

Introduction

When I, a European researcher of religion, met Javier for the first time, he presented himself as a self-confident member of the Argentinean middle class: in his early thirties, he held a university degree in business administration and earned a good salary. During the interview, he stressed extensively the European family background of himself and his wife, as well as their attachment to the European culture. Having grown up in a lower middle class Pentecostal family, Javier believed in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and its gifts, and was still affiliated with the Pentecostal church of his family. Although he believed firmly in the Pentecostal faith, he told me that he disliked the style of Pentecostalism practiced in his church. He described his church as a church for “negros” and “villeros” – pejorative descriptions for people from the lower class – and communicated a picture of a noisy and uncivilized Pentecostalism, inadequate for middle class Argentineans with European backgrounds. Also, his wife – who was raised in historical Protestantism – disliked their Pentecostal church to which they felt bound due to the congregational involvement of Javier’s parents. At the end of our first encounter, we agreed to visit their church together. Yet, after the interview I did not hear from Javier for some time. Despite sending him several messages where I asked him about our plans to visit his church, he would not answer me. Months later I finally managed to contact his wife and we arranged to visit one of their church services. From the beginning of our visit, it appeared to me as if Javier did not feel very comfortable with my presence and wanted us to leave the church as early as possible. In fact, in order not to attract the attention of their fellow members when leaving the church service earlier, Javier and his wife chose their places close to the rear end of the church hall. While the general atmosphere was highly expressive, Javier and his wife showed barely any form of emotional involvement. During the church service, the preachers asked the audience to stand up and repeat movements and phrases. Javier’s wife refused to carry out any of these practices: she remained in her seat, looked ashamed, and left the church service early. Javier behaved differently. He looked uncomfortable and appeared to be torn between showing and denying his attachment to the congregation and its practices. Thus, he sometimes stood up, raised his arms unconvincingly and repeated the phrases in a quiet voice. He marked a difference with his behavior: although he performed the practices,

he looked barely attached to them. At the end of the church service, the moment of exorcisms and dancing in the Holy Spirit, Javier encouraged me to leave his church along with him. With his fellow members dancing in the Spirit, crying and shouting in front of the pulpit, he could no longer bear my eyes on his church.

A religious movement that is frequently portrayed as emotional, ignorant, poor, and superstitious does not fit well with an educated middle class that imagines itself as European, rational, and secular.¹ Highly educated middle class individuals are not expected to participate in emotional and loud church services or to speak in tongues. Nevertheless, there exists a rising group of middle class Pentecostals in Argentina. How do middle class Pentecostals deal with their religious belonging? What type of Pentecostalism do middle class Pentecostals in Latin America develop?

The story of middle class Pentecostalism in Latin America remains largely untold. Despite a high academic interest in Latin American Pentecostalism and a rising community of middle class Pentecostals, the relationship between the middle class and Pentecostalism has been barely researched. This study endeavors to fill this void by exploring middle class Pentecostalism in Argentina. The main argument of this study is that Pentecostalism stands to some degree in opposition to the standards of appropriate middle class behavior. Middle class Pentecostals are torn between the world of Pentecostalism and the world of the educated, “European” middle class. In order to decrease this tension, middle class Pentecostals tend toward specific tastes and styles of Pentecostalism that draw boundaries in opposition to the “inappropriate” characteristics of Pentecostalism. They distance themselves from the “inappropriate” spirits of Pentecostalism.

The study of middle class Pentecostals contributes to an understanding of how individuals from different social backgrounds mark their status by drawing symbolic boundaries within the same religious community. Therefore, it adds to the research on class and religion, a topic that has received little attention in the sociology of religion during the last decades.

The following sections of the introduction will point to the general lack of studies regarding middle class religiosity and discuss the few existing insights concerning middle class Pentecostalism in Latin America.

1 For the public imaginary of Pentecostalism in Argentina, see Algranti 2010: 49; Frigerio 1993b; Frigerio 1998; Wyncarczyk 2009a: 194–197; Semán 2004: 17; Semán 2006a: 217. For the Argentinean middle class, see Adamovsky 2009; Cueto 2007; Svampa 2005; Tevik 2006.

1.1 Class and Religion: A Rather Understudied Topic

In the last few decades, the topic of social class and religion has played only a very marginal role within the scientific agenda. The academic debates in the scientific study of religion have been mainly dominated by (de-)secularization debates and rational choice theory. (De-)secularization debates tackled a wide variety of subjects around the vitality of religion in (late) modernity, such as public religion, religious fundamentalism, new religious movements, the supposed resurgence of religion, new (barely visible) manifestations of religion, and the pluralization and individualization of religion.² Meanwhile, the rational choice theory of religion endeavored to create a comprehensive social theory of religious behavior.³ In this context, rational choice theorists described social class – against their previous studies – as a minor factor for explaining religious practice:⁴

(...) although class does somewhat influence religious behavior, the effects are very modest, and most religious organizations are remarkably heterogeneous in terms of social status.

STARK AND FINKE 2000:198

In contrast to this position, there are various studies that point to the relevancy of social class in religion. In North America, studies indicate a strong relationship between social class and religious affiliation. It has been often claimed that denominational lines move along social class differences.⁵ Individuals

2 See for the (de-)secularization debate, for instance, Bruce 1989, 1996, 2001, 2003, 2010; Campiche 1993; Casanova 1994, 2006; Davie 1994, 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Dobbelaere 2002; Franzmann et al. 2006; Gabriel 1993; Garbriel et al. 2012; Gorski 2000; Hervieu-Léger 1986, 1990, 2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2008; Knoblauch 2009; Köhrsen 2012; Krech 2011; Luckmann 1991, Martin 1978; Norris and Inglehart 2004; Pickel and Sammet 2012; Pollack 2006; Pollack and Pickel 1999, 2000; Roof 1993, 1999; 2007; Sammet 2012; Tyrell 1996; Warner 1993; Willaime 1995/2005, Wohlrab-Sahar and Krüggeler 2000. The debate about Pentecostalism can be regarded as a subfield of this strand since the expansion of Pentecostalism has been described as an evidence for the vitality of religion in the modern world and a counter-evidence against secularization theory.

3 See for rational choice theory of religion, for instance, Bankston 2003; Jensen and Luther 2003; Finke 1997; Finke and Iannaccone 1993; Iannaccone 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994; Iannaccone et al. 1995; Stark and Bainbridge 1985; Stark and Iannaccone 1994; Stark and Finke 2000; Stolz 2009; Warner 1993; Young 1997.

4 Interestingly, this position contradicts Stark's and Bainbridge's positions in their earlier works where they referred strongly to deprivation approaches. See, for instance, Stark and Bainbridge 1980, 1985.

