

10 Latin America¹

Steven Engler, Anatilde Idoyaga Molina, Renée de la Torre, Paulo Barrera Rivera, and Sylvia Marcos*

Intraregional divisions and interregional connections	270
ARGENTINA	
Sociology	271
Anthropology	272
Philosophy	273
BRAZIL	
The emergence and development of the study of religions	273
Major ideas and problems	274
Institutionalization	276
MEXICO	
The emergence of the study of religions	277
The development of the study of religions	278
Emerging issues	280
PERU	
Prehistory of the study of religions	281
The emergence of the study of religions	282
The development of the study of religions	282
Emerging issues	285
STUDIES ON GENDER AND RELIGION IN LATIN AMERICA	
Conclusion	286
Acknowledgments	287
Notes	287
References	287

* Steven Engler wrote the Introduction, Conclusion, and the section on Brazil, Anatilda Idoyaga Molina the section on Argentina, Renée de la Torre the section on Mexico, Paulo Barrera Rivera the section on Peru, and Sylvia Marcos the section on gender).

270 ENGLER, MOLINA, DE LA TORRE, RIVERA AND MARCOS

THIS CHAPTER OFFERS A SELECTIVE overview of certain major themes, trends, and figures in the academic study of religion in Latin America. It is not comprehensive, and it is primarily descriptive rather than evaluative, indicating a few facets of a more complex whole. The fact that Brazil, México, Argentina, and Peru are highlighted merely reflects the limitations of space and time, the vagaries of communication, and the busy schedules of scholars who were invited to contribute but were unable to do so. Important work is also being done in other countries within Latin America.

Intraregional divisions and interregional connections

There is increasing international communication and cooperation among scholars of religion in Latin America, in large part due to conferences of regional professional associations, especially the Asociación Latinoamericana para el Estudio de las Religiones (ALER) and the Asociación de Cientistas Sociales de la Religión en el Mercosur (ACSRM).

As elsewhere, the work presented at these congresses varies, but the best work is on a par with that encountered at major North American and Western European conferences, for example that of the Société Internationale de Sociologie des Religions (SISR/ISSR). The panels and sessions are often more focused than, for example, those of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in North America. A key reason for this is the greater emphasis on movements and developments that are specifically religious, which reflects the incredibly rich landscape of religious material to study, the relative lack of people and resources to do much more than address the most obvious topics, and the related lack of emphasis on theory and on diffuse phenomena like implicit religion and 'religion and/in X'.

Despite these and other venues for interaction, and despite increasing use of e-mail and the Internet to foster international communication and collaboration, inter-regional connections among scholars in the field remain relatively weak. Scholars in the southern nations of South America remain relatively disconnected from those in the northern part of the continent and from those in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. This is due to the geographical and cultural distances involved, and to the usual constraints on time, energy, and resources. Latin American scholars also face additional pressures, when compared to many North American and Western European scholars, given both the generally greater need for political maneuvering to defend university programs and positions, and the difficulties of soliciting funds from often haphazard sources in the face of a relative neglect of the humanities and social sciences.

Argentina

There has never been a department or faculty of the history or study of religion in Argentina. The proliferation of public and private universities in the latter half of the twentieth century resulted in no departments, research programs, or positions specific to such a 'field'. The study of religious phenomena unites different individuals and research groups from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. A key moment was the establishment of programs in sociology and anthropology at the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA) in the 1950s.

Important for scientific investigation in all areas was the creation, in the 1950s, of the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET). CONICET continues to promote investigation in three ways: it funds a number of stable positions, the Carrera del Investigador Científico, allowing Argentina's top researchers to work from any university in the country; it supports the creation of active research units, centers, and institutes; and it funds research projects, generally within existing CONICET units in the country's universities.

Sociology

Sociology interest in religion took shape around Floreal Forni, CONICET researcher and professor at UBA who led a seminar on 'Sociology of Religions'. Forni set up a team of investigators at CONICET's Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Laborales (CEIL), with affiliates in other universities (Forni *et al.* 2003). This group has studied institutionalized religions, especially churches as institutions and new religious movements, including institutional Catholicism, various evangelical churches and Pentecostal groups in Argentina, the charismatic renewal, and, to a lesser extent, Umbanda and other Afro-Argentinian groups. It has also studied popular Catholicism, for example fiestas dedicated to saints venerated by the migrant population of the interior of the country and the emergence of non-canonical saints. A central figure in the group is Fortunato Mallimaci, a professor at UBA and director of CEIL/CONICET's, Society, Culture and Religion area, which publishes the journal *Sociedade y Religión*. He has also forged international research networks, especially with France's École des Hautes Études. Other important researchers include Joaquín Algranti, Aldo Ameigeiras, Abelardo Soneira, and Juan Esquivel.

