed the meeting, they did not endorse the fact that FAIE was portrayed as representing the Pentecostals (*Evangélicos*). They claim that FAIE only has 19 member churches, whereas ACIERA represents 196 Pentecostal institutions with more than 3700 congregations. Although the ignorance of the massmedia did hurt their feelings, and they felt a need to show some “muscle”, the struggle for RFE continues. As a community, the Pentecostals are now more or less integrated into Argentinean society, but since their struggle has not yet borne fruit, a certain frustration and restlessness can be sensed.

Evangelism continues, however, and new missionary methods will be tested. Much now depends on continued growth during the next decade and whether or not the Pentecostals achieve increased social influence. Will the 4–14 method “catch on” with others, and will it be successful? It is too early to say, because this is a rather new way of proselytising, and even more so because cell groups have been a widely used missionary method since the early 1990s and because the growth seems to have slowed down (or even stopped), one may expect continued expansion efforts to be directed, not only at the conversion of individuals, but also to a larger degree at social impact. How and in what ways will the Pentecostals seek social influence and how will the Argentinean society react to it? It is to this aspect of Pentecostalism and society that we now turn, as the focus shifts more specifically to political and social issues.

⁵⁹ ACIERA, “Noticias”, website, accessed 08.03.2013 (but not accessible 22.08.2013).

5. Pentecostalism and politics

Argentina needs more politicians who encounter the transforming power of Jesus Christ, and not more evangelicals who are seduced by the temporal power of politics (Rubén Proietti, President ACIERA, 2007).¹

When Carlos Menem was elected president of Argentina in 1989, he was the first popularly elected president to succeed another popularly elected head of state from another political party (Raúl Alfonsín 1983–89). It was in itself a token of a new and more democratic mentality as well as a further step towards the consolidation of the Western model. Twelve years later these processes were interrupted by politico-financial turmoil. *El menemismo* was blamed for many, if not most, of the things that went wrong in the period leading up to the crisis which escalated in 2001. Then, after a couple of turbulent years, Néstor Kirchner was elected president in 2003, and a period of steady economic growth and social reform commenced. The process of differentiation continued, as can best be observed in the “autonomisation”² of the political, judicial and religious spheres and of the increasingly important public sphere. Moreover, the role of the military, a crucial socio-political actor for several decades, was “harmonised” with democratic rule. Conscription was abolished in 1994 and defence expenditures were down to 0.9 per cent of GDP in 2006 compared to 8 per cent in 1981 (Turner 2011: 106). However, it is important to acknowledge that the reformation of society in the direction of democracy has not been, and still is not, obvious or easy. Paraphrasing Derrida’s notion of democracy as a “promise”, Ananda

¹ Argentina necesita más políticos que se encuentren con el poder transformador de Jesucristo y no más evangélicos que se dejen seducir por el poder temporal de la política.

² That is, that all the spheres (or sub-systems) became more independent. For instance, the Catholic clergy lost (un-democratic) political power, and the courts obtained more freedom from executive control.

Abeysekera (2008: 1) claims: “Understood this way, to live in a democracy, to be a citizen, to believe in democratic principles – freedom of choice, freedom of press, human rights, justice, law, among others – is to live in a state of deferral”.

Although I am not taking such a stance at face value, I think it is important to be aware of the many problems and challenges inherent in societal changes in general, with democratisation processes as no exception. That is, impatience with democratic reform is both necessary and frustrating. Hence it is important for young democracies not to “forget” that no system of rule has yet optimised its “imagined” potential. Even so-called stable democracies, like the Scandinavian countries, are still developing and still have democratic deficits, depending on how democracy is measured.³ The transition from one form of government to another varies a great deal from country to country and context to context. Furthermore, if we take into account a broader understanding of democracy, as a way of organising and structuring society,⁴ the picture becomes even more complex. A majority of the countries in South America have experienced democratisation processes over the last 20–30 years. In addition, many of the countries have had some form of democratic experience also prior to the latest transition. For example, Brazil had democratic rule for more than two-thirds of the 20th century, but still has a long way to go before democratic structures are truly in place and the substantial poor segment of the population is properly included in society (*Encyclopaedia of Democracy* 2000: 361). In Chile, the transition to democracy was to a large degree agreements among the elites, whereas “the more abrupt Argentinean transition was unleashed by the political and military collapse of that country’s military regime” (Cavarozzi 1992: 208). This may have fuelled old tensions and spurred attempts, by various segments of the population, to find new spaces for confrontation: in the political sphere through political parties, in the religious sphere through religious movements and in the public sphere through civil associations.

³ In addition, one may claim today that these democracies (like in many/most other countries) are facing challenges from regionalisation (e.g. EU) and globalisation. That is, through the regional common entities they are transferring power to non-democratic, semi-democratic or democratic institutions *outside* of their national borders (or control). This may also be seen as a way of trying to influence, at least to some extent, forces that are outside of national and democratic control; i.e. by relinquishing some of their formerly national democratic sovereignty to a larger commonly constructed entity like the EU or UNASUR, these countries hope to (or so can it be argued) regain democratic control, this time through a joint venture with other “like-minded” nation states.

⁴ That is, democracy defined not “only” by people’s opportunities to vote but also as based on free elections and democratic institutions, rule of law, a free press, etc.

Recently (in the autumn of 2012) there have been protests against the administration of Cristina Kirchner. The protesters complained about corruption and insecurity and generally opposed what they perceive as arrogance on the part of the president. Kirchner's supporters, for their part, claimed that the protests were organised by the political right and orchestrated by strong financial interests like the "monopolistic" Clarín group.⁵ Whatever the truth may be, these tensions reveal the existence of distrust between large groups in Argentinean society, but without posing a threat to democracy – as a form of government, that is.

During the same period as these structural changes took place, Pentecostalism experienced considerable growth. As mentioned earlier it is estimated that around 1980 approximately 2 per cent of the total population were *evangélicos*, of whom approximately 33 per cent were Pentecostals (Wynarczyk 2009: 170). In 1992, Pentecostals represented approximately 57 per cent of the then 10 per cent large "Evangelical" movement.⁶ Today there are somewhere around 9–15 per cent Evangelicals of which approximately 75–90 per cent are Pentecostals.

How are the Pentecostals approaching the new democratic spaces that have been opening up since the early 1980s? Before that time, the Pentecostals constituted a marginal group in Argentinean society, both in numerical and political terms. As they grew in numbers, their attitude towards society changed. Whereas their pre-democracy marginal position fuelled a negative dualism ("the world" as an evil place to be avoided), their more integrated position, from the late 1980s gave impetus to a more positive dualism ("the world" is still full of evil forces, but it can now be transformed). This positive dualism, which was first expressed in Tommy Hicks' campaigns in the 1950s, "Argentinised" by Omar Cabrera in the 1960s and 1970s, and blossomed with Carlos Annacondia's and Héctor Giménez's evangelising campaigns in the 1980s, has resulted in a more explicit focus on the evangelisa-

⁵ The Clarín group has been opposed to the Kirchners for several years, particularly since the proposal for a new broadcasting law was introduced in 2010. This law is intended to limit the power and influence of individual corporations in the media sector. The formal application of the law, which is supported by Reporters without Borders, has been delayed several times due to petitions by the Clarín group. <http://en.rsfg.org/argentina-new-law-will-benefit-media-06-12-2012,43769.html>, accessed 12.12.2012.

⁶ The estimates are based on the number of Pentecostal churches within the Evangelical community. The proportion of Pentecostals among the *evangélicos* was probably higher due to the fact that the Pentecostal churches soon became substantially larger than the churches of traditional Evangelicals and because many of the former Evangelicals became "pentecostalsed".

tion of the “multitudes” in big arenas and at rallies, and through mass media (*televangelistas*) and increased societal engagement.

Leaving evangelisation *per se* aside, my intention in this chapter is to shed light on the increased Pentecostal presence as a public and political force, and on the political dimensions of Argentinean Pentecostalism. Three different Pentecostal political “projects” or cases will serve as the empirical basis for the discussion: (1) attempts to establish a political party in the early 1990s; (2) a conference in 2003 displaying a Pentecostal response to what was seen as neo-liberal globalisation; and (3) an increased focus on certain values as the basis for political involvement from the early 2000s. Throughout the chapter I analyse these three projects on the basis of a general hypothesis concerning the relationship between two different modes of communication: a religious (Pentecostal) mode and a political one. I claim that differences between these modes of communication need to be overcome in order for the Pentecostals (in Argentina) to succeed “politically”. That is, the political needs to be made *compatible* with the religious (Pentecostal) in order to gain support from Pentecostal voters. This means that the political mode must resonate with, and be legitimised by the religious mode (scripture, tradition, leaders and/or other authority). Hence, although several Pentecostal policies can be conceived of as possible (contingency), it seems that the religious mode (here: Pentecostal) regularly “trumps” the political; the political must harmonise with the religious and not the other way around. Furthermore, as the Pentecostals have grown in numerical terms, they constitute a more diverse group than before religiously and hence also politically. However, although Pentecostal politics could be several things as far as many issues are concerned, an emphasis on certain “values” has evolved in the last decades and now seems to constitute the basis for societal (and thus political) concerns. These values can be divided into *interior* and *exterior* values (although the Pentecostals do not make such a division themselves). The interior values include honesty, sincerity and trustworthiness which again constitute the core of what could be called a Pentecostal ethos (Valoresparamipais 2010, website).⁷ The exterior values include pro-life, anti-homosexuality, pro-family and what could be called God’s natural order. Whereas the interior values are the basis for the right (political) attitudes and behaviour, the exterior ones represent the more important and specifically political conflicts that need to be won in order to transform

⁷ This website, from 2010 is now down. New site at this address: <http://www.valoresparamipais.com.ar/>, accessed 12.09.2013.

society. These values have been emphasised and promoted by the umbrella organisations, mainly ACIERA, which hosted an Expovalores (a value-Expo) in 2010 and FECEP, in addition to a political party/platform called Valores para mi país (Values for my country). An important question then arises: Are the problems of compatibility between the religious and the political modes being “solved” with this understanding of *values* as the basis for Pentecostal involvement in political life?

Before returning to the discussion of the three Argentinean cases, a brief conceptual clarification will be provided. First I will present some general thoughts on religion and politics. Then follows a brief eclectic review of modern political theory. Finally I will give some examples of Pentecostalism and politics in various settings, before directing investigative attention towards the Argentinean cases.

Religion and politics

When Marduk sent me to rule over men, to give the protection of right to the land, I did right and righteousness in..., and brought about the well-being of the oppressed (King 2012).

The relationship between religion and politics goes far back in time.⁸ The citation above, which is an excerpt from the introduction to Hammurabi’s code, legitimises the king’s power as invested in him by Marduk, the Babylonian god. At the same time it tells of the political work that Hammurabi had performed and how that work was right, i.e., accorded with the divine will and law.⁹ What we are presented with then, in this short formulation, is a world in which the religious, the political and the judicial are all part of the same.¹⁰ However, recognising that ancient as well as more recent history is full of “god-kings”, “sacred laws” and “just wars”, it is difficult for the “modern” eye not to conceive of these as *also* being separate, in one way or the other, or at least not *the same*.

⁸ Hammurabi lived around 1790–1740 BCE.

⁹ One ought perhaps to dwell on his deeds as well. He “did right and righteousness [...] and brought about the well-being of the oppressed”. Enrique Dussel has argued that Hammurabi here sparks off the “enlightenment”, distant in time and space from ancient Greek philosophers and late renaissance thinkers (Dussel in interview 2012).

¹⁰ Let loose a political scientist, a historian of religion and a law student on the society of Hammurabi and you would be in for “war”.