5 Newport 1979; Pyle 2006; Smith and Faris 2005; Waters et al. 1995.

tend to affiliate with religious groups that correspond to their social class. Higher socioeconomic status groups lean more toward theologically liberal religious congregations, while they avoid fundamental and/or sectarian movements. Lower socioeconomic status groups, instead, are more receptive to theologically more conservative and sectarian movements.⁶ However, also on the emerging Latin American “religious markets” there are class differences in religious “consumption”. These class differences are, for instance, illustrated by the lower class appeal of specific religious movements, such as Pentecostalism and Afrobrazilian cults. If religious belonging becomes more and more a subject of religious choice in modern societies – which seems to be the case⁷ – then the relevancy of social class for explaining the participation in particular religious groups equally rises. In the emerging “religious markets”, religious choices seem to be less and less determined by the “inherited religion” of the parental household, while other factors, such as class-related religious preferences, gain importance. In this context, social class may become a central element for explaining religious practice.

Despite the relevancy of social class, the relationship between class and religion is an understudied subject and has played only a marginal role during the last decades.⁸ Nonetheless, social class has formed an early topic in the sociology of religion. Weber, for instance, argued that the social position of individuals had an impact on their religious tendencies. He supposed that the “popular masses” have a need for deliverance from daily suffering, while the privileged want to enhance their grandeur and legitimate their social position.⁹ The peasant whose fate depended strongly on nature was thought to be inclined towards magic.¹⁰

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- 6 Iannacone 1988; McCloud 2007a; Roof and Hadaway 1979; Sherkat and Wilson 1995; Waters et al. 1995. Moreover, social mobility is conceived by many scholars of as a factor that motivates religious switching (Nelsen and Snizek 1976; Newport 1979; Waters et al. 1995). Individuals experiencing upward social mobility are believed to switch to religious groups that are located in a higher social position and will tend to be theologically more liberal than their previous religious group (cf. Roof and Hadaway 1979, Stark and Glock 1968).
- 7 See Berger 1990/1967: 133, 1979: 28; Casanova 2006: 18; Davie 2006a: 27–29; 2010: 172; Gabriel 1993: 31; Hervieu-Léger 1990; 2008; Luckmann 1991/1960: 140–141, 148; Luhmann 1977: 232–223; 242; Pollack and Pickel 1999: 473; Warner 1993: 1077; Wohlrab-Sah and Krüggeler 2000: 243.
- 8 See McCloud 2007a: 9; 2007b: 844; Smith and Faris 2005: 103. For other studies on religion and class, see, for instance, Bienfait 2011; Hill 2011; Ecklund and Scheitle 2007; Flere and Klanjsek 2009; Neslon 2009; McCloud and Mirola 2009; Reimer 2007; Schiemann 2010; Schwadel et al. 2009; Stolz 2004.
- 9 Weber 1921/72: 296, 298–299. Weber’s approach was later taken up by Bourdieu (1971a; 1971b).
- 10 Weber 1921/72: 286. The intellectual, instead, is thought to seek deliverance from his/her inner suffering searching for a sense in the world and trying to free it from the irrational. See Weber 1921/72: 307–308.

The question of social class was also prominently discussed by Richard Niebuhr. His book *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929) contributed to the debate about deprivation and religion. Here, he argues that sects form a haven for the deprived who compensate their lack of worldly power through religious activity. The contributions from Weber and Niebuhr – as well as those from Karl Marx and Ernst Troeltsch – nourished deprivation and social strain theories which dominated the scientific debate about social class and religion.¹¹ Deprivation approaches assume that the experience of poverty and social strain causes individuals to be more inclined towards religious coping strategies. These approaches posit that the religious activity of underprivileged or deprived groups relates to their deprivation. Deprivation is believed to render individuals receptive to specific, mostly sectarian, religious options.¹² These approaches were often applied to the Pentecostal movement. Here, scholars related the rise of Pentecostalism among lower classes to the experience of deprivation. Thus, Pentecostalism was frequently portrayed as a strategy to cope with deprivation and states of anomie.¹³

The predominance of deprivation approaches has led to several flaws in the study of the relationship of social class and religion. First, religion is reduced to a problem coping strategy. Its cultural dimensions – for instance, the cultural affinities of different social classes that may stand behind the differences in their religious practices – are disregarded.¹⁴ Second, deprivation theories have associated lower classes religiosity with a sect type of religion that creates high tension in regard to its wider social environment and is inclined towards magical practices and a high emotionality.¹⁵ This association has contributed to the stabilization of an imaginary of lower class religiosity: emotionality, magic, and sectarianism tend to be regarded as religious tendencies peculiar to lower classes and alien to middle classes. Third, deprivation approaches focus generally on individuals who are embedded in the lower class, while they disregard

11 See McCloud 2007a: 33–101.

12 Charles Y. Glock (1958) enhanced the debate about deprivation by introducing the concept of relative deprivation into the study of religion. Later, Lofland and Stark (1965) referred in their famous article to deprivation theories by stating that a religious search is generally motivated by an experience of tension.

13 Hunt (2002a, 2002b) provides a comprehensive overview of the deprivation approaches in the scientific study of Pentecostalism.

14 Smilde (2005: 761) criticizes, for instance, that deprivation approaches cannot explain why, when facing the same problems, some individuals convert to Pentecostalism, others not. He, therefore, adds the factor “social networks” to his explanation of Pentecostal conversion. For a more comprehensive critique of deprivation approaches, see also Hunt 2002b.

15 See McCloud 2007a: 17.

the religious practice of the middle and upper class. The prevalence of deprivation approaches has orientated the academic attention towards lower class religiosity. Little attention has been placed on the religiosity of middle classes. For this reason, middle class religiosity remains today a widely understudied topic.¹⁶

Beyond deprivation approaches, most of the research studying the relationship between social class and religion has a quantitative focus. These studies are based on large quantitative data samples but present only few qualitative insights on the micro and meso level. Qualitative studies on the micro and meso level, by contrast, could present detailed accounts on class differences in religious practices, beliefs, preferences, and styles and improve our understanding of how social class and religion interact with each other. Despite the relevancy of social class, there is a lack of qualitative studies exploring the role of social class in religion exists.¹⁷ With respect to the lack of qualitative research, McCloud states:

Finally, those searching for connections between class and religion need more than archival research, theoretical musings, national phone surveys, and quantitative analysis of the General Social Survey. The interdisciplinary study of religion and class demands fieldwork attuned to differences within denominations and among individuals inside single congregations. It also leads to new kinds of questions. Do middle-class Pentecostals speak in tongues and dance in the spirit differently than working-class Pentecostals?