More recent groups include that led by Alejandro Frigerio and Marita Carozzi, both CONICET investigators at the Universidad Católica Argentina, which has published studies of Pentecostal groups, Afro-Argentinian worship,

and the New Age movement in Buenos Aires (e.g. Frigerio and Carozzi 1993; Frigerio and Oro 1998; Carozzi 2001). The group has strong relations with Brazilian researchers through the Asociación de Cientistas Sociales de la Religión en el Mercosur (ACSRM) and publishes the journal *Ciencias Sociales y Religión*.

Anthropology

The emergence of anthropological studies of religion was rooted in field work with indigenous groups and in rural Creole and half-caste societies. From the 1920s into the 1960s, the myths of Argentina's indigenous cultures, especially in the Gran Chaco, were compiled and published, generally without analysis and with some information on religious beliefs (Metraux 1939; Palavecino 1935, 1940). Folklore studies of rural, Creole, and half-caste populations focused on the beliefs, 'superstitions', and rituals of popular Catholicism (Cortazar 1948; Vivante 1953; Ambrosetti 1971).

A significant change in the study of the indigenous cultures of Latin America materialized towards the end of the 1960s in the Instituto de Antropología de la Universidad de Buenos Aires, with a group investigating the broader cultural contexts of myth and ritual. Led by Marcelo Bórmida (see 1969–1970), the group created the Centro Argentino de Etnología Americana (CAEA), a unit of CONICET, which publishes the journals *Scripta Ethnologica* and *Mitologicas*. Thematic interests include myth, native cosmologies, ritual, and notions of power (in the phenomenological sense). The predominant methodological stance draws on Husserl's phenomenology and hermeneutical theories. CAEA has also studied the evangelization of indigenous societies, related adaptative strategies and religious change, and messianic movements. Prominent contributions include the work of Edgardo Cordeu (e.g. 1974, 2004), Alejandra Siffredi (1984, 2002), José Braunstein (1974, 1990), Pablo Wright (1984, 1994) and Anitilde Idoyaga Molina (1985, 1999, 2000). New lines of investigation examine relations between the medical and religious fields, including New Age, yoga, reiki, shiatsu, and ritual therapies among evangelicals, Pentecostals, Catholic and Afro-Argentinian groups (e.g. Saizar 2005; Korman 2005; Bordes 2006; Barrón 2004; Idoyaga Molina 2004; Idoyaga Molina and Luxardo 2004).

UBA's Instituto de Ciencias Antropológicas is also home to the Centro de Antropología Especiales, founded by Edgardo Cordeu and Alejandra Siffredi, which studies, among other issues, the indigenous societies of the Gran Chaco (Briones 2003; Ludueña 1998; Spadafora 1995). Pablo Wright has played an important role in shaping the careers of younger investigators, such as Cesar Ceriani Cernadas, Catón Eduardo Carini, and Silvia Citro. Currently, research into contemporary urban issues, for example New Age and Internet sects, has taken precedence over qualitative studies and hermeneutic approaches.

Work outside the UBA has addressed a number of issues: theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of indigenous societies; popular Catholicism, including beliefs and rituals regarding souls, the dead, the devil, and popular saints; the Pachamama (Mother Earth); rituals linked to the reproduction of the livestock; and the Inca presence in the Argentine northwest. The contributions of several scholars stand out: Cristina Krause (Universidad Nacional de San Juan) (1994, 2000), Ángel Cerutti (Universidad Nacional del Comahue) (Cerutti and Pita 1999), Luis Amaya (Universidad de Belgrano) (1996), Silvia García (Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Pensamiento Latinoamericano, de la Secretaría de Cultura de la Nación) (1984), Susana Gómez (Instituto Universitario Nacional del Arte) (2004), Cristina Bianchetti (Universidad Católica de Salta) (1995, 1996), Constanza Ceruti (CONICET) (1999, 2003) and Claudia Forgione (Universidad del Salvador) (1990, 1996).

Philosophy

Significant work is being done in the philosophy of religion (Ferrara 2005; Balzer 1988, 2000). At the Universidad de Quilmes, religious philosophy has developed in relation to studies on human rights. The Universidad del Salvador has a research center and Chair of Oriental Studies, largely due to the work of the Jesuit Fr. Quiles (1984, 1987), which is producing important work on Buddhism (Dragonetti and Tola 2002, 2004) as well as translations of and commentaries on eastern texts.