This mixture of religion and politics is also found in ancient Rome, where it was claimed that “the position of the priests can only be understood in the context of the rest of the constitutional and political system of the city” (Beard, North and Price 1998: 21). However, reflecting upon the changing character of the role of the *rex sacrorum* and the *pontifex maximus*, Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price (1998: 56) ask the question whether or not the Romans of the early republic “are making a deliberate separation between religious and political areas of the king’s duties”.¹¹ The authors’ reflections upon this may be supported by their data, but one may also ask to what degree their “conclusion” is based on an unintended comparison with what is normally regarded as the outlook of so-called modern societies. As an outsider to Roman history, I can only speculate about the political role of the pontifex maximus and the religious role of the emperor, but I am pretty certain about one thing: they both express a will to see to it that the “world” is how it “should” be, and they both seek power in order to implement the necessary measures. In my opinion, addressing the question of who has access to the power needed to change societies is crucial if one is to have something approaching a working definition of politics. And, herein lays one of the ideas of the modern so-called secularised society: by stripping the religious authorities and institutions of political power¹² religion fades out of the official realm and into the private sphere. As argued by several authors (e.g. Haynes 2006), the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia altered the relationship between politics and religion in Europe: “Religion as the prime mover of war and politics was increasingly replaced by an autonomous politics of the princely state” (Giesen 2005: 94).

By chasing historical patterns or courses of events, or by conducting an archaeological genealogy, in a Foucaultian or Agambian sense, one may end up essentialising the past at the same time as one deconstructs the present. Such an endeavour may prove a valid and constructive academic enterprise in so far as it questions and criticises current structures of power, and thereby reveals the shaky ground beneath one’s own feet. But it may also amount to no more than an excursion through the past in search of what is not to be found (the essence of the present). To be more precise, I do not wish to prove the present with the past by saying that religion and politics

¹¹ Rex sacrorum (“king of rites”) and pontifex Maximus (leader of the priests) were, in the late republican period “the most powerful of the great political priests” (Beard, North and Price 1998: 55).

¹² As will be discussed later, the only way to return to that power in a democratic society is via the ballot-box.

always have been the same or that the political of the present has its roots in the religion of the past (e.g. Agamben 2005). One may speculate about whether or not the authors who see the “religious” in the “secular” and vice versa (?), like Weber and Agamben, are mere observers, or if they also “want” the political to be grounded in the religious.¹³ A theological argument could be that without some kind of transcendent anchoring only politics is possible, not ethics, and politics without ethics lacks “values” and therefore is prone to corruption and inconsequence. A “secular” argument, on the other hand, could be that the political is about the immanent and that ethics and values do not need a religious legitimisation. Moreover, Western democracies may be understood as legitimising the very political system as “sacred” or “necessary” and therefore to be “above” criticism (democracy as transcendent). Giesen asks if the political can dispense of the religious at all. Echoing Carl Schmitt, he answers himself: “Religion – however disguised and translated – is constitutive for every kind of politics” (Giesen 2005: 95).

That said, whether one finds the religious in the political or the other way around, religion does something to individuals, communities, societies and cultures, and various religious authorities have a long tradition of seeking political power (even though they may call it something else). The “history” of the defeat of the acclaimed secularisation thesis that dominated sociology from the 1950s to the 1970s has become a “standard” ingredient in any book about religion and society, politics and globalisation today. Even though it is easy to agree with those who see religion as “alive and kicking”, there are still many aspects that need to be looked into and theories that need to be grounded. The “world” is still not one place in one time; Buddhism in Java should not be seen as the same as Islam in Egypt, and Pentecostalism in Brazil is not the same as Scientology in Hollywood, and so on. Moreover, it is not only the religions themselves that distinguish the cases. The cultural and political contexts are still very different. A religious organisation, like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, may play a very different role politically in a dictatorship than in a democracy. In the former it needs to balance between various forms of pressure and make alliances, in order not to be dissolved or marginalised. In a dictatorship they can befriend those in power and access privileges, which again may instigate po-

¹³ By juxtaposing the political with the religious, some may think that one or the other is *reduced* and thereby de-legitimised. For example, one may argue that the politics of the present, with its “dubious” unbalanced power relations, has a religious origin and that this is the reason for its faults.

litical action as they see fit. But by doing this they may lose support from the constituency. Therefore, they need to fight their religio-political battles while constantly struggle to balance between “true” and “realistic” religio-political action. Democratic elections, on the other hand, are first and foremost vote-intensive (assuming that the ballot is properly functioning – no rigging, etc.). In such a context the Muslim Brotherhood will have to show their supporters that their political program is compatible with their religious program in order to get the necessary votes. Moreover, in order to “play the game” as a democratic party in a new and fragile democracy, they need to establish double compatibility.

As we have seen recently this turned out to be a difficult task, not only for the Muslim Brotherhood, but also for the new democracy, as well as various segments of the old and new political establishment.

New political theory

Politics, or the political, can be understood and defined in many different ways. One way of approaching this particular field is to look at how the issue is treated in modern political theory.¹⁴ The presentation of this academic field and its connection with the Argentinean Pentecostals’ involvement in politics will to a certain degree be done successively, but it will mainly take place as an introduction to the political field. As mentioned above, an increasing number of books are dealing with religion and politics in contemporary contexts. This in itself is a sign of a different approach to religion as a political force as well as a consequence of religions’ so-called re-appearance in the public sphere, globally as well as locally, in recent years. The authors of these books – sociologists, anthropologists, historians of religion and other scholars like Peter Berger (1999), Peter Beyer (2006), Jeff Haynes (2005), David Martin (2002), Nicholas Adams (2006), Jürgen Habermas (2008), Steve Bruce (2003), Jose Casanova (1994), David Westerlund (1996), Roland Robertson (1995) and Jean Comaroff (2010) – rarely define politics and religion *per se*, but rather set out to observe how religions are playing a role in local and global political life. Often the discussions encompass topics like democracy (Martin, Beyer and Habermas), globalisation (Martin, Beyer, and Robertson), secularisation (Westerlund, Bruce,

¹⁴ They are considered to be *modern* in the sense that they represent the period after the “resurrection” of political theory, commencing with John Rawls’ *A Theory of Social Justice* from 1971.

Casanova) and local encounters (Comaroff). The trend seems to be to employ *instrumental* definitions of politics, which are thought of as analytical tools that can clarify the arguments. Westerlund and Hallencreutz introduce the concept of “policies of religion”, which they say is “used here primarily to define the position of the state in relation to the religious traditions within its sphere of jurisdiction” (Westerlund and Hallencreutz 1996: 2). This is a narrow and clear-cut definition, but not very useful outside that specific field. Steve Bruce has a wider approach, defining politics as everything from: “the nature and actions of states and governments, to political parties, to the actions of groups intended to influence governments and to the basic liberties that, these days, states are supposed to protect”. Bruce adds that he draws his cases from modern politics: “In part this is because it is only in complex societies that religion and politics are sufficiently separate for us to talk about the way one effect the other” (Bruce 2003: 9). Bruce then anticipates a divide or separation between the religious and the political in so-called complex societies, a separation that is not present in “simple” societies. Thus, secularisation of sorts becomes a hallmark of complex (modern) societies.

However, what is frequently found is a lack of definitions and clarifications of what is meant by politics (and religion). Although it is understandable that one does not wish to spend too much time on this, which can be quite time- and space-consuming, it may contribute to confusion. One of the reasons why it is so problematic to even speak about the two at the same time is because there is no clear agreement on what they mean individually or in relation to one another. Hence, in order to meet this challenge, or problematize some might say, I now briefly present an overview of modern political theory. My hope is that this may serve as a clarifying tool when I later come to a more specific presentation of Pentecostals and politics.

According to Peter Laslet, in the 1950s political philosophy was “dead”, killed by logical positivism. Within the scientific frames of logical positivism, normative statements had no value, and political philosophy (as first and foremost a normative academic discipline) therefore had nothing to contribute to the *scientific* understanding of societies. Behaviourism, inspired by the natural sciences, dominated, and theories were supposed to be objective and empirically oriented. However, the general conception of the humanities and social sciences changed and began to incorporate an understanding of those academic disciplines as not being value-free, and as such reflecting the changing and fluid contents of their objects: societies and cultures. The disciplines could not live up to the so-called objective goals of

the natural sciences, and a growing awareness of the interpretative role of the academician and the field or discourse of which he or she was part of became clearer. The stage was set for a book like *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls 1971), which in many ways rehabilitated normative political theory (Pedersen 2010: 10).

John Rawls' book confronts utilitarianism¹⁵ and reopens the debate between liberalists and communitarians, whose quarrels more than anything else concern the relationship between the individual and the community (or society). Liberalism has its origin in contract theory and the idea of an establishment of modern states with "free" citizens from the 17th century and onwards. The basic idea is that every individual has natural rights as a human being.¹⁶ Those rights are thought of as universal and should be written in law. Furthermore, it is the role of the state to secure those rights on behalf of every individual; apart from that the state is supposed to play a minor role in peoples' lives, and by doing so accept a substantial private sphere. Rawls, however, sets out to "work out a theory of justice" (Rawls 1971: 3). He sees "justice as the first virtue of social institutions", and continues in a "liberal" manner: "Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice." But, in a clear response to utilitarianism, he also states that "justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others" (Rawls 1971: 3). So there has to be a balance between the kind of "hard-core" liberalism with a minimalist state that is argued for by, for instance, Robert Nozick (2009), and the "hard-core" communitarianism found in certain totalitarian states. Rawls wants to renew and further develop classical contract theory as explicated by Locke, Rousseau and Kant, and claims that "the guiding idea is that the principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement" (Nozick 2009: 11), the agreement having been made between "free and rational persons". The agreements and the contracts are to be sanctioned according to a common understanding of what is considered to be fair. Fairness thus becomes the guiding principle for the just state. Law (contract–constitution) secures the universal rights, and the political "sphere" includes the institutions that make sure that justice and fairness are maintained through the public state apparatus and elected bodies.

¹⁵ Utilitarianism is generally understood as stating that the morally best action is the one that produces the best result for most people.

¹⁶ For (too) many years this applied to men only, and more often than not to men in certain positions and with a certain income.

Charles Taylor (1975) criticises the atomistic ideal of liberalism, i.e. that every individual person, based on rights, is free to construct her or his own life. He argues instead that human beings are *social* self-interpretative (hermeneutic) animals who are completely dependent on the recognition of other “animals” (Taylor 1985: 45). Moreover, he adopts the Hegelian understanding that it is the common language, history and community/society which provide the necessary preconditions for individuals to comprehend and actually be themselves. This notion is often considered to be communitarian, although Taylor himself has expressed reservations about such a label (Fossland and Grimen 2001: 227). Taylor is somewhat dubious as to what the implications of this understanding of human beings as “hermeneutic animals” should be when it comes to practical politics, but it is rather obvious that the importance of society and community in relation to the individual should be understood as more comprehensive than in a liberal society; the well-being of individuals is based on the good community/society, and it is therefore the quality of that society or culture that provides the basis for the fulfilment of people’s potentialities.

Michel Foucault is not occupied with normative issues of how societies should be organised for the common or individual good *per se*. He is concerned with the history or genealogy of power and governance, and with what he views as a historic shift in early modern times from an absolutist Machiavellian form of rule¹⁷ to a “household” rule, where the political powers not only need to control the territory but also the people of that territory, since they are a potential threat to political power-holders. This he calls “biopolitics”, and it involves the governance of the population of a territory (often a nation) – where they live, what they do, how they make their money, how they reproduce, etc. (Foucault 1999: 152, 2008). If Foucault is right in his analysis of the development of forms of rule that involve a need, for those in power, to control “all” parts of life and politicise a number of issues that formerly were private or not important for the ruling elite, it may shed light on the politicisation of religions and/or religious values (and to a certain extent individual and/or communitised values). Viewed in a Foucaultian perspective then, the Argentinean Pentecostals’ growing pre-occupation with certain values or issues like support for the nuclear family, opposition against same sex marriage, scepticism toward gene technology and opposition to abortion (or pro-life stance) is a mere *reaction* to the

¹⁷ Foucault calls this synthetic; it is a form of rule based on the relationship between an individual (the king) and the territory (the kingdom).

politicisation of those issues – and the fight to control those issues must be fought in the political sphere, since that is where the decisions are being taken. To control the populations' reproduction, however, may look very different from a political than from a Pentecostal perspective. In the political, the need to control the subjects on behalf of the state is expressed, whereas in the Pentecostal, the need to realise God's natural order is on the agenda. Moreover, due to effects of globalisation one can speculate about a shift from biopolitics to "soul politics": the nation-state can no longer control its subjects in the way it used to, so a battle for peoples' minds and "souls" begin? This again, may help explain the increased importance of religion in (world) politics.