McCLOUD 2007B: 855

This study addresses this issue and contributes to the qualitative study of middle class religiosity. The emphasis will be on middle class Pentecostals in Latin America. Middle class Pentecostals have an exceptional status among Pentecostals since Pentecostalism in Latin America is mainly a lower class movement. Focusing on the middle class in a religious movement dominated by the lower class allows for studying how middle class members deal with their exceptional status and mark their social position within the movement. Although Pentecostalism forms today by far the most successful strand of Christianity in Latin America, there exists so far no comprehensive research about its relationship to the middle class.

16 See also McCloud 2007b: 845–846; one exception is perhaps Altglas 2011.

17 Smith and Faris 2005: 103–104.

1.2 Latin American Pentecostalism: Towards a Middle Class Movement?

Pentecostalism emerged as a Christian renewal movement at the beginning of the 20th century within Protestantism¹⁸ and experienced a vast expansion around the world, counting at the beginning of the 21st century between 250 and 523 million devotees worldwide.¹⁹ Its success is, among other factors, due to its ability to adapt to local cultures and its steady innovation, which lead to the emergence of diverse forms of Pentecostalism.

The term “Pentecostalism” describes today a variety of manifestations of charismatic Christianity. Therefore, “Pentecostalism” is often perceived as a rather vague and imprecise term.²⁰ As Robbins notes, there is little standardization in the use of the term among scholars.²¹ Pentecostalism appears to be a catchall expression that lumps together different strands of charismatic Christianity.²² Despite its all-embracing character the term has not lost its semantic content and is usually associated with some specific attributes.

Pentecostalism can be best described with regard to its basic beliefs: most importantly the belief in the Holy Spirit and its gifts. Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit can become present in the daily reality of the devotee and award him/her with specific gifts. Prominent gifts are the gifts of tongues (glossolalia), healing, prophecy, and wisdom. The belief in the Holy Spirit and its gifts is linked to the general belief in the intervention of the supernatural in

18 The roots of the Pentecostal movement can be traced back to the Anglo-American revival movement, the “Great awakening”, and particularly to the Holiness movement. The starting point is often identified with Azusa street movement which was founded by William Seymour (Anderson 2004: 19–45; Aubrée 2010: 875–876; Cox 2001: 45–78; Hollenweger 1976: 7–14; Robbins 2004: 119–121; Schäfer 1992a: 47–57; 1992b: 58–61; 2009b: 556; Willaime 1999: 6–7). However, similar Christian renewal movements emerged almost at the time in different parts of the world (Anderson 2004: 35; Baier 2014: 25; Willaime 1999: 6). For this reason, Lehmann (2003) speaks with reference to the Azusa street movement of a Pentecostal myth of origin.

19 The number of Pentecostals varies according to the statistics and definitions and is estimated to be between 250 and 523 million adherents at the beginning of the 21st century (Anderson 2004: 11–13; Barrett 2001; Robbins 2004: 117–118). The estimation of 523 million Pentecostals worldwide embraces different types of charismatic Christianity and entails also Charismatic Catholics.

20 See Anderson 2004: 10; Willaime 1999: 5.

21 See Robbins 2004: 119.

22 See Schäfer 2009b: 555. Anderson proposes to speak of Pentecostalisms and to describe with this term movements and congregations that emphasize the action of the Holy Spirit. See Anderson 2004: 10, 13.

daily life: supernatural forces – which entail the Holy Spirit but also evil spirits such as demons – are supposed to intervene constantly in the daily world.²³ These basic beliefs manifest themselves in different ways: speaking in tongues, trance and ecstasy, faith healing, strong prayers seeking divine miracles, as well as prophecy and exorcisms.²⁴ A salient element of Pentecostalism is its emphasis on physical experience and the involvement of the body. Both are strongly related to the experience of the divine in form of the Holy Spirit.²⁵ Moreover, Pentecostal church services are notorious for their highly expressive, celebrative, exuberant, and eventful character. They are usually shaped by joyful music and strong emotional expressions.²⁶

Other characteristics often associated with Pentecostalism include its strong focus on evangelization and conversion. Pentecostals emphasize evangelization. Devotees are expected to engage in proselytism.²⁷ Moreover, Pentecostals stress the conversion experience. Conversion is conceptualized as a life transformation that implies the beginning of a new life oriented towards God. The new Christian identity is expected to become virulent in all aspects of life.²⁸

Biblical fundamentalism – a literal understanding of the Bible – is another feature frequently ascribed to Pentecostals.²⁹ Fundamentalism goes along with a

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- 23 See Anderson 2004: 13; 284; Aubrée 2010: 875–876; Mariz 1994: 67; Lehmann 2003: 479; Parker 1996: 142; Santagada 1975: 626; Schäfer 1998: 67; 2009b: 569; Semán 2000: 159; Stoll 1990: 4; 112–113; Willaime 1999: 6–7.
- 24 See Chesnut 1997: 6, 47; Corten 1995: 10–12, 153–154; Cox 2001: 81–110; Freston 1998: 340; Mariz 1994: 67; Jenkins 2007: 8, 73; Lehmann 2003: 479; Luca 1999a: 9–10; 2008b: 29–30; Parker 1996: 142; Schäfer 1992a: 53–57; 1998: 67; 2009b: 567; Wyncarczyk et al. 1995: 7–8. Anderson, for instance, describes the prayer for divine healing as “perhaps the most universal characteristic of the many varieties of Pentecostalism and perhaps the main reason for its growth in the developing world.” (Anderson 2004: 30).
- 25 See Anderson 2004: 14, 284; Luca 2008b: 29–30; Semán 2000: 159; Schäfer 2009b: 565; Schäfer and Tovar 2009: 5–6.
- 26 See Luca 1999a: 10; Robbins 2004: 125–126; Schäfer 1988: 71; Wyncarczyk et al. 1995: 7–8. Pentecostal beliefs and practices are closely related to popular religion and culture. See Freston 1998: 349; Robbins 2004: 128–129.
- 27 See Robbins 2004: 124; Willaime 1999: 6.
- 28 See Chesnut 1997: 73; Lehman 2003: 479; Robbins 2004: 127–129; Schäfer 2009b: 565.
- 29 See Bastian 1997: 143–144; Parker 1996: 142; Santagada 1975: 626; Wyncarczyk et al. 1995: 4. Yet, Pentecostalism does not form a branch of the fundamentalist movement. The fundamentalist movement partly rejects Pentecostalism (Corten 1995: 150; Robbins 2004: 122–123; Schäfer 1992b: 64–65). Moreover, Schäfer (1998: 62–66; 2003) questions if all Pentecostals can be considered as fundamentalists. He raises two conditions for fundamentalism: (1) the own position is regarded as the absolute truth and (2) the aspiration to rearrange one’s (secular) environment according to the religious truth. The second condition

supposed anti-intellectualism: Pentecostals are usually conceived of as renouncing theological education and relying instead on spiritual inspiration.³⁰