Brazil

The emergence and development of the study of religions

The study of religion in Brazil begins with the texts and images of those who were fascinated by indigenous and Afro-Brazilian cultures, from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries: colonists, travelers, priests, missionaries, ethnographers, folklorists, and novelists (e.g. Buarque de Holanda 1999 [1936]). The social sciences were established late in Brazil (e.g. Rodriguez 2004 [1932], 1935 [1900]). In the 1930s, French, Italian, and German university missions jump-started Brazil's university system, creating the University of São Paulo (USP) in 1934. The French contribution was crucial, bringing to Brazil a series of young scholars who would later become influential in their respective fields, such as historian Fernand Braudel, geographer Pierre Monbeig, and 'sociologist' Claude Lévi-Strauss, replaced in 1937 by Roger Bastide, who stayed until 1954 (cf. Bastide 1960).

274 ENGLER, MOLINA, DE LA TORRE, RIVERA AND MARCOS

The social scientific study of religion emerged even later, a delay with complex roots. The motto on Brazil's flag, 'Order and Progress', reflects the prominent place of positivism in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Brazilian intellectual circles. In the 1960s, Marxist analyses and the influence of Lévi-Strauss became prominent. Beginning in the 1950s, many churches saw the humanities and social sciences as means of understanding themselves and their place in society, and of claiming a certain legitimacy in the public sphere. As the study of religions was beginning to be consolidated in the late 1970s and early 1980s, its development was hampered by the repressive actions of the military dictatorship (1964–1985). Religion was often associated with anti-government stances and repressed, especially given the then-prominent role of liberation theology as a counter-ideology.

Major ideas and problems

Not surprisingly, given the richness of the religious landscape, Brazilian scholars of religion tend to focus on the study of religious phenomena in their own country. The study of millennial movements was a foundational theme in the social scientific study of Brazilian religion (Queiroz 1965; Monteiro 1974). Valuable work has also been done on popular Catholicism (e.g. Brandão 1993; Pereira 2006), including religious festivities (Magnani 2003; Pereira and Camurça 2003), pilgrimage and 'religious tourism' (e.g. Steil 1996; Abumanssur [ed.] 2003), as well as the rapid growth of charismatic Catholicism (Machado 1996; Prandi 1997).

Brazilian research on Afro-Brazilian religions is, of course, rich and essential (e.g. Birman 1995; Prandi 2005; Bernardo 2003). Closely related to this work is a rich literature on syncretism, *mestiçagem*, and hybridity (e.g. Ferretti 1995, Sanchis [ed.] 2001).

Two other important Brazilian religions have prompted significant research. The French Spiritualism of Alain Kardec has put down strong middle-class roots in Brazil, as Espiritismo or Kardecismo (Camargo 1961; Giumbelli 1997; Stoll 2003). It was a key influence in the emergence of Umbanda, a uniquely Brazilian mixture of Afro-Christian traditions and Spiritualism (e.g. Montero 1985; Negrão 1996).

The study of religious aspects of indigenous cultures has been particularly strong. Egon Schaden (1913–1991) is the foundational figure. (European scholars also did important work, above all Curt Unkel [1883–1945] and Alfred Métraux [1902–1963].) Other important figures include Eduardo Galvão, Herbert Baldus, Darcy Ribeiro, Florestan Fernandes, Roberto Da Matta, Eduardo Viveiros De Castro, Dominique Gallois, and Renate Vietler.

Beginning in the late 1970s, a series of key works by Brazilian Protestant historians drew attention to the importance of Protestantism in the country's past and developed nuanced typologies of the emerging forms (e.g. Cesar 1973; Alves 1979). Valuable sociological studies have been published in a number of related areas: evangelicalism and neo-Pentecostalism (e.g. Campos 1999; Mafra 2001); Pentecostal growth at the expense of Catholicism (Campos 1996; Birman and Leite 2000); the Pentecostal 'war' with Afro-Brazilian religions (Soares 1993; Oro 1997); and the political roles of evangelicals and Pentecostals (Sylvestre 1988; Burity and Machado 2005).

The recognition of the growth of Pentecostalism turned scholarly attention beyond Catholicism, especially in the early 1990s. The late 1990s saw increasing recognition of the broader range of religions in their country: Judaism (Topel 2003; M. Carneiro 2001); Buddhism and the religions of Japanese immigrants in Brazil (e.g. Oro 2000; Usarski [ed.] 2002); Hinduism and related New Religious Movements (NRMs) (Guerriero 2000); the New Age movement (Magnani 2000; Amaral 2000); Brazilian NRMs that make ritual use of the drug ayahuasca, that is Santo Daime, Barquinha, and the Centro Espírita Beneficente União do Vegetal (e.g. Araujo 1999; Labate and Araújo [eds] 2002); and NRMs more generally (Albuquerque 2004; Guerriero 2006). There has been a recent wave of popular books on Islam, but relatively little scholarly work has been done on Islam in Brazil. A few important works explicitly consider religious pluralism, among them Bittencourt Filho (2003) and Teixeira and Menezes (2006).