Pierre Bourdieu's understanding of the political is as part of a more comprehensive theory about social praxis which is concerned with various forms of capital like social, political, cultural and symbolic capital. In addition he advances the concepts of habitus and fields. Politics involves the study of the structure of the fields and the relations between them (Hjellbrekke and Osland 2010: 274). The more political capital one has the more power one has as well. Concentration of political power is typical of totalitarian regimes, and therefore one would expect a wider distribution of such power in a democracy. However, the other forms of capital matter as well, as they can be converted or give access to each other's domains; the head of a culture or knowledge institution will more often be invited to lecture for leading politicians and therefore get access to political power. Religious capital is not specifically mentioned by Bourdieu, but should be added here, as it either may empower certain individuals inside the congregation (in a small religious community) or that it may overrule political capital in, for instance, a theocracy.¹⁸ In Bourdieu's understanding, habitus means a perception or structured way of thinking and acting (Bourdieu 1984). As acting agents, people have certain positions and roles into which they have been socialised, which again to a certain degree determines actions and behaviour, in a similar way as Max Weber's "elective affinities" (Weber 2009: 284–285). Habitus and one or several forms of capital together direct and influence the whereabouts of people in the political field. The Argentinean Pentecostals had close to zero political capital before the re-democratisation process started in the early 1980s, but as the society changed, political capital became more available to them. Now they are gaining even more as they

¹⁸ There have been some scholarly discussions/theorisations around the concepts of religious or spiritual capital (see e.g., Iannacone 1990, Stark and Finke 2000, Verter 2003).

enter the political sphere; they are numerous and their votes count, because they are entering formalised politics as legislators and as members of political parties and constellations. In addition, given their relatively large numbers and increased presence in the public sphere, their religious capital has increased, and perhaps one day it will reach the same level of convertibility as the religious capital of the Catholic Church.

The above-mentioned theories illustrate that there is no consensus about the definition of politics, where it begins and where it ends. Where are the boundaries between the judicial, the political and the religious, etc.? To stress the complexity further, at the website OneLook Dictionary Search (2013), no less than 48 independent dictionary definitions of politics are referred to (out of which 32 are general definitions). A closer look at some of these reveals that an average of 5–10 sub-definitions can be found under each of them. Regardless of whether or not many of these are overlapping, this amounts to at least 300 definitions to be dealt with.

Pentecostalism and politics

The politics of Protestantism in general and Latin American Pentecostalism in particular has long been the subject of debate. Ideas about a link between Protestantism and democracy go back at least as far as Alexis de Tocqueville (1998 [1840]), who postulates a connection between the free, egalitarian Anglo-Saxon Protestants and democracy in the USA. Max Weber's theory (1904) about a connection between Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism has influenced social scientists (and others) for more than a century.

Lalive d'Epinay (1969) and Emilio Willems (1967), and in more recent years, David Martin (1990, 1999), David Stoll (1990), Daniel Míguez (1998), Paul Freston (2008) and Amos Yong (2010), have followed up the discussions, focusing in varying degrees on the Latin American context. David Martin emphasises how Protestantism, in his opinion, is an anti-hierarchical religion where "like-minded" individuals constitute a kind of egalitarian community. This, he claims, is more modern and democratic than the hierarchical and absolutist "old-fashioned" Catholic Hispanic culture, which has predominantly influenced Latin American societies, at least until the growth of Protestantism began to have an impact, not only "religiously", but also politically and socially (Martin 1999: 40). Paul Freston also observes that the Latin American growth of Evangelical Protestantism, and particularly Pentecostalism, coincides with processes of democratisation

and re-democratisation (Freston 2008: 3). At the same time, he elaborates on the democracy-Protestantism theory by showing how in many areas the Pentecostal growth began during military dictatorships, i.e. before democracy was installed. Furthermore, he observes how Pentecostal political behaviour is not necessarily, as in the USA, taking a (value) conservative route, but instead is going in many different directions (Freston 2008: 3–4). Contemplating the social alienation of a great number of Latin American Pentecostals, Juan Sepúlveda stresses that a high percentage of them were poor and marginalised to begin with. Furthermore, comparing them with the “base ecclesiastical communities”¹⁹ he claims that “for both movements, salvation is not a purely immaterial question; it is a concrete reality in the here and now of life” (Sepúlveda 1991: 172–173).²⁰

Daniel Míguez has shown how local Pentecostal churches in Buenos Aires, provide “alternative networks to the ones established by the dominant political parties” (Míguez 1998: 135). Both Fortunato Mallimaci and María Soledad Catoggio have emphasised the role and relationship between Argentinean culture, the state, the Catholic Church, religion and society. Thus, the complexity of a particular context, here the nation, is stressed as opposed to more stereotypical labels given to various countries (the USA as the modern but religious exception), regions (Western Europe as the “secular” exception in the world) and religions (Islam as different from all other religions, hence exceptional). But, Mallimaci asks (2008: 117), is not Argentina also exceptional? Catoggio focuses on how the Registro Nacional de Cultos, established during the military dictatorship (1976–83), was intended to control dissident groups, like “threatening” non-Catholics (Catoggio 2008: 114). After democracy was restored in 1983, the National Register became a main issue in the struggle for religious freedom and equality in Argentina, and its very existence has also been important as a motivation for increased Pentecostal political engagement, largely because of its symbolic heritage as instrumental in controlling various Protestant communities.

The increased political presence of Pentecostals on the Argentinean scene is not exceptional in comparison to political Pentecostalism in other countries. On the contrary, the Argentineans seem to be lagging behind. The “politicisation” of Pentecostalism is a global phenomenon. Brazilian Pentecostals have played a considerably larger role as political voices, as voters and in political parties than have their Argentinean counterparts.

¹⁹ BEC or CEB (Comunidades eclesiales de base).

²⁰ Sepúlveda’s statement is from 1991. Today increasing numbers of Pentecostals also come from the middle and upper classes (which may affect the validity of his statement).

Even more interestingly, and in many ways defying “established” ideas of Pentecostals as politically conservative, they have taken various political routes: 1) The AoG and the Universal Church for the Kingdom of God (UCKG) have mobilised votes for their own candidates in elections; 2) Brazil’s Evangelical left has become the largest of its kind in Latin America (Freston 2001: 13); 3) since 2004, more than 60 Protestants have served in congress and two-thirds of these represent AG, UCKG and the Church of the Foursquare Gospel (CFG) (Pewforum 2012); 4) the tele-Evangelist Silas Malafia portrays himself as the leading new value-conservative voice saying: “I’m the public enemy No. 1 of the gay movement in Brazil” (Malafia 2011), and has a clear pro-life and pro-family stance (*New York Times* 2011).

David P. Gushee, reflecting on Evangelicals and politics in the USA, “sees an emerging evangelical centre, neither left nor right” and believes that this Evangelical centre “offers the best way forward for us in a notoriously controversial engagement of our faith with American public life” (Gushee 2008: 104). Gushee strikes at the heart of a difficult issue experienced by many Pentecostals around the world today: the “movement” is getting larger and more complex. Not everyone wants to wait for “the kingdom of God”, but many would rather act in order to reach people and help them, and not only through traditional mission and evangelism. The American Pentecostals and Evangelicals have been “political” for quite a while now, and (like Gushee) not everyone has felt comfortable being “placed” in the neo-conservative right. *“Evangelical Christians have fallen hard for politics. We are in it up to our eyeballs. It seems to be the main thing we are known for”,* he complains before stating that: “A growing number of visible Evangelicals, including Billy Graham himself, are disillusioned with politics, especially with Evangelical engagement in politics” (Gushee 2008: 107, 105). Then, as a response to his own call for a new biblically grounded social engagement, Gushee suggests eight “non-negotiable convictions” as basic principles. These can be summed up in this way: God (faith) trumps any politics; the main obligation of Christians is to follow Jesus, preach the word and make disciples; the world as a whole is the Evangelicals’ moral concern (morality, ethics and values trump politics). “As Jesus warned: ‘The people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light’ [Luke 16:8]. If we play the world’s game in the world’s way we will lose every time” (Gushee 2008: 106). The problem of compatibility is striking and to combine the religious and the political still poses a great challenge for the American Pentecostals/Evangelicals, even after many years of practising.

In El Salvador similar issues are surfacing. “Capitalizing on effective evangelization, the Pentecostals now make up more than 40 per cent of the population” (Wadkins 2012: 12). In addition, with a fast-growing Charismatic movement, the appearance of the religious scene is changing. However, as in many other places, the question of how the Pentecostals are to “be in society” poses a challenge. *Misión integral* seems to be a solution for many, and several leading Pentecostal pastors complain about the lack of social justice: “It’s not enough just to preach the Gospel, place gang leaders in jail or even give aid to the poor... We must speak out against and attempt to change those underlying conditions that cause poverty and violence” (Pastor Vega of Mission Elim church, quoted by Wadkins 2012: 14).

A survey of Pentecostals in ten countries was made by Pew forum in 2006. It revealed that in two of Argentina’s neighbours, Chile and Brazil, 65 per cent of the respondents thought “religious groups should express views on social and political questions”. Despite the question being somewhat vaguely formulated, this result tells us that Pentecostals care about what happens in society, one way or the other.

Amos Yong, a Pentecostal scholar, has tried to come to terms with what Pentecostal²¹ politics can be (Yong 2010). He describes three political positions which he finds among Pentecostals world-wide. The first he calls apolitical Pentecostalism. Taking sayings like “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36) straightforwardly, Pentecostals in this category advocate a dispensationalist eschatology and prioritise mission and evangelisation over political engagement.²² Carlos Annacondia’s answer to the question of the causes behind the global economic crisis, “I think the times are accelerating, the coming of the Lord too” (El Puente April 2009), belongs to this category. Annacondia provides what many would consider to be an apolitical (or religious/Pentecostal) answer to what many would consider to be a political/economic question.

The second position is called Political Pentecostalism. Yong here refers to open political engagement, and especially electoral politics, citing exam-

²¹ Because of the diverse composition of worldwide Pentecostalism today, Yong opts for “a broad and general definition – hence the uncapitalized ‘p’ in pentecostalism” (Yong 2010: xviii).

²² Dispensationalism is a theological system that teaches biblical history in terms of a number of successive administrations of God’s dealings with human kind, called “dispensations”. It maintains a fundamental distinction between God’s plans for the nation of Israel and for the New Testament Church, and emphasises prophecy of the end-times and a pre-tribulation rapture of the church prior to Christ’s Second Coming (Christianity-wikia 2012).

ples from Brazil, Zambia and Nigeria. The above-mentioned Brazilian examples may fit in well here.

The third position he calls “Pentecostalism as an Alternative Civitas and Polis” (Yong 2010: 11). He divides this into three sub-parts of something that he calls “prophetic politics”: a) utterances with a distinctly prophetic character, biblically supported, which seem apolitical but may be intended as political (also) and which have political consequences; b) antithetical political stances like anti-communist, anti-Catholic and anti-Muslim; c) counter-culture and an alternative civil organisation.