With regard to its organization, the most important attribute of Pentecostalism is the absence of a central organization. There is no unifying organization that could control the whole movement.³¹ Instead, there are thousands of – if at all – loosely coupled Pentecostal churches: the majority of them are very small and isolated congregations located predominantly in slums and lower class neighborhoods. Therefore, Pentecostalism is often conceived of as a grassroots movement.³² The lack of a central institution confers a high flexibility to the movement enabling churches to adapt to local culture.³³

Finally, characteristics often identified with traditional Pentecostalism are a strict moralism, – which forbids members, for instance, to wear modern cloth and jewelry – the rejection of the secular world and its pleasures, as well as a premillenaristic worldview.³⁴ However, this type of Pentecostalism seems to represent today only a small part of the movement. It has been replaced by a less moralistic and sectarian Pentecostalism that allows – and often even encourages – its members to engage in the secular world.³⁵

This new type of Pentecostalism is occasionally denominated as “Neo-Pentecostalism”. Yet, the term remains highly problematic through its use in varied ways. Some scholars like Hollenweger use the term to describe the charismatic renewal within traditional Protestant churches.³⁶ Others use the expression simply with regard to a less strict and rather wordly oriented type of Pentecostalism: they refer with the term to Pentecostals who engage in the

is not necessarily given in the case of Pentecostals. For a comprehensive introduction into fundamentalism, see Schäfer 2008b.

30 Anderson 2004: 14; Corten 1995: 243; Robbins 2004: 130; Wyncarczyk et al. 1995: 7–8.

31 Robbins 2004: 125; Semán 2000: 160; Willaime 1999: 14.

32 Anderson 2004: 282; Schäfer 2009b: 562–563.

33 Anderson 2004: 281–283; Aubrée 2010: 881; Luca 1999a: 7, 9; Robbins 2004: 118–119; 129–131; Schäfer 2009b: 554, 562–563; Semán 2000: 160; Stoll 1990: 112–113. Moreover, an astonishing feature of the movement is its gender gap. Scholars have observed that Pentecostal attract by far more female than male devotees. Estimations range from an average 60% to 75% female membership in Pentecostal congregations. See Aubée 2010: 878; Bergunder 2000: 14; Chesnut 1997: 22; 2003: 136; Freston 1998: 348; Martin 1995: 107; Martin 2001: 56; Robbins 2004: 132.

34 Robbins 2004: 121.

35 Anderson 2004: 38; Martin 2002: 77; Schäfer 2009b: 573.

36 Hollenweger 1976: 33–45; Stoll 1990: 50.

secular society instead of withdrawing from it.³⁷ Moreover, scholars often refer to Neo-Pentecostalism as a type of Pentecostalism marked by prosperity gospel and the vast use of mass media. With “Neo-Pentecostalism” they mean a Pentecostalism that preaches worldly well-being, joy, and directs itself towards consumer culture.³⁸ In Central America this type of Pentecostalism applies to middle and upper class Pentecostal churches. In contrast, in Brazil, this type of Pentecostalism attracts predominantly the lower class; one example is the IURD.³⁹ Consequently, the term “Neo-Pentecostalism” can be misleading. Originally designed to differentiate the Pentecostal movement into different types and development stages, the term often contributes to more confusion than it helps to provide clear cut categories. On one hand, there is no shared definition of the characteristics of “Neo-Pentecostalism”.⁴⁰ On the other hand, it is often empirically difficult to distinguish between “traditional” Pentecostal and “Neo-Pentecostal” churches.⁴¹ In Buenos Aires, for instance, most Pentecostal churches embrace some characteristics that are often attributed Neo-Pentecostalism while rejecting others. For this reason, this study will rather abstain from the term “Neo-Pentecostalism” and refer to Pentecostalism in general. The most common feature of Pentecostals is their emphasis on the Holy Spirit, which entails the belief in the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and supernatural intervention. The belief in the Holy Spirit can express itself in ecstatic experiences, faith healing practices, and exorcisms.⁴²

Pentecostalism experienced a rapid growth and vast success in Latin America where religious belief and practice as well as the public involvement of religious actors – particularly the Catholic Church – remain high.⁴³ Therefore, Hervieu-Léger’s notion of secularization as a reconfiguration of the religious field appears to fit better with the Latin America case than the classical concept of secularization.⁴⁴ This reconfiguration manifests itself in the

37 See Garcia-Ruiz 2007; Schäfer 2002: 139–148; 2008a: 495–496; 2009a: 49.

38 See Aubrée 2010: 877; 879; Hallum 2002: 227; Jaimes 2007; Mansilla 2006, 2008. Sometimes “Neo-Pentecostalism” is also associated with spiritual warfare. See Aubrée 2010: 877.

39 Freston (1998: 341; 1999: 150) indicates that the term is used in very different ways in Central America and in Brazil. He defines “neo-Pentecostalism” as the latest wave of a contextualization of lower class Pentecostalism to society (Freston 1999: 152).

40 See Freston 1999: 150; Jaimes 2007; Willaime 1999: 8–9.

41 Freston 1999: 152; Mansilla 2008.

42 I will refer with the term Pentecostalism only to Protestants and mostly use the terms “charismatic Catholicism” and “Catholic renewal” for the charismatic movement within the Catholic Church.

43 Beliveau and Esquivel 1996; Frigerio 1993; Mallimaci 2007; Höllinger 2006; Parker 1999:11.

44 Hervieu-Léger 1986: 227.

diversification of the religious field and the dissolution of the Catholic Church's religious monopoly. The monopoly is substituted by a "religious market" where religious "suppliers" compete for "clients."⁴⁵ Pentecostalism played an important role in this reconfiguration process. It became the central competitor of the Catholic Church and helped to break its religious monopoly.