A few examples will have to suffice of important work in other areas. Brazilian scholars have made especially strong contributions to the analysis of relations between media and religion, often with an emphasis on marketing strategies (Frigerio and Oro 1998; Campos 1999). Explicit discussions of relations between gender and religion are relatively infrequent in the Brazilian literature (but see, e.g. Rosado-Nunes 2000; Bernardo 2003). Statistical analyses of demographic trends are producing valuable results, including detailed work with regional variation, based on the 2000 IGBE census returns (Jacob *et al.* 2003, 2006) and analyses of surveys, which show a dramatic rise in people with 'religiosity' but 'no religion' (S. R. A. Fernandes 2006). Among rare work on science and religion is USP psychologist Geraldo Paiva's study of the religious views of Brazilian scientists (2000). Theological views of science are often explicit in research in this area (Cruz 2004; Marino 2005). Besides Paiva, João Edênio Reis Valle is a key figure in psychology of religion. The new Centro 'Cardeal Arns' de Estudos Interdisciplinares (CECREI), at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, shows promising signs of invigorating the social scientific study of relations between religion, science, biotechnology, and economics (online at <www.pucsp.br/cecrei>).

Institutionalization

Religious studies in Brazil is a small but growing field. Several recent collections of papers have brought the work of top scholars together under the rubric of *ciências da religião*, contributing to the consolidation of the field (e.g. B. M. Souza and Martino [ed.] 2004; Manoel and Freitas [ed.] 2006; and Usarski [ed.] forthcoming). A key figure in this movement and a strong advocate for the autonomy of the field is German-trained scholar Frank Usarski (2006).

There are currently three doctoral programs in *ciência(s) da religião*: Universidade Metodista de São Paulo; the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo; and Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora. Two differences from North America and Europe are the absence of undergraduate programs and the lack of emphasis on comparative study, including survey courses on 'World Religions'.

The IAHR-affiliated Associação Brasileira de História das Religiões (ABHR) is the main professional association, with important Brazilian participation in the international groups mentioned in the introduction. The Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais (Anpocs) and the Associação Brasileira de Antropologia (ABA) have working groups on religion. There are two important research centers on religion, both founded in the 1970s: the Instituto de Estudos da Religião and the Centro de Estudos da Religião (CER).

The field is only beginning to distinguish itself institutionally from theology (Engler 2006). Theology had traditionally been categorized as a sub-area of philosophy by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES), the federal agency that oversees Brazilian graduate programs. It received separate status only in the last few years. The status of *ciência(s) da religião* as an explicit sub-area of theology is currently being negotiated. This lack of disciplinary autonomy has four negative implications for the Brazilian field. First, *cientistas da religião* and theologians compete for the same small pot of grant and scholarship funding, almost always in confessional institutions. Second, some of the graduate programs in the field currently face resistance from ecclesiastically conservative administrations and colleagues. Third, very few of the faculty in departments of *ciência(s) da religião* are trained in the field: most are theologians, and some are anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, or philosophers. They produce excellent work, but a relative lack of comparative breadth is making it hard for the field to establish its identity. Fourth, theology is unique among all academic areas under CAPES jurisdiction in being granted special status, exempt from any interference in terms of criteria of curricular or research excellence. This respect for freedom of religion results in theology being seen as a pseudo-discipline within the university. *Ciência(s) da religião*, officially a sub-area

of theology, is subject to the same special status and so tarred with the same brush.

Religious studies in Brazil faces a double bind. On the one hand, the religious universities, recognizing the non-theological bent of *ciência(s) da religião*, often see the field as a threat to be contained or a competitor to be co-opted. On the other hand, the public universities reject the field as too theological. This deprives the non-theological study of religion of what would seem to be its natural home. The combination of these factors obstructs the development of the field's theoretical, methodological and institutional autonomy.