After this brief review of how religion and politics, particularly Pentecostalism and politics, have been approached by scholars, it is time to turn to the Argentinean cases. I hope that the various theories and considerations presented above will make it obvious that the subject at hand is not clear or straightforward. However, I will now return to the question of different spheres, communications and compatibility. These are concepts that are particularly well-suited for analyses of relationships between Pentecostalism (or other religions) and politics in a vote-intensive democratic society. In such a system (and in an ideal world) it should be rather easy to measure if the communication is successful; just check whether the Pentecostal party receives the Pentecostal vote. However, the world is a complex arena, and the question of why the Pentecostal party gets few votes may be hidden somewhere else, as will be discussed. A comprehensive survey among Pentecostal voters, to understand their priorities and reflections on this issue would have been helpful, but such a task was beyond the scope of this thesis.

Three political “experiments” or cases

By discussing three clear-cut cases of Pentecostal politics, I aim to illustrate that Pentecostalism, once a marginal and isolated movement, is now becoming an integrated part of society and political life in Argentina. Moreover, this is, at least partially, in line with a global trend where *Misión Integral*²³ (proclamation *and* demonstration of the gospel), *holism* (God-in-

²³ A concept launched by the Argentinean Evangelical René Padilla in the 1970s: “When the church is committed to integral mission and to communicating the gospel through everything it is, does, and says, it understands that its goal is not to become large numerically, nor to be rich materially, nor powerful politically. Its purpose is to incarnate the values of the Kingdom of God and to bear witness to the love and the justice revealed in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit, for the transformation of

everything) and a positive dualism (the “other” – everyone and everything is convertible/transformable) are becoming increasingly important.

First, I will focus on the attempt to establish a political party in the early 1990s. Then follows an analysis of a conference and a book, *Las Iglesias evangélicas dicen basta!* (The Evangelical Churches Say Enough!), published in the wake of the economic-political crisis of 2001. Finally, I will reflect upon the Pentecostals’ political mobilisation in the struggle against same-sex marriage and abortion, and in favour of a greater emphasis on particular values as a foundation for the transformation of society. My hypothesis is that the two first political projects were not made compatible with the religious project of the majority of Pentecostals, at least not at that time. The third and most recent case may reveal how the gap between the religious and the political is being bridged through a convergence or adaptation of the religious communication to the communication in the political sphere in a way that gives the political involvement religious legitimacy.

The formation of a political party in the 1990s

Some Pentecostals (mainly pastors) created a political party, Movimiento Cristiano Independiente (the independent Christian movement) in the early 1990s. The party did not become the success its founders wanted it to be. Argentinean anthropologist Daniel Míguez contextualises the religio-political climate of the 1990s in Argentina as follows: Since democracy was restored at the beginning of the 1980s, the country witnessed growing political freedom and an increase in religious liberty that occurred in two ways: first, the prohibition to proselytise was removed and second, “people acquired a more developed consciousness of the importance of civil rights, especially freedom of speech and thought (Cheresky 1992) and thus felt more free to enter dissident religious minorities such as Pentecostals” (Míguez 1999: 3). As a considerable number of people converted, Pentecostals became more visible in the public sphere and soon came to attract the negative attention of the “established” media and the Catholic Church. A “campaign” against the *sectas* was launched and a “law of cults” was promoted by “certain senators and deputies connected to the Catholic Church” (Míguez 1999: 3) with the aim of restricting the religious freedom of minorities and especially Pentecostals. The negative attitude of the Argentin-

human life in all its dimensions, both on the individual level and on the community level” (Padilla 2012).

ean establishment (the Catholic Church, the leading political parties and the media) reflects some of the Pentecostal motivations to enter politics.

According to Míguez, towards the end of the 1980s, the Argentinean people grew tired of politicians and corruption. Pentecostal leaders of “second rank” hoped to capitalise on the atmosphere of discontent in elections and made an attempt at creating the first political party in 1991. An ecumenical group of Baptists, Pentecostals and Plymouth Brethren were behind the attempt.²⁴ This first political project was a failure, but in 1993 the party fielded candidates in the national elections. 80,000 votes out of two million were not enough to get a single candidate elected to office, and Míguez asks why, like in Peru, Brazil and Central America, in Argentina “brothers don’t vote for brothers?”²⁵ Míguez presents a list of five factors to explain the Pentecostals’ political ambiguity: (1) Pentecostals’ main aim and motivation is evangelisation; (2) Pentecostal leaders seek churchly advancement through political success; (3) because of (1) and (2) their relationship to politics is pragmatic and instrumental; (4) Pentecostal followers, and to a lesser extent leaders, have secular political identities; and finally (5), the Pentecostal doctrine is “malleable and subject to *ad hoc* interpretation” (Míguez 1999: 2). According to Míguez, various combinations of these factors explain the ambiguous political position of Pentecostals and add evidence to the theory of “paradoxical behaviour”.²⁶ Looking more closely at the factors in Míguez’s list, I believe that none of these factors, however they are combined, can really support his hypothesis. The first factor stands out as the essence, the aim and motivation, that which “really” concerns the Pentecostals. When this motivation lies behind “everything”, you need a factor to contradict it in order to support the theory of paradoxical behaviour. None of the other four factors qualifies in this respect. Depending on how one understands or defines religion, one could consider the possibility that, though not explicitly stated, the Pentecostals’ main aim and motivation is to attain earthly power, whether by the instrumental use of “religious” or of “political” means. I agree with Míguez that one of the main

²⁴ All these could now easily be placed under the Pentecostal umbrella in Argentina.

²⁵ I asked Rudolf von Sinner, Professor of Systematic theology and author of *The Churches and Democracy in Brazil* (2012), whether or not it was true that “brothers voted for brothers” in Brazil. He replied that it was not really true, and that people could not really be sure about it. Rather it was based on assumptions, since the Pentecostals received a substantial number of votes in the elections.

²⁶ The theory holds that Pentecostals say one thing but do another; e.g., they believe in healing through prayer but at the same time consult biomedically trained doctors (Droogers 1998).

aims and motivations for the Pentecostals is evangelisation. But herein also lies a clue as to why they had problems succeeding in politics: they experienced politics as not being compatible with Pentecostalism, and since the religious trumps the political (in a political project) such a failing would prove devastating (for the political project, that is).²⁷

The second factor can be explained by the fact that churchly advancement is central for, at least, the mid-segments within the Pentecostal organisations. However, to display the will to work hard, to want to do better, to let the spirit work fully with you and to seek power with/in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is based on Pentecostal “doctrine” and is expected of aspiring members of the organisation – as part of what this religion is (also) about. The struggle between second-rank leaders of Pentecostal churches to occupy leading positions in the political party was one of the reasons why the enterprise failed, according to Míguez. However, it is really difficult to see how this would contradict the other factors, since such competition is to be expected in all political parties.

The third factor, that the Pentecostal approach to politics is pragmatic and instrumental because of the first and the second factors, is highly dubious. Yes, it may have been pragmatic, but the fact that it was not, could easily have been the main reason why it failed. Pentecostal politics must be anchored in the non-pragmatic and not-corruptible: the non-negotiable Bible.²⁸ Míguez points out how, in the 1990s, the political atmosphere in Argentina was characterized by growing corruption, and the two dominant political parties had turned into “political machines”. The political system itself orchestrated the rules of the game, and many Pentecostals were converts with a pre-conversion political history. For example, some former policemen, who had participated in the repressive task-force during the dictatorship and converted to Pentecostalism after the return of democracy, were among the Pentecostal party leaders (Míguez 1999: 61). They had, according to another group of leaders, “not really repented from the role they had played in the violent years, and during harsh discussions had remembered the ‘good old times’ in a humorous, but also threatening tone”

²⁷ And, as I argue for in this thesis, it is just issues like this that need to be sorted out – and that the Pentecostals are coming to terms with by focusing on “values” as the basis (the un-trumpable) for the political.

²⁸ In an interview with Norberto Saracco (06.11.2007), high-profile member of ACIERA and later Latin American co-ordinator of the Lausanne movement, I asked if he considered himself to be a fundamentalist. “No-no”, he answered, almost laughing at the thought of this kind of question. However, after thinking for a bit he laid his hand on the Bible and said “only when it comes to this”.

(Míguez 1999: 5). The other group opposed them, and pre-Pentecostal disagreements became an obstacle for the party. Míguez's fourth factor, secular political identities (inherited from their "previous" lives), has more to do with the historical context than with pragmatism and instrumentalism; that is, it was during that specific period of rapid Pentecostal growth and in that particular political situation that the Pentecostals were pragmatic to a certain degree, but it is difficult to see how this contradicts any of the other factors. Actually, the schism among Pentecostals caused by so-called included secular ideologies and the fact that it caused severe problems, could lead to another conclusion: that they were not that pragmatic after all. The instrumentality involved in creating a political party did not suffice to prevent ideological differences from ruining the political project. Whether due to paradoxes, inherited ideologies from pre-conversion lives, or just a deficient political platform, the project of creating a political party resulted in failure. I also asked Norberto Saracco why the political project did not succeed back then. His answer was: "it could not work because there [in the political sphere] you have to negotiate – and how do you negotiate this?", he said, and again laid his hand on the Bible. It was a tough lesson to learn that political life was full of negotiations, compromises and pragmatic deals, and many Pentecostals got their fingers burnt from that experience. César Degarbardian, editor of *El Puente*, a leading Argentinean magazine for more than 25 years, claimed that the Pentecostals who started the political party "only represented themselves" and did not have the support of the Pentecostal "movement" (Degarbardian, October 2010). In my opinion, the attempt to start a political party in the 1990s went wrong mainly because the party's traditional centre-right conservative political program had no religiously based legitimacy; it was not convincingly anchored in scripture, doctrine, tradition or authority, and hence lacked compatibility; it did not represent the Pentecostals politically.

A religio-political reaction to the crisis in 2001

In 1999, more than 100 000 Pentecostals demonstrated for religious freedom and equality in downtown Buenos Aires. The magnitude of the demonstration boosted their self-esteem, but did not lead to any concrete results. Dissatisfied by the lack of judicial amendments, they once again mobilised in the autumn of 2001. This second demonstration was meant to be a continuation of the struggle for religious freedom and equality, but the political and economic crisis building up at the time was so severe that the

slogans and focus changed at the last minute. Instead of a rally for religious equality, it became a demonstration of solidarity with the suffering Argentinians. The speeches and prayers for the “people” may have given the Pentecostals a stronger sense of being integrated and accepted partners in Argentinean society than ever before. The political consequences of the rally, and of the crisis itself, for the Pentecostal community, were both direct (increased political engagement) and indirect (changing attitudes toward society at large and politics). In the following I will analyse some reactions to the crisis, in the form of a conference and a book.

In 2003, the Latin American Council of Churches (Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias, CLAI) hosted a conference in Buenos Aires on the impact of (neoliberal) globalisation on Latin American societies. Although this was a Latin American conference, the Argentinean case was high on the agenda, and many participants were from Argentina. In 2004, the book *Las Iglesias Evangélicas dicen ¡Basta!*²⁹ was published, and I will discuss some of the main thoughts presented in the book and why it (and the conference) did not influence the Pentecostal community in any considerable way. When I asked César Degarbardian (October 2010) about the influence of this conference and project on the Argentinean Pentecostal community in, he answered: “*ninguna, ninguna ... ninguna*” (none, none ... none).