Although Pentecostals already arrived at the beginning of the 20th century in Latin America, the mass expansion of Pentecostalism started in most countries half a century later and showed different growth rates in the various regions of Latin America. While the earliest mass growth occurred in Chile from the 1930's onwards, the expansion of Pentecostalism in Argentina occurred relatively late. Here, the movement experienced a vast growth in the 1980's and 1990's after the end of the last military dictatorship.⁴⁶

Barrett et al. estimate for the year 2000 that there are 141.4 Million Pentecostals in Latin America.⁴⁷ The proportion of Pentecostals varies from country to country. Brazil and Chile have the highest proportion of Pentecostals with an estimated 24% of their population being Pentecostal. They are followed by most of Central America, including Guatemala with 17%.⁴⁸ These numbers illustrate the success of a movement that turned out to be much more successful than liberation theology and mainstream (historical) Protestantism, even though historical Protestantism had already arrived in the 19th century.⁴⁹

45 Bastian 1997: 11–17; 2004, Chesnut 2003; Forni 1987; Mallmaci 2004; Parker 1999.

46 Aubrée 2010: 878; Bastian 1994a: 115; Chesnut 1997: 39; Cleary and Steigenga 2004: 12; Freston 1998: 336–337; 1999: 147; Gill 1999: 287–288; Hurtado 1941: 104–127; Jenkins 2007: 73; Martin 1990: 49; 2002: 71.

47 See Barrett et al. 2001(1): 14, 20. The number of Pentecostals has to be taken carefully since it entails also charismatic Catholics which will form a great proportion of this group. Barrett et al. (2001(1)) split the group of the Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal basically into three subgroups: Pentecostal Renewal, Charismatic Renewal, and Neocharismatic Renewal. Further they add to this a sub-group of "peripheral quasi Pentecostals" which consists of Prepentecostals and Postpentecostals. Pentecostalism in Latin America in 2000 consists according to Barrett et al. of 23% Pentecostals, 52% Charismatics (including Anglican, Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Charismatics) and 24% Neocharismatics (including, for instance, the IURD and grass-roots movements). See Barrett et al. 2001(1): 19–21.

48 Gooren 2010b, 2010c; Schäfer 1988: 69; Stoll 1993: 2. More recent research suggests that the countries with the highest proportion of evangelicals are today Guatemala and Nicaragua. The proportion of evangelicals is estimated to be even up to 40% for Guatemala and 29% for Nicaragua. See Schäfer 2013.

49 Cleary and Steigenga 2004: 12; Stoll 1993: 3, 11; Stoll 1993: 1–2, 4–7.

The spreading of Pentecostalism was not an unanimous success. Not all parts of society readily welcomed Pentecostalism. While it faced often rejection in public discourses, its expansion remained widely limited to the lower class.

Pentecostalism was perceived critically in Latin America's media debates and was often treated as a dangerous sect. Particularly at the beginning of the mass expansion, Pentecostals faced strong criticisms and prejudices. They were regarded as a North-American conspiracy and stigmatized as fundamentalist sects recruiting its members from the most vulnerable sections of the society: the ignorant and poor.⁵⁰ Although Pentecostalism has spread in the meanwhile strongly through many Latin American countries, it does not necessarily form a well-accepted religious option. By contrast, wide parts of their host societies still critically judge Pentecostals, particularly among the educated middle class.⁵¹

The stigmatization of the movement appears to have had an effect on its expansion, which took particularly place among the lower class, while its impact in Latin America's middle classes remained – apart from some exceptions such as Guatemala – marginal. Thus, numerous scholars and studies point to the lower class appeal of the movement.⁵²

Its success among the “poor” spurred deprivation theories: scholars interpreted the lower class appeal of Pentecostalism as a product of their

50 Bastian 1994a: 116; 1997: 21–23; Frigerio 1993b; Freston 1998: 344–345; Semán 2000: 161; Wyncarczyk 2009a: 179–192, 194–197.

51 Martin (2002: 9–11), for instance, points out that Pentecostalism is often experienced as unacceptable even by scholars. Further, Bergunder (2000: 23–28) points to the fact that historical Protestants in Latin America seek distinction from Pentecostals. In addition, Bernice Martin mentions an example that may help to illustrate the educated middle class' rejection of Pentecostalism in South America: “When I met him 1989, the distinguished Chilean Pentecostal theologian Jan Sepulveda made the same point. I had asked him a foolish question. Thinking of George Eliot's fictional portraits of nineteenth-century Dissenters, I asked whether there were any Latin American novels in which Pentecostals appeared. He laughed and indicated that such thing was unthinkable in Chile because novels were the *métier* of intellectuals for whom Pentecostals were the lowest of the lower. ‘Do you not know what we are called? Canudos! That is a little pipe traditionally smoked by peasants. That is what our intellectual class thinks of us!’” (Martin 2006: 145). See also Algranti 2010: 49; Frigerio 1998: 446–450, 453–455; Semán 2004: 12–18; Wyncarczyk 2005.

52 Anderson 2004: 59, 282; Bastian 1997: 59–72; 61–68, 71, 139–140; Burdick 1993a: 79, 85; Chesnut 1997: 17; 2003: 39–43; Cox 2001: 167–168; Deiros 1992: 175; Fernandes 1992; Freston 1998: 338, 341–342; 1999: 145–146; Höllinger 2006: 267–269; Hunt 2002a; Jenkins 2007: 73; Lehmann 1996: 210–214; 2003: 492; Mariz 1994: 35; Martin 1990: 53; 202; 2002: 1, 20; 78; Parker 1996: 154–155; Schäfer 2009a: 48; 2010: 93, 98–99; Stewart-Gambino et al. 1997: 241.

deprivation.⁵³ Approaches seeking to explain the lower class appeal of Pentecostalism focused unanimously on the lower class without addressing the topic from the viewpoint of its low appeal to the middle class. Instead of exploring why Pentecostalism attracts the middle class to a much lesser degree, they focused on explaining why it attracts the lower class and often reduced the phenomenon to the material living context of the lower class. The relationship of the Pentecostal movement to the middle class has been disregarded.

In addition, research on Pentecostalism in Latin America has so far mainly stressed the expansion of Pentecostalism and its cultural, political and social implications for the wider society.⁵⁴ The growing middle class membership and the internal changes within Pentecostalism occurring due to this growing middle class membership have so far not been studied in a comprehensive way.

Several scholars witness an expansion of Pentecostalism into Latin America's middle classes from the 1970s onwards. In many cases the "new" middle class Pentecostals are second or third generation Pentecostals.⁵⁵ However, the middle

53 See, for instance, Gill 1999: 290–293; Robbins 2004: 123–124. See for a comprehensive overview of deprivation theories in the study of Pentecostalism Hunt 2002a; 2002b. Prominent deprivation approaches in the study of Pentecostalism are Willems' (1967) "Follower of the new Faith", Lalive d'Épinay's (1968) "El refugio de las masas" and Robert Anderson's (1979) "Vision of the Desinherited". A newer and modified version of deprivation approaches was presented by Chesnut (1997). Deprivation approaches have faced serious criticism in the study of Pentecostalism (Gerlach 1974; Hine 1974) Other scholars relate the success of Pentecostalism to its proximity with Latin America's popular culture and religion (Bastian 1994a: 122–124; Parker 1996:148; Semán 2000; 2001a). Another, but less prominent, strand of approaches analyzes the expansion of Pentecostalism through the glimpses of rational choice theory, interpreting it in the context of the emergence of a religious market where religious suppliers compete for religious clients who can choose religious products from a rising variety of religious offers (Chesnut 2003; Gill 1999). Further, it is argued that Pentecostalism may contribute to poverty reduction and social upward mobility (Heuser 2013; Mariz 1994).