Mexico

The emergence of the study of religions

Despite the fundamental role of Catholicism in Mexican history, the birth of academic interest in the study of the religion in the country is very recent. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the emergence of a modern nation still faced ideological resistance from conservative sectors of the Catholic Church. The birth of modern nationalism caused intense conflicts, some armed, for example, the clash between Catholics and the military in the Cristero War (1926–1929). For decades, these same tensions were present in academia, in the form of tensions between conservative Catholics and liberal jacobines. This historical context permeated intellectual thought, especially that of liberals, who supported what Agustín Vaca (1998) calls 'the conspiracy of silence'. Since 1945, Catholics removed the historical gag concerning these struggles and recovered their voice and memory, writing epic novels on the role of the Catholics in national history and later denouncing the period of silence. As Jaime del Arenal (2002) puts it, 'All our twentieth-century historians were intellectual heirs of the conservative historians of the nineteenth century.' However, this history was always held in contempt by the universities, resulting in its exclusion from academic circles.

For decades, historians largely ignored the Cristero War, considering it of little relevance to the history of Mexico. In 1966, when a historian first chose this religious conflict as a dissertation topic, his advisors tried to dissuade him, considering it a matter of little importance. In 1969, at a meeting of Mexican historians, Jean Meyer stated, 'Our modern world, our history will not be intelligible until the place of religion in the life of the masses is clearly defined'. In a few years, he himself published his monumental work on *La Cristiada* (1973–1975), acclaimed by academics and general readers and inspiring many historians' interest in the topic. Only in the mid 1970s did a more objective,

academic, and scientific historiography, detached from these ideological tensions, begin to emerge, housed in institutions like El Colegio de México and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Research into the roles of Catholics in the history of Mexico is now recognized as indispensable in understanding the construction of the modern nation, as demonstrated by the works of José Miguel Romero de Solís (1994), Roberto Blancarte (1992), Manuel Ceballos (1991), Martha Eugenia García Ugarte (1993), and Fernando González (2001), among others. Today, historians, most notably Roberto Blancarte, play a key role, not only in understanding the past, but also in analyzing the new role of laicism in contemporary Mexico.

The development of the study of religions

What we might call a religious sociology began in the 1960s and 1970s, emerging primarily from the reflections of progressive Catholic intellectuals who valued research as a resource for action. A sociology of religion emerged in the 1980s. Prominent here are socio-political analyses of Catholic institutions (Puentes Luterroth 1993), of the political and social role of the Catholic Church (Reilly and de la Rosa 1985), and of the political experiences of religious movements (Arias *et al.* 1981; Concha Malo *et al.* 1986). Since these studies are generally undertaken by religious or by laypeople involved with liberation theology, they tend to focus on Catholic politics. Liberation theology has deeply influenced the theoretical conceptions and the analytical approaches of the academic study of religion in Mexico, privileging Marxist analyses and devaluing both the cultural study of popular religion and research into the customs and day-to-day lives of believers. With a few exceptions (e.g. Gilberto Giménez' [1978] work on popular piety in Anáhuac) such topics were, until very recently, considered of little relevance to the academic agenda. Since then, interest has grown in the culture of daily life as manifested in popular piety: e.g. pilgrimages (Garma and Shadow 1994), religious festivities (de la Peña and de la Torre 1990; Salles and Valenzuela 1997), and votive offerings (González Sánchez 1986).

In the 1990s the study of Catholicism's hegemony and of its presence in different spheres of secular Mexican society became a central topic of investigation, addressing not only religious actors but secular academics. Although earlier studies of Catholicism concentrated on bishops and priests (e.g. Martínez Assad [ed.] 1992; Ramos 1992), this perspective became less central. The social and political impact of the Base Communities led investigations to focus on laypeople. Research on lay movements broke with monolithic visions of Catholicism, highlighting its diversity and internal contradictions (Padilla 1991; de la Torre 2002). On the political stage, for example, laypeople, played important roles in right-wing Catholicism (Canto

and Rojas 1988; Loeza 1988), in the democratic movements (Pastor 1995), and in the Christian left (Concha Malo *et al.* 1986). Similarly, the growth of the Charismatic Catholic Renewal Movement brought new challenges for the characterization of the institutional field and its relations with Pentecostal-type religions (Diaz de la Serna 1985; Juárez Cerdi 1997). This re-emphasis on the Catholic institution privileges the analysis of internal structures of power and of the agency of lay movements (de la Torre 2006, Patiño 2006).