If this was the result, why was it so? To attempt to answer this, we have to start by studying more closely the contents of some of the papers that were presented at the conference and later reproduced in the above-mentioned book. In the introduction, Ángel Luis Rivera Agosto summarises the contents of the book as a collection of diagnostic experiences, biblical-theological reflections both pastoral and prophetic, and a search for alternatives to neoliberal globalisation by the Evangelical churches of Latin America and the Caribbean (Agosto 2004: 7). More than 100 leaders from churches all over the continent, in addition to participants from Europe, Asia and Africa, were present at the conference. Moreover, this continental consultation was linked to a project called “Economic Justice”, initiated by the World Council of Churches in 2001. The main focus was on Argentina and Brazil and, according to Agosto, the main aim of the book was to provide the religious leadership with an orientation in the implications of the socio-economic system and suggest how they could “use their voices with Christian knowledge, sincerity and authority” (Agosto 2004: 9). As a sort of “precursor” to the later Pentecostal focus on certain *values* as a central ele-

²⁹ The Evangelical Churches Say Enough!

ment for political involvement, Agosto states that before conducting a socio-economic analysis one needs to recognise the values that Christians can be identified by.³⁰

The book and conference were thus intended as guidelines and as a way to learn about a socio-economic reality and how to deal with that reality from an Evangelical point of view. As an introduction to the Argentinean section, Horacio Verbitsky was invited to make a presentation: “The socio-economic reality of Argentina” (Verbitsky 2004: 13). Verbitsky is a well-known journalist and author of several books on the last MD in Argentina, and is reputed for his particularly outspoken criticism of the role of the Catholic Church during the “dirty war”. He actually characterises the MD as an attempt to create a form of “national Catholicism” (Verbitsky 2004: 15). Verbitsky could be seen by some of the members of the Pentecostal community as a rather controversial figure, particularly by those who do not sympathise with policies that could be labelled as leftist, or those who seek more harmonious relations with the Catholic Church. Furthermore, this “problem” also has to do with the political left’s traditional liberal stance on value-conservative issues. Whereas Pentecostals and socialists (or the political “left” in general) may share a common concern for the poor and for social justice, they do not (often) have the same values concerning family, abortion and same-sex marriage. Herein lies an important clue to understanding Pentecostal political behaviour.

Verbitsky begins by acknowledging the Evangelical communities’ stance as defenders of the rights of “the people” during the dictatorship, in stark contrast to the Catholic and Jewish leaderships, whom he claims oscillated between panic and collaboration with the military. It should be mentioned that only a small segment of the Evangelical/Pentecostal³¹ members of FAIE participated actively in the opposition (Andiñach and Bruno 2001: 27). FAIE, being the organisation of the so-called historical Protestant churches, also counts among its members people or groups representing Protestant liberation theology.

Néstor Míguez, Argentinean theologian and professor at the Department for Biblical Studies at the Supreme Evangelical Institute for Theological

³⁰ He does not explicitly specify what these values are, but I assume he is thinking of values like social responsibility, sincerity, justice etc., which are not far from the “interior” values referred to by the value-conservative Pentecostals (as we will see later).

³¹ In the 1970s, the Pentecostal churches did not dominate the Protestant scene to such a degree that one can speak of “all” Evangelical churches being Pentecostal or “Pentecostalsed”. It would therefore be more accurate to use the term *iglesias evangélicas*, which in Latin American normally includes all Protestant churches.

Studies (Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos, ISEDET) and present leader of FAIE, presented the paper: “Empire and power from a biblical perspective” (Míguez 2004: 55–60). Using what could be called a socio-theological approach Míguez sets out to describe globalisation, not as a new phenomenon but rather as something similar to what occurred in the early history of mankind and is described in Genesis 10 (Nimrod and the building of the tower of Babel). According to Míguez, there is a lesson to be learned from this story, one that relates directly to the project of building the “total market”, which constitutes the core of contemporary (neoliberal) globalisation. Comprehending this requires (theological) understanding and biblically inspired anti-hegemonic action, he continues. In Genesis 10:5 it is told that Noah’s descendants had emigrated to all lands and shores and that they spoke different languages. Míguez observes that this was the first known “interruption of men”, through the formation of a pluralistic world. This was a good thing, he claims, and according to God’s plan. Then followed the second “interruption”, when Nimrod, the first man to rule a great empire on earth, set out to build the tower of Babel, and by so doing challenged the power of God. But it was not the building of the tower itself that offended God. The fact that the peoples of the earth were evolving towards one empire, one ruler and one language was also wrong. That was the first attempt at global control, an act condemned by God, and now the same thing is happening again, with neoliberal capitalism as the main vehicle. What Míguez is saying is that God’s punishment – the dispersion of the peoples of the earth, and the confusion of languages after the building of the tower of Babel – was not actually a punishment. He observes that nowhere in the Bible is this referred to as a punishment and it should not be understood as such; it should instead be understood as an act of liberation by God. This is why God descended: to set free and not to punish. If he only wanted the latter, he would not need to descend. “Behind Nimrod is the globalisation project” and “behind the Divine *Descent* is the project of possibilities, of diverse identities, of the construction of legitimate and lawful humans” (Míguez 2004: 58). This way of understanding power is a recurrent theme in the entire Bible, according to Míguez.

To understand the conference and its lack of explicit influence on Pentecostal politics, I think it is important to observe and recognise the socio-political climate of the time. The 1990s had been a decade of neoliberal policies and privatisation in keeping with IMF policy and the Washington consensus, and they were followed by the chaotic period from 2001 to 2003. Towards the end of the Menem era, the most severe economic decline since

the MD produced a kind of mental fatigue in the population. Many saw this as an omen, a proof of their lack of ability to “make the country work”. Many were angry and fled the country to get relief or to escape with “their” money. The economic crisis added fuel to theories such as that presented by Verbitsky: the oligarchy were no longer Argentinean and therefore had no national obligations. They were now part of a global bourgeoisie without any affinity to the Argentinean nation, economy or people.

The conference and the book may best be understood as a *reaction*, an expression of frustration and anger, and an attempt to find something that could provide hope and offer change for those segments of the Evangelical community with a history of socio-theological thinking, and who thus were predisposed for an alternative ideology. It seems that the religio-political contents of the conference were not compatible with the religious project of most Pentecostals. The conference was initiated by CLAI, an organisation marginalised by the Pentecostal revival in the previous two decades. With the support of the now dominating organisations ACIERA, FAIE and FECEP, the conference could have had a considerable impact, but then again it might have moved in a different direction. Neither ACIERA nor FECEP had much experience or training in socio-theological matters, and were still more concerned with the struggle for religious freedom and equality. Whether influenced by the crisis or not, their members seem to have taken a different route politically. The crisis and the subsequent experience of social responsibility strengthened integration and participation in social and political activities. In spite of the large number of participants, the conference was a marginal project to begin with as far as the majority of Pentecostals were concerned. The main reason why the project lacked compatibility with the Pentecostal project was that it was not based strongly enough on the right “exterior” values, i.e. nuclear family, pro-life (anti-abortion) and scepticism toward LGTB issues. In addition, the political consequences of the statements made at the conference were too radical.

Toward “values” as the basis for Pentecostal politics

A la hora de votar, debemos orar y pensar.³²

Before the October 2011 election, ACIERA posted this slogan on its website (quoted above). The members were encouraged not only to *pray*, but

³² In the time of voting, we should pray and think (ACIERA, autumn 2011).

also to *think*, now that the elections were coming up. This short sentence can serve to sum up the Pentecostal position or attitude towards politics in 2011. Praying is no longer sufficient, and ACIERA encourages the Pentecostals to think and to act accordingly. This focus on thinking tactically with regard to the election reveals how they have become more integrated into Argentinean society. They accept the political institutions and “understand” that they have to “play the game” to win their battles. In the call to their members, ACIERA chooses a cautious path and carefully presents formulations meant to influence people to vote in a particular way, while at the same time respecting individual choice as well as not offending the denominational and “individualistic” traditions of the Pentecostals. In the following section we shall see that many Pentecostals now find their way into political engagement through a social commitment based on certain values.

The 1990s was a period of consolidation for the Pentecostal community, in particular through the struggle for religious freedom and equality. Their exposure in public spaces and public spheres culminated with the demonstrations at the obelisk in 1999 and 2001.³³ However, from 2001 onwards, the unity in the Pentecostal community is put to the test when the struggle for religious equality drags on and the focus on values exposes differences, particularly between FAIE, on the one hand, and ACIERA and FECEP on the other. In my opinion, by basing politics on these *values*, Argentinean Pentecostals are creating a political platform that is convincingly *compatible* with their religion; policies based on these values are policies based on Pentecostalism. Understanding distinctly Pentecostal values as a prerequisite for political engagement was also important in the 1990s, particularly among second-rank leaders who sought political power as an instrument for increasing religious power (Wynarczyk 2009, interview). But since the 2000s, these values have become not only a prerequisite for political endeavours, but more explicitly serve as *the* basis for social commitment. Using these values as the basis for manoeuvring in the political sphere is not only an Argentinean Pentecostal experience. It can also be observed in the Pentecostal presence on a global scale. On the liberalism-communitarianism spectrum, the Pentecostals are mainly to be found at the liberal end but with distinctly communitarian traits: they pray for the conversion of the individual, work for the nuclear family and live for the transformation of

³³ The Obelisk of Buenos Aires is an iconic historic monument built in 1936 to commemorate the fourth centenary of the first foundation of the city.

society and the second coming of Christ. Their liberalism mostly has to do with their struggle for freedom of religion, and opposition towards state authorities and resisting interference in internal Pentecostal affairs by outsiders. Apart from that they are not “outspoken” defenders of free choice and free will. Instead they have strong inclination towards communitarianism – a Pentecostal communitarianism, that is, where the members of “the Church of Jesus” make up the central framework for the good society.

ACIERA’s text is a message to all “members” of the Pentecostal community in Argentina. Moreover, the members of ACIERA are addressed as well-integrated citizens and wonderful people of the country.³⁴ This appeal to the Pentecostals as well integrated in the nation is an important sign of the notion of *belonging* to a larger society that is not, as in the days of Annacondia, filled with evil forces and bad spirits. The borders between heaven and hell have been moved from being physically present on the Argentinean soil to occupy a symbolic location, not as obviously located and conspicuous as it once was for many Pentecostals. Moreover, the new attitudes toward politics illustrate the processes of transformation from a negative to a positive dualism. As mentioned above, the processes leading towards a positive (or integrated) dualism started with the campaigns of Tommy Hicks in the 1950s, and continued with the open style and attitude of Omar Cabrera in the 1970s, and Carlos Annacondia’s “spiritual warfare” in the 1980s. This first form of positive dualism was, however, first and foremost a revolution in missionary methods. In the 1990s, this positive dualism began influencing Pentecostals’ attitudes towards and relations with the judicial and political sphere and in the 2000s Pentecostals became more visible in the public sphere.

The difference between a positive dualism, focusing on evangelisation methods (the Pentecostals as outsiders in society) and a positive dualism, focusing on politics and public life (an insider perspective) is illustrated in an interesting interview with Carlos Annacondia in *El Puente*, in April 2009. After a short presentation of Annacondia, as “the most famous and influential Argentinean Preacher” (*El Puente*, April 2009: 39), it is said that he has been invited to talk about the global economic crisis, among other issues, and the first question concerns what he thinks are the causes of the current global crisis. “I think that the times are accelerating, the coming of Christ too”, he answers (Annacondia 2009: 38), before continuing with a

³⁴ “Hemos decidido transmitir el presente documento a los miembros de nuestra comunidad evangélica en todo el país, y hacerlo extensivo a la ciudadanía en general, como miembros integrantes del maravilloso pueblo de la Nación Argentina.”

description of how the Bible is real and preaches to all nations that the end will come as the Lord has promised. Annacondia claims that the crisis does not only concern economics, but morality and violence as well, and this is all because people do not follow God. “This happens as a consequence of sin; this happens because of disobedience and ambition.” The answer to the misery is God: “It is not a political plan. [...] The important thing is that God provides the fruit, which causes the seed to grow.”³⁵ Hence, confronted with what many would call a question about politics, Annacondia provides a “Pentecostal” answer. To him, prayer and evangelisation are still enough. Hence he is not concerned with the sort of tactical “thinking” that ACIERA’s text is encouraging. Prayer, faith and conversion are still sufficient, and Annacondia clearly has not abandoned the positive dualism of the 1980s; he is still an “outsider” (not integrated) in the sense that evangelisation is the main answer.