54 One of the most prominent approaches to Pentecostalism has been developed by Martin (1990). He conceives the rise of the movement as part of a social modernization process in Latin America. Pentecostalism offers a space to its followers where they can experiment with modernity. Bastian (1994a: 124–125; 1997: 139–140, 200–203) perceives Pentecostalism in a similar way and stresses its ability to offer a new form of social participation and integration for those who are deprived from other means of integration and social participation. Others like Stewart-Gambino et al. (1997: 237) call for caution and argue that one should not overestimate the impact of Pentecostalism on society and politics. Also Gooren's research on Pentecostalization appears to advise precaution with regard to the impact of Pentecostalism on the wider society. See Gooren 2010b; 2010c; 2011.

55 Freston 1997; B. Martin 1995: 107, 112; Martin 2002: 4, 81, 24, 114; Schäfer and Tovar 2009: 7; Stewart-Gambino et al. 1997: 241.

class membership should not be overestimated. The middle class remains in most countries a small faction within the movement, while the vast majority of members are still recruited from the lower class. Middle class Pentecostals appear to constitute a slowly growing minority among Pentecostals.

Some studies marginally tackle the presence of the middle class in Latin American Pentecostalism. The few existing studies point to a differentiation of middle class Pentecostals from lower class “mainstream” Pentecostalism. Schäfer, for instance, perceives a social polarization among Pentecostals.⁵⁶ Referring to Bourdieu, Schäfer supposes that in order to be appealing to the upper middle and upper class, religious options have to lend themselves for a religious distinction from other social actors.⁵⁷ Consequently, the upper and upper middle class will lean toward a Pentecostalism that is different from “mainstream” Pentecostalism.

A phenomenon often attributed to middle class Pentecostalism is Neo-Pentecostalism.⁵⁸ Neo-Pentecostalism is regarded as a type of Pentecostalism more appealing to the middle class than the old-fashioned, morally strict Pentecostalism. As already discussed above, the problem with the term “Neo-Pentecostalism” is not only that it is vaguely defined but that many – if not the vast majority of – Pentecostal churches in Latin America embrace today to different degrees characteristics often attributed to Neo-Pentecostalism. Therefore, the supposed middle class appeal of Neo-Pentecostalism would imply that many – if not most – of the existing Pentecostal churches nowadays attract the middle class. However, this does not appear to be the case. For this reason, one has to demarcate the characteristics of “Neo-Pentecostalism” particularly attractive for the middle class.

The tendency to identify Neo-Pentecostalism with middle and upper class involvement in Pentecostalism appears influenced by the case of Central America and especially Guatemala, where Neo-Pentecostals have a strong appeal to the (upper) middle class. Pentecostalism in Guatemala has experienced its strongest expansion during the 1970s and 1980s, when the country was dominated by military dictatorships and a violent civil war. Studies of Pentecostalism in Guatemala indicate that the movement has, in contrast to other Latin American countries, had a strong impact in the middle class and

56 Schäfer 2009a: 63.

57 See Schäfer 2009a: 63.

58 Delgado 2004: 105–106; Jaimes 2007; Garcia-Ruiz 2007; Luca 1999b; Mansilla 2008; Martin 2002: 4; O'Neill 2010: 10; Robbins 2004: 121–122; Schäfer 20008a: 487, 492; 2009a: 49; Villamán 2002: 510–511. For the case of North America see, for instance, Hunt et al. 1997.

that specifically Neo-Pentecostals recruit their members from the middle and even upper class.⁵⁹

Particularly interesting is Schäfer's approach, which is based on the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu.⁶⁰ Schäfer focuses on Pentecostal growth in the 1970s and 1980s in Central America, especially Guatemala, and observes that individuals are affected by the social transformations and conflicts in this region. The problems from which individuals suffer vary according to their social position. Sections of the upper class and middle class undergo a legitimacy crisis and experience a loss of control over their lives and their future while the lower class suffers from a crisis of their living conditions that manifests itself in migration, physical violence, and a marginal integration into the economic system. Affected by different problems and having incorporated different dispositions of perception, judgment, and action, they are inclined towards different types of Pentecostalism. The dominant social classes tend towards a Neo-Pentecostal type of Pentecostalism which lends itself for generating legitimacy and control over the empirical world. On the other hand, the lower class leans toward a traditional, premillenaristic Pentecostalism with an apocalyptic worldview that stresses the afterlife and inspires a withdrawal from the world. Remarkably, each class – although based on a similar inventory of religious symbols and concepts – creates its own type of Pentecostalism. Their inclination towards different types of Pentecostalism is not the bare product of different objective circumstances and problems, but rather due to different habitus. Class-related (pre-)dispositions of perception, judgment, and practice render them more inclined towards specific types of Pentecostalism. Schäfer shows that there are homologies between social positions and specific types of religious habitus.⁶¹ Of particular interest is the religious habitus of (upper) middle

59 See Anderson 2004: 76–77; Delgado 2004: 105–106; Garcia-Ruiz 2004; 2007; Hallum 2002: 227; Martin 2002: 25; O'Neill 2010: 10; Schäfer 1988; 1992a; 1992b; 1998; 2002; 2005; 2006; 2008a: 490–494.

60 Schäfer developed a habitus-analysis in order to explore the dispositions of actors. See Schäfer 2005; 2006; 2011; 2015. Moreover, Schäfer presents already in his early work a general classification of different types of Protestantism that differentiates between historical Protestantism, evangelical Protestantism, Pentecostalism and Neopentecostalism and the degree of institutionalization of these groups. This classification reveals that historical Protestantism and Neopentecostalism with their tendency towards bureaucratization are appealing to the middle class and, in the case of some Neopentecostal churches, even to the upper class, whereas evangelical Protestantism and Pentecostalism are more appealing to the lower class. See Schäfer 1992a: 85–113.