Also in the early 1970s, anthropologists and ethnologists discovered the need to investigate a new phenomenon, one threatening the popular culture of indigenous peoples: the growth of evangelical Protestantism. This emergent academic sector focused on denouncing the cultural impact of non-Catholic evangelizing activities in the country. Initial investigations were conducted in the frontier states of the North (bordering the United States) and South (bordering Guatemala). These studies, though academic, were not free from prejudice. On the contrary, as Rodolfo Casillas (1996) points out, they lobbied for the defence of Mexico's cultural heritage and denounced the Yankee infiltration that they perceived in these Protestantisms. Even with these biases, the studies were the antecedents of the future anthropology of religious diversity in Mexico. Two were important large-scale projects, drawing together some of the most engaged and outstanding investigators in the contemporary study of Protestant minorities in Mexico. The north border states study drew together researchers from the then Colegio de la Frontera Norte: Rodolfo Casillas, Alberto Hernández and José Luis Molina. A team from the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS), directed by Gilberto Giménez and including Patricia Fortuny, Aída Hernández, and Elizabeth Juárez, undertook a project on 'Religion and Society in the Southeast of Mexico' (Giménez 1989).

Studies of Protestantism have undoubtedly contributed to theoretical and methodological reflection in the study of religion, emphasizing the themes of secularization and religious diversification. The tendency to stigmatize Protestants as foreign elements became less marked as a series of studies recognized the extent of their historical presence and their contributions to the construction of the nation (Meyer 1989; Bastian 1989; Gaxiola 1994). Anthropologists led the way in discarding the perception that Protestant groups formed part of a strategy of ideological penetration by the United States, and in emphasizing the processes of cultural appropriation through which new national and ethnic versions of Protestantism emerged. Beginning in the 1990s, ethnographic studies have analyzed processes of evangelical growth in certain regions of the country: e.g. Chiapas (Hernández Castillo 2000; Rivera Farfán *et al.* 2005), Yucatan (Fortuny 1982), Quintana Roo (Higuera 1997), the Sierra Norte of Puebla (Garma Navarro 1987), Oaxaca (Marroquín [ed.] 1995), Veracruz (Vázquez 1999), the Northern Border states (Hernández 1996, 2002), and Mexico City (Garma Navarro 2004). Many of these studies went beyond simply

recognizing increasing religious pluralism to analyze the reculturation processes among evangelical and Pentecostal groups that have produced novel expressions of Mexican Protestantism. Carlos Garma Navarro, for example, found that evangelicals serve as a source of resistance to the power of local *caciques*, thus contributing to alternative forms of political organization. Renée de la Torre, in her (1995) study of The Light of the World Church, explored how a model of life that emerged from this Mexican evangelical church functions as a 'total institution', an urban model that governs the day-to-day identity and political actions of the faithful. José Luis Molina (2000) analyzed the way in which Jehovah's Witnesses interact with Mexican nationalism in schools.

Several themes are prominent in studies of Protestantism: diffusion and conversion (Hernández and Molina 2003; Zalpa 2002); classification of denominations (Garma 1989, Fortuny 2001); Protestant relations with State and society, especially as regards the 1992 constitutional frame for State/church relations (Ruiz 1998, Hernández 2001); the roles of women in NRMs (S. Ortiz 1999; Marcos 2000; Juárez Cerdi 2004); and intolerance and interreligious conflicts, for example, the bloody conflict in Chiapas (Robledo 1987; Aramoni and Morquecho 1999).

Emerging issues

Beginning in the mid 1990s, the academic study of religion started exploring the presence of new religious movements in Mexico. Elio Masferrer Kan's influential collection (1995b) both continued the established line of study of confessional plurality in Mexico and addressed new developments in the religious field: for example the influence of the Age of Aquarius among Catholics (Gutiérrez Zúñiga 1995); religious dimensions of horse racing among the Children of God (Lagarriga 1995, Masferrer Kan 1995a); Christianity on the Internet (Segato 1995); and the Raelian (UFO) Movement (Smucler Rosenberg 1995). The first extensive study of NRMs and New Age spirituality in Mexico was carried out by Cristina Gutiérrez Zúñiga (1996) in the city of Guadalajara. Patricia Fortuny's pioneering study of 'Believers and Belief in Guadalajara' (1999) broke with institutional conceptions of religion, using surveys to explore the extent of Eastern and New Age religious influences among Catholics.

With the end of the millenium, the study of religious phenomena turned to contemporary cultural transformations found in popular piety. This work contributed to the recognition of the dynamism, plurality, and heterodoxy of the Catholic religious field. It also explored what might be called nativist religiosities, syncretistic expressions of both native and foreign elements: e.g. Trinitarian Marian Spiritualism, where popular indigenous magic mixes with Kardecist spiritualism (Lagarriga 1991); the *mexicanidad* movements that seek

to restore the ancestral culture of the Anáhuac; or the *neomexicanidad* movements that mix ancestral religiosities, such as Tibetan Buddhist Aztec traditions (Y. González 2000; de la Peña 2002). Other studies analyzed the profound changes experienced by popular religious practices in late modernity (de la Torre 2001), and the creation or invention of new popular worship forms, implemented as protectors of the masses in the face of problems not addressed by modern institutions: for example *la Santa Muerte* (patron of prisoners and prostitutes), *el Santo Malverde* (patron of drug dealers), and Juan Castillo, popularly known as Juan Soldado (patron of migrants) (Valenzuela Arce 1999).