In another interview, in *Pulso Cristiano* (no. 147, November 2009), pastor Norberto Saracco answers questions about Pentecostals and their relations with society in general, as well as about their relations with other religious groups (mainly Catholics). Saracco is the founder of a faculty of theology in Argentina, the FIET,³⁶ a member of CRECES (Comunión Renovada de Evangélicos y Católicos en el Espíritu Santo), and Latin American coordinator of the global Evangelical/Charismatic/Pentecostal network the Lausanne Movement. He is also one of the leaders of the Council of Pastors in Buenos Aires. This council consists of around 350 Pentecostal pastors who meet regularly to discuss various problems and issues, both large and small (Interview with Saracco, October 2010). In the interview, he is asked what the Pentecostal movement in Argentina looks like today and answers: “The question that everyone is asking: We grew, but there is no social transformation” (Saracco 2009). Elaborating on this, he states: “We thought that social transformation began with politics [...] but we had rejected the ABC of the Evangelical, which is to transform lives”. He further claims that it is in politics (and Congress) that people believe you can change people by changing laws. It is important to remember that Saracco is giving an interview in a Pentecostal magazine and addressing a Pentecostal audience. Let us also be reminded that the umbrella organisation ACIERA, of which he is a leading member, has the motto: “Pentecostalism as the basis for the transformation of the individual, the family, and society”. In the end then, it is

³⁵ “No es un plan político [...] lo importante es que Dios da el fruto, que hace que la semilla crezca.”

³⁶ Facultad Latinoamericana de Estudios Teológicos.

conversion and faith that constitute the basis for the transformation of society, and to believe that some Christians in politics represent the Pentecostals is “farfetched, it’s crazy, it could never work”, as Sarraco told me, referring to the Pentecostal political parties in the 1990s (Saracco, October 2010). “The Church has to serve all kinds of Pentecostals, and the Church does not have an ideology”, he continued. However, Saracco holds that “the Church has political implications” and, therefore, “should work politically as well” (Saracco, October 2010). “The Church is open and does not have a political ideology, whereas the political parties are closed”, Saracco stated, before adding that “politicians must negotiate, whereas the Church has principles”. “The Church cannot negotiate, but at the same time must serve all. Pentecostals are religiously open and at the same time firm.” Interpreted in relation to ACIERA’s official announcements, one senses a positive dualism where the “Pentecostal” and the “political” are no longer cut off from one another, but still represent different “worlds” (or spheres). The statements also reflect the different modes of communication that constitute the different spheres. The communication in the democratic political sphere is directed at power, influence and re-election. Negotiations and the building of coalitions are paramount for political success. The Pentecostal communication is oriented around experiencing encounters with divine powers, spiritual warfare, evangelisation, and transforming the world before the second coming of Christ. Those who believe that transforming the individual, the family and the society is a prerequisite for the return of Christ, and who therefore wish to influence the political sphere, must first create a political platform that is compatible with the Pentecostal communication.

What Saracco is saying is that one should never be unclear about the fact that Pentecostal faith is more important than politics. However, through involvement in various organisations, he is acutely aware of the fact that the Pentecostals have grown but have had very little social impact. Finally, through ACIERA in particular, he displays an “understanding” of the fact that, although he says in the interview above that politicians and Congress believe they can change people simply by changing laws, and that he disagrees with them, he also wants people to both think and pray, because elections and politics *matter*: changing laws *is* important, though not crucial. Saracco is not only concerned with evangelisation as it was done before, he also wants to see results here and now. Saracco’s positive dualism is not like Annacondia’s; he is more of an “insider” in Argentinean society and in a way closer to the *Misión Integral* suggested by René Padilla (Padilla 2011, 2009).

ACIERA's text continues by affirming that the organisation does not engage in party politics or make agreements with particular political forces or parties. This is meant to ensure that the Pentecostals maintain their religious freedom and that the organisation maintains a clear distance from formal politics. However, it is another matter if some particular Pentecostals want to become politically active. That might work as long as the political platform is compatible with the religious platform. ACIERA actually supports those who, on their own initiative, want to enter the political sphere, which reflects the new attitude and understanding of the importance of political decisions for influencing vital matters in society.

So what did ACIERA consider to be at stake in the 2011 elections? Was it social policies, the eradication of poverty, taxes, foreign policy or socialism vs. liberalism? No, the issue that ACIERA considered to be most important was the proposal for the de-penalisation of abortion. All Pentecostals were urged to reflect upon this before casting the vote, to find out where the legislators stood on this issue and act accordingly. The time of being the "glossolalic ostrich" was over.³⁷ Now the Pentecostals needed to learn from what happened when the senate passed the bill legalising same-sex marriage; it is the elected legislators who will make the final judicial decision on this important topic. Hence ACIERA stated: "only with our intelligent vote can we prevent a new law",³⁸ thus appealing to the intellect and not only to religious conviction. *Cortemos Boleta*,³⁹ if we do not find proper candidates, ACIERA concluded, revealing the sincerity of the statement. ACIERA's appeal illustrates some aspects of this, for many Pentecostals new, attitude towards politics in particular and society in general. First, specific values are the most important issues to deal with. These constitute the foundation for the transformation of society and will "trump" other political issues in future elections. Second, the Pentecostal community regards itself as an integrated part of Argentinean society, which is very different from their self-image some 20–30 years ago. The Western model provides them with space to grow and room to participate in new hitherto unexplored arenas. Third,

³⁷ That they speak in tongues while they are oblivious to social problems (Warrington 2008).

³⁸ "Sólo nuestro voto inteligente puede impedir que sea impuesto el aborto por ley."

³⁹ *Cortemos boleta*: "Split-ticket voting, which refers to a ballot on which voters have chosen candidates from different political parties when multiple offices (e.g. president, vice-president, senators and deputies) are being decided by a single election". In the election one can vote for a president and vice-president, and normally one follows the party or front and vote accordingly for legislators as well. But if you like Cristina Kirchner but not "her" legislators you can vote for her, but not for other legislators.

since their growth has slowed down, they are seeking out new arenas of influence. The struggle for religious freedom and equality is meant to open new fields for domestic and international evangelisation (the transformation of the individual). The struggle for values will secure the family as the core unit of society (the transformation of the family). With a multi-directional approach through evangelisation, the 4–14 and 10–40 windows, the struggle for religious equality and the entry into the public and political spheres with a “package of values” as a basis for their political platform, the Pentecostals seek to continue their growth and finally transform society.

An ideology of values?

In recent years, Pentecostals have joined or supported various political coalitions and initiatives. An example is the group *Evangelista K*, Pentecostals who support Cristina Kirchner through the Peoples’ Party (Partido por la gente) and are also affiliated with the Transversal Front (Frente transversal). In addition to encouraging Pentecostals to think and vote intelligently in the 2011 election, in an attempt to get their members to support what they considered to be the best alternative, ACIERA introduced and recommended many “good” candidates from various coalitions and parties. Guillermo Prein, leading pastor of one of Buenos Aires’ mega-churches, Centro Cristiano Nueva Vida, with more than 30 000 members, argued that no umbrella organisation should tell anyone how they should vote and no one should act as if they represent the Pentecostal community as a whole (Prein, 2010). Prein is an outspoken voice in the Pentecostal community, with strong opinions on the role of the Catholic Church (Prein, 2012) and he has also criticised Cynthia Hotton’s proposal for a new law on cults and religions (Prein, 2010).

Cynthia Hotton, daughter of Arturo Hotton, one of the founders of the Pentecostal political initiative in 1991, has founded the political platform Valores Para Mi País (VPMP, Values for my country). She was originally affiliated with centre-right politician Mauricio Macri and was elected a legislator when she founded the political party in 2009. Hotton has been active with regard to political issues like the above-mentioned law on cults and religions, the struggle against same-sex marriage and the pro-life (anti-abortion) campaign that was initiated to stop the proposed legalisation of abortion. Hotton has a middle-class background and is supported by Claudio Freidzon, leading pastor in the upper middle class Iglesia Rey de Reyes. On its website the VPMP presents itself as a group composed of various

people with the common aim of constructing a society based on values (Valoresparamipais 2010).

Cynthia Hotton explains the initiative in the following manner: “VPMP is a space which unites Christians who think that the defence of life, family and values should be present in Argentinean politics” (Hotton in *Pulso Cristiano* no. 149, 2009). Furthermore, the VPMP is “a political space where Christians can develop and gain influence in society. We believe that politics needs values, we believe that things can change and we know that Christians must participate.” In another edition of *Pulso Cristiano*, Hotton states that “we will not concentrate on the ideological, but on the values” (Hotton in *Pulso Cristiano* no. 132, 2008).

Attempting to fuse the interior and exterior values, the VPMP has listed those they consider to be the most central: (1) *Identity*: What makes a person who he/she is, which again is linked to the recognition of his/her personality and history; (2) *Family*: The nuclear family is the heart and foundation of society. The family forms our identity and moral values, our social orientation and our development as human beings; (3) *Solidarity, Commitment and Honesty*: values and ideals which the Pentecostals represent and which can be their contribution to (a better) society (Valoresparamipais 2010). Hence certain socio-political issues concern the VPMP more than any others: homosexuality, abortion and the nuclear family. In the municipal elections in Buenos Aires in 2011, the VPMP listed a number of political proposals related to these values. First three central commitments: (1) the human being as the centre of all political activity; (2) defence of life from conception; and (3) defence of the family. These three are the fundamental values for the VPMP when it comes to practical political engagement. Honesty, solidarity and the other basic values are not forgotten, but these three are crucial for the translation of Pentecostal communication into political communication. They are non-negotiable. The focus on the human being, the individual, both reflects the unique creation of each human being in God’s image and perhaps at least to some degree may explain the inclination to support conservative liberalism.⁴⁰ The defence of the family and of life from the point of conception illustrates the importance of the creation of life as God’s work (pro-life) and the importance of the nuclear or “tradi-

⁴⁰ Earlier I mentioned the Pentecostals’ scepticism towards state authorities, or any other authorities from “outside” of the Pentecostal community. In conservative liberalism the Pentecostals find support for the rejection of outside authority (at least to a certain degree) as well as support for their views on the “traditional” family.

tional” family as the central building block of society, and for the transformation thereof.

In addition to the explicit political project of the VPMP, ACIERA, together with other Pentecostal groups, hosted a so-called Expovalores (ValueExpo) in 2010. In a brief note, “to the council of Pastors in the country: the challenges of the 21st century”, eight challenges were listed (ACIERA 2010). To meet these challenges, the pastors and the churches must learn more about these issues and consider where to stand and how to react to them. They are the environment and sustainable development, the demographic explosion, natural disasters, bioethics, politics, evangelisation, new arenas for exerting influence (mass media, Internet, new media, etc.), and the awareness that only a united church can deal with these challenges.⁴¹ This is indeed a comprehensive list of things to learn about, but what does it mean? To what degree would one expect the Pentecostals to interpret natural disasters and the demographic explosion as signs of the end of the world? Many Pentecostals do think that natural disasters are signs of the coming end-times, but at the same time many will not sit and wait; they want to participate in the transformation of the world.