61 See Schäfer 1988; 1992a; 85–113, 183–186; 1992b; 1998; 2002; 2005; 2006; 2008a: 490–494; 2009b; 2010: 103–105; 2011. Moreover, Schäfer argues that the practice of Pentecostalism

class Pentecostals. In contrast to traditional Pentecostals, they do not withdraw from the world but endeavor to shape it: Neo-Pentecostals in Guatemala engage strongly in politics and have managed even to produce presidents, including Efraín Ríos Montt and Jorge Serrano. Instead of withdrawing from the world, they seek to accumulate power in order to control the fate of their society.⁶² Furthermore, Schäfer explains that upper and middle class Neo-Pentecostals are inclined towards a discourse of excellence, hold neo-liberal economic views, and tend to a negative regard of Latin American culture, which is perceived by them as promoting laziness and corruption.⁶³ Moreover, the religious discourse in church services shows a strong emphasis on demons and exorcisms.⁶⁴

The case of Guatemala provides some insights into middle class Pentecostalism in Latin America. However, at the same time, one has to take the peculiarities of the Guatemalan case into account, which consist, among other factors, in a violent conflict threatening not only the lower but also the middle and upper class. This context has contributed to a middle class appeal of the Pentecostal movement exceptional for Latin America.⁶⁵ Moreover, Pentecostalism in Central America appears to have developed its own logic. In comparison to South America's Pentecostalism, the movement in Central America is characterized by a stronger involvement in politics and society, as well as by a closer relationship to the evangelical movement in North-America.⁶⁶ Another peculiarity is that Central America – and particularly Guatemala – seems to be the region where the general classification into (upper) middle class Neo-Pentecostals and lower class traditional Pentecostals best fits. In other regions of Latin America, the class differences between traditional and Neo-Pentecostalism are different or less evident.

In the Brazilian context, Neo-Pentecostalism refers mainly to lower class Pentecostalism, as Freston points out. He argues that there is a need to distinguish between Neo-Pentecostal churches, which attract mainly the lower class like the IURD, and middle class churches, such as *Renascer*. For this reason, Freston uses a different term, and denominates middle class Pentecostals

allows individuals to retrieve their sense of agency in the context of crisis, especially within the crisis of modernity in Latin America. See particularly Schäfer 1998.

62 See also Freston 1997: 198–201; García-Ruiz 2007; Hallum 2002: 227, 233–235.

63 Schäfer 2008a: 496, 498.

64 Schäfer 1998: 68–69; 2003: 29–35.

65 In the rest of Latin America Pentecostalism remains widely a lower class movement. Schäfer 2009a: 53; Freston 1998: 341–342.

66 See, for instance, Freston 1997: 198–201.

“charismatic Evangelicals”. Many of these charismatic congregations are related to traditional Protestantism or independent evangelical communities.⁶⁷ Similar to Guatemala, these middle class congregations engage in politics with the objective to put the fate of their societies under evangelical leadership.⁶⁸ The concept of spiritual warfare frames this project. Here, spiritual warfare refers less to exorcisms within the context of church services than to a macro project of cleaning the society – including the political system – from evil forces. Spiritual warfare on the macro level embraces Pentecostal networks that seek, for instance, to expel the “demon of corruption” from different spheres of the Brazilian society.⁶⁹ Meanwhile middle class congregations abstain from the micro applications of spiritual warfare in church services. Freston writes:

(...) at the level of combat against individual demonic oppression, the Comunidades consciously differ from lower class churches such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God: they do not put possessed people through embarrassing situations (for middle class sensibilities) such as physical manhandling or interviewing the demons.

FRESTON 1997: 191

Hence, middle class sensibilities appear to play an important role in the design of middle class church services. Concerning the middle class sensibilities Freston argues that “(...) the search for respectability would not be served by appearing too Pentecostal.” (Freston 1997: 188) Middle class Pentecostals keep distance from strong forms of Pentecostalism, which entail, for instance, “embarrassing” exorcisms. This dissociation becomes also evident with regard to the more traditional type of Pentecostalism. Middle class Pentecostals are reported to indulge in a less ascetic lifestyle. While maintaining the core moral rules with regard to marriage, they selectively engage in some of the pleasures of modern society, such as television, alcohol consumption, or soccer.⁷⁰ With regard to the clothing of middle class Pentecostals, Bernice Martin notes:

Pentecostals in the professional middle classes, some of them second or third generation Protestants with experience of higher education, are acutely aware of the class connotations of the typical Pentecostal dress

67 Freston 1997: 187; 1998: 341; 1999: 150–151.

68 Freston 1997: 198–199.

69 Freston 1997: 190–193. For spiritual mapping, see also Holvast 2009.

70 Martin 1995:108; Robbins 2004: 121–122.

code and tend to modify, if not wholly abandon it. Their clothes are virtually indistinguishable from those of their non-Pentecostal class peers in cut and quality, while still avoiding sexual immodesty.

MARTIN 2006: 152–153

Dressing in a modern, “un-Pentecostal” way, they seek distinction from traditional, lower class Pentecostalism. Further, Martin indicates that prosperity gospel is less evident among middle class congregations.⁷¹ Yet, these insights have to be taken carefully since they appear to refer particularly to one case: the congregation *Renascer* in São Paulo, which is reported to attract the middle class and to have a strong attachment to youth culture and the music milieu.⁷²

Also, Henri Gooren's recent work on Pentecostalization in Chile provides some indications with respect to middle class Pentecostalism. He reports that young professionals who grew up in traditional Pentecostal churches dislike the unsophisticated preaching styles, anti-intellectualism, and the tendency of their Pentecostal congregations to isolate themselves from society. Many of them switch, according to Gooren, to Baptist congregations, the Anglican Church, and, in particular, an evangelical congregation called *Viña Las Condes*. This church is led by an US-American pastor and shaped by a charismatic style of Protestantism. Further, Gooren describes the congregation as a well-organized church that provides a variety of Bible and leadership courses, entails a small charity program, and has a high quality of music.⁷³

Although this book focuses on Pentecostalism in Latin America, a short excursion to the case of South Korea provides some interesting insights. Nathalie Luca reports a tendency among university students and (upper) middle class individuals involved in Pentecostalism to privatize strong spiritual and emotional practices that could alienate non-Pentecostals.⁷⁴ Thus, the charismatic

71 Martin 1995: 116.

72 Martin 1995; 2006: 150; Freston 1997: 193–195.

73 See Gooren 2011.

74 Luca (1999b) states that some of the characteristics of Pentecostalism become less and less acceptable for a South Korean population which experiences a significant improvement in its life quality and education. Thus, the changes in life quality and education are accompanied by changes in the style of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul. Moreover, in the Whole World Church she finds many ex-members of the Yoido Full Gospel Church who experienced an improvement in their social position and other Koreans from the (upper) middle class. This church shows a different style which is calmer and less emotional than the style of the Yoido Full Gospel church and embraces at the same time a more “cultivated” membership. Luca witnesses a strong orientation towards the Occident. In addition, the church enjoys a high reputation within the society. Further, Luca describes

gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as glossolalia, become banned from the church services while they may be practiced in the private sphere of the devotee.⁷⁵ The withdrawal of spiritual practices from the church services indicates – similar to the case of Brazil – that middle class sensibilities with regard to potentially embarrassing or inappropriate practices play an important role among middle class Pentecostals.