Another topic much in vogue is the relation between religion and international migration. Translocal studies investigate migrants' use of religion as a resource for reanchoring identities, for maintaining stable relations with places of origin, and for carrying a piece of one's *matria* to a new home. The issue of migration is a very dynamic one for Mexicans. The dangerous border crossing into the United States is valorized because of its risks. For this reason, Mexicans constantly create new forms of popular worship, or imaginatively appropriate traditional ones, to seek protection for migrants (Morán 2000; Hernández Madrid 2000).

At present, the study of religion in Mexico is indispensable: 1) for the comprehension of our modern history; 2) for the modernization of the course of that history; 3) for understanding the shift from a homogeneous to a multicultural society; and 4) for capturing in a nuanced manner the continuous adaptations and changes of popular culture. Studying religion involves tackling cultural complexity, recognizing the changes that lie at the heart of continuity, and the continuities that lie at the heart of change. For these reasons, it is important to continue with the institutional, academic, and publishing efforts that support the study of religious changes in the contemporary world.

Peru

Prehistory of the study of religions

In attempting to construct a Republic during the late nineteenth century, Peru's political and intellectual elites 'discovered' the need to take into account 'the Indian' in thinking of the country's future. Two authors of this early *indigenismo* stand out: the works of Manuel González Prada (1844–1918) and the stories and novels of Clorinda Matto de Turner (1854–1909). For González Prada the development of the Indian is symbolized by the 'soul-destroying Trinity' of judge, governor and priest. Interestingly, we find in his works an explanation of the origin and evolution of religions that was advanced for its

time: 'Each religion germinates in the downfall of another. It fights against its own mother. It wins and rises to its climax, thereupon declining and ceding the field to a new belief destined to suffer the same fate' (1985, vol. 1: 318). Clorinda Matto also criticized the abuse of women and natives by priests. The social stage of Matto's fiction is the province, that is, indigenous territory, where Indians worked for no pay, without protection, and suffering various abuses at the hands of priests.

The emergence of the study of religions

Two early twentieth-century scholars were prominent in the emergence of the study of religion in Peru: José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930) and Julio C. Tello (1880–1947). Mariátegui's work (1928, 1970, 1979) consists of essays written in the heat of the militancy and the revolutionary thought that took shape in Latin America during the first decades of the twentieth century. Writing from an unorthodox Marxist perspective, Mariátegui was the first Peruvian to analyze the 'indigenous world,' emphasizing the social place of religion in contemporary, Andean Peruvian culture. Tello was interested in explaining the shape of ancient divinities, traces of which still existed. Peruvian archaeology begins with his investigations. His conclusions rest on empirical information—iconography in ceramic ware and architecture—as well as on chronicles, travelers' histories, myths and legends. His key work (1923) studies Wiracocha, one of the most important divinities of ancient Peru.

The development of the study of religions

Peruvian anthropology took an important step in the late 1940s, with the founding of the Instituto de Etnología y Arqueología de la Universidad de San Marcos en Lima. The resulting ethnohistorical studies made excellent use of colonial chronicles. Luis Valcárcel (1965) discussed the impact of Catholicism on indigenous cultures. He argued (1964, vol. 2) that, unable to resist the religion of the colonizers, the indigenous peoples feigned acceptance while continuing to adhere to the old gods. The result was the incorporation of indigenous elements into Catholic worship, with Christianity in the end merely superimposed on the ancient religion. John Rowe (1946) studied post-conquest Inca culture and presented a general vision of 'Andean religion'. George Kubler (1946) studied religion in the colonial era, concluding that the conversion of indigenous peoples to Catholicism was an established fact by 1660.

In the 1950s, the Department of Anthropology at the Universidad del Cusco was founded. Two works stand out in this decade: Harry Tschopik (1957) wrote a rich ethnography of the magical practices among the Aymaras of the

south Andean plateau. Rebeca Carrión Cachot (1959) following in the steps of her teacher, Tello, studied religious iconography in the architecture, ceramics, and textiles of the north and central regions of the country.