Conclusions

In order to understand how Argentinean Pentecostals conceive of these matters we should again be reminded of ACIERA’s motto: “Pentecostalism as the basis for the transformation of the individual, the family and the world”. As good soldiers of Christ, the Pentecostals not only have to be prepared but also need to prepare their surroundings. Assuming that they attempt to accomplish this, one might see it as an example of total or holistic integralism, the end of both negative and positive dualism, when the transformation of the world has made way for the establishment of the kingdom of God. Is this the recipe for transforming the world? And, is this the key to understanding their focus on values? The Pentecostals *know* how to transform the individual through evangelisation. They are now approaching an understanding of the transformation of the family whereby it means securing God’s “naturally” created nuclear family. Finally, in the eight challenges presented at the Expovalores, the next (or last) steps towards the transformation of society are to be found. However, in order to

⁴¹ Para los consejos pastores del país: Los desafíos de la iglesia en el siglo xxi.

achieve this, they need to learn how to approach the political sphere without losing their religion, so to speak. Here the issue of compatibility becomes crucial for the maintenance of “the Pentecostal” in the political. If the religious is lost in (the political) translation, the political will fail. However, the question remains: how can one formulate an explicit political program which combines social justice and concern for the poor with a pro-life and anti-LGBT stance? Are the values of the liberal left too hard for the Pentecostals to swallow? It would seem so. In that case it may appear easier to meet ad hoc on practical political terms than on a general and principle level where liberal vs. conservative values dominate the discourse. If the Pentecostals’ values are to override other concerns, like social justice issues, in the political sphere, then they are likely to have problems organising a political alternative that can win the support of a large majority of Pentecostal voters, as has been the case for Argentinean Pentecostals and Evangelicals. That is, if the values keep on “sending” the Pentecostal political projects towards the neo-liberal (which often fuses with the conservative) right, then many with a strong social commitment (integral mission) and concern for the poor and marginalised will withhold their votes and rather support the values as a public concern in demonstrations and other activities, but not in elections. So it may be for precisely this reason that the Pentecostals’ openly political projects in Argentina have not yet succeeded: Pentecostal voters are also concerned with social issues, and they care about the poor, and they often have a quite poor background themselves. Moreover, they care about both family issues and values. As Amos Yong has shown, the Pentecostals do not constitute a uniform political voice, and during their substantial growth over the last 30–50 years worldwide, their attitude towards society at large has changed. Four different but overlapping relations to the “non-Pentecostal” seem to be guiding their practical approaches to society and the other (the non-believer): positive dualism (the world as transformable), integral mission (social commitment), the Great Commission (mission and evangelisation) and holism (“God-in-everything”). These four interrelated ways of relating to “the world” will shape Pentecostal politics in the near future. Moreover, just as integral mission seems to become an important aspect of the Pentecostal ethos in Latin America, holism seems to be doing the same in Africa its African: “Pentecostal holism is even more vibrant in the global south, where it resonates with forms of spiritual pragmatism” (Comaroff 2010: 21).

However, the value base for Pentecostal politics is still in its infancy when it comes to formulating a practical political agenda. If the VPMP manages to bridge the gap between liberal-conservative values and policies aimed at reducing poverty and social injustice, while at the same time maintaining compatibility between the Pentecostal and the political, it might constitute a more significant political force in the future.

6. Conclusions and final remarks

In this final chapter, I will draw some main conclusions and briefly reflect on questions and hypotheses which have been discussed in this thesis. I will also shed some light on certain tendencies or trends within contemporary Argentinean Pentecostalism and then, in an epilogue, make some final remarks about what may happen in the future. Thus, I will discuss how the main findings relate to ongoing processes of change. Neither the structure of Argentinean Pentecostalism, nor its political aspects or its relations to “society”, be they on a judicial level (religious freedom and equality) or a missionary level (evangelising methods of various kinds), are settled. On the contrary! Most of what has been discussed in this thesis concerns issues which are constantly in the making.

Main issues and hypotheses

- (1) *Globalisation processes have accelerated, with the spread of the Western model of governance as a main vehicle.*

Globalisation is a highly contested and debated concept and academic term. However, apart from all the controversies concerning the processes involved in globalisation, it seems rather clear that the number of democracies in the world has increased over the last decades. Latin America has seen processes of (re-)democratisation after longer periods of dictatorship and unstable governance in most countries. One of the main points of this thesis, moreover, is that these democracies have had to adapt to increasingly influential transnational forces and pressure from the so-called international community on how to organise themselves. Although “democracy”, like globalisation, does not mean only one particular thing, it has, as a form or a model promoted by influential interests, come to mean “less” than it could. It has come to mean, globally, not only elections but “free” elections, “free”

press, “liberal” economics, privatisation of religious institutions, “free” research and politics that balance between social democracy and liberal-conservative ideologies. During the last decade the West has been challenged by other economic and political powers, first and foremost the BRICS countries.¹ It is possible that these states are also challenging the very notion of democracy and communicative differentiation, but for the time being one could claim that even they are going through processes of democratisation, i.e., are approaching the Western model (as a structure for organising society) at the same time as they are challenging the hegemony of Western states.

There is little doubt that Argentinean society has changed dramatically since the MD ended in 1983. Moreover, the very idea of what a society is – national (often understood as constrained by the nation state), local, regional or global – is becoming increasingly difficult to pin down. Niklas Luhmann developed a new and comprehensive understanding/definition of what society is, so that sociology could have a clear understanding of its object of study (society). Society, however, is not only one single thing.² Many different societies can be conceived of, on all the above-mentioned – and overlapping – levels. In addition, various communities are defined by spatial borders (e.g. the Church of Rio de la Plata or the Evangelical Fellowship of Latin America), cultural or religious borders (e.g. Catholics, Pentecostals or indigenous communities) and/or borders defined by common interests (e.g. the LGBT community).

(2) The structural changes, which to a large extent took place in accordance with the Western model, made room for the Pentecostal boom from the early 1980s.

The structural changes opened up the way for the Pentecostals to evangelise and proselytise. As we have seen, both Juan Perón in the 1950s, and the generals in the 1970s, under the nationalistic Catholic programme, were able to hinder a Pentecostal presence in public places (e.g. cinemas and stadiums) and spaces (like TV and radio). These obstacles were removed in the early 1980s with the fall of the military regime and Catholic systemic power.

Democracy has been consolidated and, apparently, the risk of a military intervention now appears smaller than ever. In addition, the executive powers no longer have direct control over the judicial powers in the way they had before. The academic scene has opened up and the humanities and

¹ Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

² See e.g. Jary and Jary 2004: 581.

social sciences in particular have experienced a broadening of perspectives as well as fields of research.

A new religious sphere has been constructed. It is still an open question whether this sphere “serves” society in any functional sense, i.e., whether religion as such has a particular function in the fabric of a differentiated society where it, together with the other spheres, makes up a “natural” component which such a society “needs” in order to function. The religious sphere, however, must be understood as a space and place with room for more than one particular religion. Whether it serves some spiritual or religious needs that people will always have is beyond the scope of this study to answer, but it should be thought of as a place for a different form of constitutive communication than what is found in the other spheres. For example, the economic sphere has a qualitatively different form of communication than the religious. As argued throughout the text, there is a sort of competition between the spheres, though not necessarily in all arenas. The Catholic Church has lost its position as a part of “society in society” – a natural part of the non-democratic establishment. Certainly, it still has a great deal of influence, and it still plays a crucial role in Argentinean society, but it has to manoeuvre in a new way. It has had to find different channels for securing its interests and position. Apparently, it is beginning to accept the Pentecostals and the new religious sphere in which all religions have to “play by the rules”, i.e., accept that elected politicians make political decisions and that lawyers and judges make the judicial/legal decisions.

Finally, with democratisation, a new economic sphere evolved. What was called liberal economics was instrumental in the de-nationalisation and de-politicisation of economic power and influence, particularly during the Menem era of the 1990s. However, after the crisis in the early 2000s, the Kirchners partly re-politicised economic power so that the economic sphere to a larger degree now serves political and/or so-called national interests. Nevertheless, this sphere still has a large degree of autonomy.

(3) *An active and partly aggressive evangelism has been important for the success of the Argentinean Pentecostals.*

It is not enough to have access to arenas like stadiums, TV and radio channels, as well as other public spaces or instruments, if they are not used, and used the “right” way. This is something that the Pentecostals understood when the shift from negative to positive dualism implanted the idea of preaching for the multitudes. Hence, it is not only the so-called contents of

Pentecostalism (healing, glossolalia, prophecies and “Spirit-encounters”) that make it a success. Just as important (or perhaps even more so) is its evangelism, its focus on conversion and transformation, its relation to the “other” such as non-converted individuals, families and societies.

- (4) *The resonance between Pentecostalism and traditional religiosity was helpful in giving a sense of “familiarity” to the messages presented by Pentecostal leaders or pastors like Omar Cabrera and Carlos Annacondia.*

This last point has not been a main focus of this thesis. As mentioned in the introduction, however, it has been an important issue in several studies of Pentecostalism, and not only concerning Argentina. The idea of the Pentecostals’ capacity to contextualise or inculturate their message is prevalent in theories about its success. I do not disagree with those who make such claims, and I suppose that in many senses they are right, also when it comes to the Argentinean context. But, since I have not followed up on this particular lead, I cannot discuss it in detail.

Contemporary trends

There are several trends or tendencies within contemporary Argentinean Pentecostalism.

The movement is becoming more “globalised”.

Due to its involvement in trans-national and global networks, and because of the general flow of information and exchange of ideas in the global “mediascapes”, Internet and social media, it is impossible for any particular Pentecostal denomination or congregation not to be influenced by globalisation. At the same time, a sense of unity and the notion of having a common cause are created in these global contexts.

The movement is becoming increasingly more integrated into Argentinean society.

The Pentecostal voice is now accepted to a greater degree in the public sphere, although much scepticism can still be found in the “secular” mass media. The Pentecostals themselves may discuss “mundane” matters that

affect all Argentines, like infrastructure, corruption, crime and women's rights. In addition, the struggle for religious equality is still central in their dealings with the public and official sectors, and this struggle is still acting like a vehicle in the process of integration.

*Values seem to constitute the core element
of their political endeavours.*

With the notion of interior values (like sincerity, honesty and trustworthiness – in short, being “good” Christians) and exterior ones (the nuclear family, being pro-life, anti-same-sex marriage – in short, God’s “natural order”), they may feel more confident about not “losing” their religion when entering the political sphere.

Two other trends, unity and the new evangelism, will be presented subsequently and more thoroughly below.³

Unity

I have said in the presence of the Pope that what we are witnessing in Buenos Aires is something pioneering: Christians expressing their faith together. Catholics and *Evangélicos*, undivided. This expression is like Pentecost (Cantalamessa 2012: Infocreces).

The idea of unity, a hallmark of Argentinean Pentecostalism in the 1980s, is presently being put to the test. On the one hand, the scope of the unity is being enlarged with the rapprochement between Pentecostals and Catholics. On the other hand, the sheer size of the Pentecostal community may be an obstacle for the creation of common platforms as far as political, judicial and religious projects are concerned.

Created in 2003, CRECES (the Renewed Communion of Evangelicals and Catholics in the Holy Spirit) has become an important venue for encounters between Pentecostals and Charismatics, or Protestants and Catholics. It is not only a meeting place, but also functions as a space for mediation, a place where old tensions and distrust between Protestants and Catholics can safely be aired. While such an initiative may spark off new agreements, it can also “irritate” segments from both groups who still see

³ These trends or tendencies should not be seen as separated. Rather, they overlap and are intertwined in many ways so that the following and main examples contain elements of the others.

the others as “infidels” (or plainly as enemies). Deliberations take place, with Catholic Charismatics and Pentecostals finding a common ground in their understanding of what it means to be a Christian. On the other hand, unity may be a difficult goal to achieve with large numbers of Catholics and Pentecostals, who in general are still highly sceptical of each other, become upset by their fellow believers’ “flirtation” with what they consider to be a different faith. But the initiatives, by a substantial amount of Pentecostals and Catholics, through CRECES, are making an impact. The cooperation and unification is exemplified in the quotation above, which indicates that Catholics and Pentecostals seek to be undivided and “express their faith together”. Moreover, as is formulated in a “Common Declaration” issued by the members of CRECES in 2005, there is a longing for a general unification of all Christians. Such unification can be made possible by the presence and continued experience of the power of the Holy Spirit: “We are one, by the action of the Holy Spirit we are gradually progressing from the unity in the Spirit, where we are now, towards unity in faith, and to become one body. We will be one and the world will believe!” (Creces 2005).