Several scholars argue that middle class Pentecostalism in Latin America tends towards an institutionalization process. This institutionalization process implies a partial removal from the spiritual and emotional characteristics of Pentecostalism and a transformation towards a more bureaucratic and formal type of Pentecostalism. André Corten supposes that an increasing participation of the middle class in Pentecostalism implies a transition from sect to church. Referring to Weber, Troeltsch, Niebuhr, and Yinger, he argues that Pentecostals will develop from a sect into a church, which implies an adoption of a more socially adapted form of Pentecostalism, as well as a tendency towards a more intellectual and less emotional style.⁷⁶ David Martin presents a similar hypothesis arguing that bureaucratization and institutionalization will increasingly find their way into Pentecostalism.⁷⁷ Also, Schäfer observes a process of institutionalization and bureaucratization among middle class Pentecostals in Latin America, which consists of, for instance, middle class churches opening schools, cooperating strongly with the wider society, and promoting umbrella organizations. Moreover, he describes a tendency towards softer enthusiastic forms of expressions – which becomes, for instance, evident in the worship music of middle class church services – whereas stronger expressions of Pentecostalism – exorcism and faith healing – as well as the concept of prosperity gospel are more present in lower and lower middle class Neo-Pentecostal churches, such as the IURD. Practices involving the Holy

a third church that recruits almost exclusively young students. This church encourages the professional ambitions of its young members, shows a transcultural style by inviting pastors from abroad, and employs vastly mass media. Strong emotional expressions are restricted to specific spaces, particularly its football matches.

75 This appears not only to be the case with churches located in South Korean but with South Korean congregations that have expanded to Europe. Luca reports that the French branches of the Yoido Full Gospel Church are dominated by middle and upper class Koreans who have banned some of the spiritual manifestations for which their mother church in Seoul is notorious from their church services. See Luca 2008b: 229.

76 See Corten 1995: 189–192, 209–215.

77 Martin 2002.

Spirit appear to lose importance among middle class Pentecostals in comparison to lower class communities.⁷⁸

Do the “tongues of fire” cease to burn among middle class Pentecostals? Is there a tendency towards a more institutionalized and less spiritual style of Pentecostalism?

The few existing studies concerning middle class Pentecostalism indicate that middle class Pentecostalism involves a middle class sensibility. The sensibility of Latin America’s middle classes appears to stand in tension with strong and old-fashioned, sectarian forms of Pentecostalism. Consequently, middle class Pentecostals are inclined towards a type of Pentecostalism that fits better with the sensibilities of the middle class and distinguishes itself from “lower class Pentecostalism”. This Pentecostalism appears to be less morally strict, abstains from “embarrassing” spiritual practices and adapts itself to and engages itself in the wider society instead of breaking away from it. Yet, we know little about the religious preferences and styles of middle class Pentecostals. The research on middle class Pentecostalism in Latin America is at most fractional. There is a lack of comprehensive empirical studies about the religious styles and preferences of Latin America’s middle class Pentecostals. This study wants to help overcome this void by conducting an empirical study on middle class Pentecostalism in Argentina. Thereby, it raises the following questions: How does Argentina’s educated middle class relate to Pentecostalism? What type of Pentecostalism do middle class Pentecostals create in Argentina? How do they deal with the tensions between their religious and their class belonging?

1.3 The Structure of the Study

The objective of this study is to explore middle class Pentecostalism in Argentina. In order to address middle class Pentecostalism, I will use a theoretical approach that stresses the social representations and symbolic boundary work of the Argentinean middle class. The second chapter will outline this theoretical approach. Based on the theoretical framework, the third chapter provides an outline of the methods that are applied for the empirical the study of Argentinean middle class Pentecostalism.

Middle class Pentecostalism in Argentina is embedded in a specific socio-religious context. Therefore, the fourth chapter sketches a general picture of the context of middle class Pentecostalism. Focal topics are Argentina’s socio-religious history, its middle class, the religious field, and the relationship

78 Schäfer 2009a: 62, 67–72; 2010: 103.

between class and religion. After having described the socio-religious context, the fifth chapter portrays the Pentecostal movement in Argentina. In this chapter it becomes evident that Pentecostalism remains mostly a lower class movement in Argentina. It will be argued that the continuing stigmatization of Pentecostalism and its mismatch with the representations of the middle class contribute to the lower class bias of the movement. Due to this mismatch educated middle class actors tend to avoid the movement. Despite the lower class stigma of Pentecostalism and its tensions with the representations of the middle class, there exists a small group of educated middle class Argentines participating in the movement. Their religious belonging is frequently experienced by peers as inappropriate and creates tensions in their social relationships. These tensions raise the question of how educated middle class Argentines come to convert to Pentecostalism. This question will be addressed in the following chapter where different factors that facilitate the conversion of educated middle class Argentines to Pentecostalism are explored.

While the fifth and the sixth chapter illustrate the tensions between the educated middle class and Pentecostalism and show how middle class Argentines convert to Pentecostalism, the following two chapters sketch a picture of the religious tastes and styles of middle class Pentecostals. Chapter 7 presents the example of two Pentecostal churches: God Is Love and Assembly of Christ. This chapter presents an in-depth study of two Pentecostal churches which helps to illustrate the boundary work of Pentecostal churches. Although both churches are situated in middle class neighborhoods, they attract a very different clientele. Assembly of Christ attracts mainly the Argentinean middle class, while God Is Love shows a high appeal to the lower class. The comparison of these churches reveals that they represent vastly different styles of Pentecostalism.

Since the comparison between these two churches delivers only a very limited perspective on middle class Pentecostalism, Chapter 8 widens the perspective by integrating larger empirical material from my field research in Buenos Aires. This chapter presents the religious tastes and styles of middle class Pentecostals along different symbolic boundaries. It is argued that middle class Pentecostals show religious tastes and styles that draw different types of boundaries in opposition to other Pentecostals: "legitimate" boundaries, structural and organizational boundaries, educational boundaries, expressive boundaries, and moral boundaries. Each of these boundaries will be addressed in a separate section. Chapter 9 portrays the evolution and implications of this boundary work. The study ends with a conclusion summarizing the main results of the study and sketching an outlook.