The influence of these efforts and the importance of the Pentecostal growth, together with the new Catholic attitude to what they in the 1980s had referred to as *sectas*, was highlighted in the “VI Fraternal meeting of Catholics and Evangelicals” on 13 October 2012. “It was more than just a meeting between Catholics and Pentecostals (*evangélicos*). What took place today in Luna Park [a stadium with more than 8 000 seats] was a true celebration of unity” (Creces 2012). And a special event it was! The new relationship, between (some) Pentecostals and (some) Catholics, reached a high point with the participation of priests and pastors from several churches. The archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio (the current Pope Francis), was also present, as he has been on several of these occasions. On the Creces website there is a particularly illustrative picture: Catholic Father Raniero Cantalamessa, Apostolic Preacher (*el predicador*) to John Paul II, and at the time of the event to Pope Benedict XVI,⁴ is kneeling on the floor. Praying for him, with a hand on his shoulder and eyes closed, is Omar Cabrera Jr. The latter is the son of Omar Cabrera, whom I have referred to as the “godfather” of Argentinean Pentecostalism. Cabrera Jr. is also the leading pastor of the church that his father started, VisiondeFuturo, which I presented in Chapter four, and is a proponent of the G12-method. Finally, behind Cabrera Jr. is Norberto Saracco whom we have met several

⁴ Preacher to the Papal Household.

times in this thesis. He is bowing his head with his eyes closed, taking part in the prayer.

What we are witnessing in Argentina today may be the beginning of a new era for Catholic–Pentecostal relationships. This is being made possible, first and foremost, by the strong and growing Charismatic movement within the Catholic Church, the rather influential middle sector of Pentecostals represented primarily by ACIERA, and a traditional Catholic Church whose influence has been reduced, first as a political actor, in Argentina as well as in Latin America in general, and secondly as a religious actor.

At the same time as CRECES is working hard for a common Catholic–Pentecostal basis of faith, there are others who do not share their enthusiasm.⁵ Both pastors Ruben Salome of Iglesia de Dios and Mario Morana of Príncipe de Paz expressed some kind of “neutrality” towards the Catholic Church when I interviewed them in October 2007. They had cooperated with Catholics in demonstrations and found common (socio-religious) ground. However, later in the same interview, Salome stressed how the Catholic Church had had a negative impact on Latin American history.

In addition, there are many Pentecostals who are sceptical of both the religious power and the position in society that the Catholic Church has today. In Chapter four we saw how some Pentecostals opposed religious symbols in public spaces, which primarily are Catholic symbols. The “debate” between Guillermo Prein and ACIERA on this particular matter may serve as an example of the problems that need to be overcome in order to create unity: ACIERA accepts the public display of such symbols, as its members consider it to be an expression of religious diversity, whereas Prein opposes it because it favours one particular religion, in this case the Catholic (Prein and ACIERA 2011).

Religio-political aspects often become part of the unification processes (or attempts). This has been particularly conspicuous in social mobilisations for the values mentioned above. However, the interpretations of what it means to be a good Christian also have a political dimension which may be instrumental in uniting believers both inter-religiously (Christians, Muslims, Jews and others) and intra-religiously (various Christian groups). The shared relationship to “the other” (the non-Pentecostal) and society at large

⁵ As shown in the historical background chapter, the Pentecostals had an openly negative view of Catholicism in Latin America in the early 20th century and considered the continent to be “ripe” for evangelisation. This was very different from the attitude expressed at the worldwide ecumenical World Missionary Conference in 1910, when Protestant churches drew up the map for future missionary efforts.

are what may be the “trend” among Pentecostals with most potential for both increased numerical growth and increased socio-political influence.

The new evangelism: from negative to positive holism

We know that what’s most beautiful about the **gospel** is not to read or preach it, but to **practise** it.

Moreover, we have also discovered that it is impossible to live the gospel only with our own strength;

it is only possible by the grace of the Holy Spirit.⁶

The new evangelism is first and foremost characterised by a different attitude to “the other”, to non-Pentecostals and society at large. In the years of negative dualism, the mundane world was portrayed as a place to avoid. It was full of evils and bad influences, where one could be contaminated. Hence, the Pentecostals constituted marginal communities “outside of society”. Then, the gospel of suffering paved the way for a certain *religious capital* to be the most important, or only capital to yearn for. This capital was invested in the Pentecostal hero of the early years: economically poor but strong in faith. He – it was almost always a he – was never sick, and he was an inspiration for the congregation.

However, as time passed and the Pentecostal communities grew with the opening up of spaces for proselytising and with new generations of adherents, a new attitude emerged, first in the USA. I have called this attitude, which was first observed in Argentina when Tommy Hicks campaigned in the 1950s, a positive dualism. This means that the world is still divided into a good (healed) part and a bad (demonised) part, but it diverges from the negative dualism in that it sees the bad part as curable (the Spirit is stronger than the demons). The idea of preaching for the multitudes in order to achieve as many personal conversions as possible is entering the stage. This is the way and style of Omar Cabrera, Ed Silvano, Luis Palau and Carlos Annacondia. The spiritual warfare of Annacondia in many ways represented a bridge between the negative and positive dualism with his empha-

⁶ Sabemos que lo más hermoso del **Evangelio** no es leerlo, o predicarlo, sino **practicarlo**, pero hemos descubierto también que resulta imposible vivir el Evangelio con nuestras propias fuerzas; solo es posible con la gracia del Espíritu Santo (Declaración Común CRECES – Comunión Renovada de Evangélicos y Católicos en el Espíritu Santo).

sis on the casting out of evil spirits from both people and physical spaces, as well as the “cleansing” or renovation of the nation.

The latest development includes integral mission and holism and still resembles positive dualism, but with the holistic approach it is no longer only individuals who must and can convert; everything and everyone are convertible. This does not concern individuals only. It also applies to families, communities and societies, indeed the whole world. And, furthermore, it affects *how* the Pentecostals are supposed to be in this world. Integral mission and holism represent a new evangelism *in spe*. It is not yet clear what shape and form it will take and what it will contain. In academic books dealing with this new characteristic of Pentecostalism, various authors try to explain the phenomenon. As we have seen, Amos Yong, a Pentecostal scholar, chooses to call its “concern” with societal issues “political theology” (see Chapter 5). Rudolf von Sinner, when discussing Brazilian Protestantism and democracy, speaks of a “public theology” (von Sinner 2012). When Amos Yong gave a lecture in Uppsala, Sweden, I asked him what made this political theology different from an ideology (2009). He grinned and replied that such a question was typical of a person influenced by social science. The whole debate about religion and politics in general, and Pentecostal social commitment in particular, reveals how touchy this field is. Pentecostals will not accept that their evangelism, when it takes the form of what “outsiders” would see as political mobilisation, is being reduced to politics. However, I think – and this comes from a person who represents the discipline of Religious Studies – that processes of politicisation of Pentecostalism are inevitably involved in the new integralism and positive holism.

In Argentina one can observe some of these tendencies in the negotiations about what it means to be a Christian today, and particularly when Pentecostals and Charismatic Catholics cooperate. Much of the above-mentioned focus on unity, understood as being made possible by the workings of the Holy Spirit, may look like a “victory” for the Pentecostals. The focus on Pentecost and the Holy Spirit, rather than doctrines and sacraments, may seem like a “Pentecostalisation” of Catholicism. Perhaps it is, or perhaps it is not; the Catholic Church has lost political and religious power and influence, it has had to adapt to the new situation in one way or another, so their ultimate goal may be to “lead the sheep back to the flock”? Furthermore, it is not only a “religious” struggle and/or unification process that characterises these events. They also include a more specific “political” dimension, as can be read in expressions like “the most beautiful thing

about the gospel...is to practise it". This practising of the gospel furthermore resembles the integral mission of René Padilla:

The Christian life in all its dimensions, on both the individual and the community levels, is the primary witness to the universal lordship of Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Mission is much more than words; it involves the quality of life – it is demonstrated in the life that recovers God's original purpose for the relationship of the human person with his Creator, with his neighbor, and with all of creation (Padilla 2010: 5).

Final remarks

Hence, to be a Christian is to practise, and to practise is to act and be in the world as a witness of God. When taken seriously, this has consequences for how Christians behave, not only in a strictly so-called religious sense but also how they behave as, among other things, political, judicial and academic citizens.

Pastor Carlos Mraida, one of the coordinators of the Pastoral Council of the city of Buenos Aires,⁷ was another important speaker at the CRECES meeting in October 2012. He focussed his message on the role of Christians in professing the "values". "God wants to do something new in this city and nation. As Christians we are militant for life, justice and equality" (Mraida 2012: infocreces). "The gospel is not ashamed before the system", he continues, and reveals how as Christians they should have a say in society, not only within their community but in every way, as they stand for "life, justice and equality". This version of integral mission is elaborated on by Norberto Saracco: "This is a key question in the gospel: coherence. There is no preaching stronger than our lives."

"Values" represent a political meeting point for Pentecostals and Charismatic Catholics. Although both groups would probably claim that these values are religious, it is first and foremost in what they represent in relation to the "other", or society at large, that their importance becomes explicit. Both Pentecostals and Catholics regard themselves as bearers of *essential* meaning and truth, who can and must stand firm as protectors of Christian values in what they consider to be a volatile and aimless time: "The dictatorship of relativism is confronting the world. It does not recognize anything

⁷ Consejo de Pastores de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires.

as absolute and leaves as the ultimate measure only the measure of each one and his desires” (Pope Benedict XVI 2005). Hence, the religious and the political merge in what constitutes the essence of what it means to be a Christian, namely to uphold certain ethical values. “A large proportion of contemporary philosophies, in fact, consist of saying that man is not capable of truth. But viewed in that way, man would not be capable of ethical values, either” (Pope Benedict XVI in interview with Peter Seewald 2010). It is exactly such statements and questions, put forward by the former Pope, that the new Pope Francis seems to answer when he focuses on how the Catholic Church is the church of the poor and opts for a new evangelism: “His homily focused on protection – of the environment, children, the elderly and those in need”, whom he said were “often the last we think about” (BBC-News Europe, March 19, 2013). Instead of addressing the “problems” of our time in an abstract and philosophical way, he gives the values content.

However, the Catholic Church has a long history of dealing with political matters and has had many religio-political encounters with various regimes. One of its challenges in democratic societies is its size and structure. Furthermore, its global character would appear to make it unfit for direct involvement in national and local political life. Instead it may seek to play a role in civil society and as a “guardian” of certain standards and values. This does not go unnoticed in Catholic circles. Pope Francis, soon after his inauguration, “gave a clear call to the Catholic Church that it must not become a ‘compassionate NGO’”. He also made it explicitly clear how the ministry of the church differs from that of governments” (*The Examiner*, March 16, 2013). What the Pope is saying here is that the Catholic Church is *something other* than a political party or ordinary NGO: “The work of the church is *not* the same as that of social or government organisations, even the compassionate ones” (*The Examiner*, March 16, 2013). Its engagement in societal matters is anchored in Christ and therefore different.

Pope Francis calls for a confession of Christ. What does that mean? The world would rather not have any ‘tags’ attached to good works done by the church. However, no work by the church can have any lasting value when done apart from Christ (*The Examiner*, March 16, 2013).

The Pentecostals have traditionally shunned the superstructure of the Catholic Church and been accused of practising a “hara-kiri of denominationalism” (Carriquiry 2005). However, in Argentina during the last decade the two branches of Christianity have come closer, and with a great deal

of help from Cardinal Bergoglio (now Pope Francis), the Pentecostals and the Catholics now have exciting times ahead. Bergoglio was (and still is) very much liked by Pentecostals as well as by other religious groups in Argentina. Many Pentecostals suspect that the “Evangelical” and/or Charismatic new Pope was chosen to enable the Catholic Church to regain territory. Others hope for a positive outcome, and see this as an important step on the way to the unification of all Christians, which they see as the final sign of Jesus’ return.

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