In the 1960s the departments of anthropology at the Universidad de Huamanga and the Universidad Católica en Lima became interested in religion. The work of Tom Zuidema was a key result. Zuidema (1964) introduced structuralism into the Peruvian academic world, looking for the roots of Inca social organization in their places of worship, beliefs, rites, and myths. Later (1986), he argued that the mass of material on Inca kinship recorded by the chroniclers can only be understood within a broad frame that includes political and social organization, mythology, ritual, and conceptions of time and of space.

A number of important works were published in the 1970s and 1980s. Manuel Marzal (1971) compared five areas in the province of Urcos, correlating levels of modernization with degrees of religious change. He also analyzed (1988) the religious changes that occur when immigrants from the interior come to the capital, bringing their cultural and religious traditions with them. His (1983) synthesis of the evolution of religion in Peru during the first century and a half after the Conquest concluded that the Andeans accepted Christianity while preserving and integrating elements of the old Andean religious system. Pierre Duviols (1971) produced a meticulous study of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century fight against idolatry, arguing that indigenous people did not abandon their beliefs and saw no incompatibility in practising both native and Christian rites. Nathan Wachtel (1971) drew similar conclusions about religious survival. Concentrating on the first forty years of Spanish domination, he documented the destructuring of Andean society and the disappearance of Inca state worship but argued for the survival of ancient religions within local worship. Alejandro Ortiz' (1980) structuralist study of Andean myths related symmetrical oppositions and hierarchies of divinities to tensions between the permanent and the transitory, order and the inexplicable. Popular piety only became a topic of interest for scholars of religion in Peru with rapid urbanization (J. L. González 1986).

The 1990s were rich in innovations, in terms of both topics and perspectives. José Sánchez (1990) wrote the first study in Peru on the Catholic charismatic movement. He analyzed the political positions taken by charismatic Catholics in an important Lima *barrio*. Hernán Cornejo (1995) studied the large charismatic masses celebrated by Father Rodríguez in Peru's major cities, with detailed accounts of the rituals and rich ethnographic material on the socio-economic conditions and illnesses of the participants. The first anthropological account of the Pentecostal phenomenon in Peru was Frans Kamsteeg's (1991) study of a Pentecostal church in the southern Peru city of Arequipa. Kamsteeg emphasizes the tensions of power that arise between pastor and congregants as a reflection of Pentecostal teachings. Another topic that emerged in the 1990s

was the relation between communication and religion. Several research projects in this field were begun at the University of Lima. The first publication to result was Gogin (1997), which studies the radio programs of four religious groups: the Catholic church, the Evangelical church, the Dios es Amor Pentecostal church, and the Hermandad del Cordero de Dios. A further subject of interest was Taqi Onqoy, a sixteenth-century native protest movement that extended over a wide region in the southern Andes (Millones *et al.* 1990). The movement consisted of preachers with numerous followers who expressed themselves in a sort of collective ecstasy preceded by songs and dances.

A topic little studied in Peru is that of relations between church, society, and the state in light of modernization and secularization. Pilar García (1991) made an important contribution, highlighting the enormous social and political influence exercised by the Catholic church in shaping the Peruvian state, beginning with its independence from Spain. Fernando Armas Asin (1998) has studied nineteenth-century polemics surrounding religious tolerance, ending with 1915, the year in which reforms to the Constitution prohibited forms of public worship other than Catholicism. Armas finds here a symptom of modernization: mobilized, more or less organized sectors of the population, each with its own interests, but each making a positive contribution by affirming the need for specific new developments. Fonseca (2002) examines the topic of modernization between the years 1915 and 1930, analyzing the role of Protestant missionaries and churches in the project of modernizing a nation shaken by the emergence of new ideas and new organizations, including political parties and unions. Imelda Vega-Centeno's (1991) study of the Aprista Party² offered a different perspective on the social and political functions of religion, as a system of ultimate meanings defining forms of political participation: she studied the party's 'doctrine' and the 'mystique' elaborated and transmitted by its leaders. Karen Sanders (1997) also studied religious, mythical, and messianic elements in the discourse of the Aprista Party. She found in the speeches its founder, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, elements of an entire 'project of salvation'.

Messianism has been an important theme in Peruvian studies of religion. Juan Manuel Ossio (1973) underlined its importance in ancient and contemporary Andean society. Several other works demonstrate the centrality of the myth of the return of the Inca for utopian and political projects in the Andean region (Salomón 1990; Szeminski 1984, 1990; Galindo 1994; Fernández and Brown 2001). According to Rostworowski (1978), this myth appears repeatedly in the cosmovision and power relations of pre-Hispanic peoples. Her analysis (1992) of relations of domination and hegemony in the Lima region makes a case that political defeat and domination always implied the subjugation of the gods of the defeated, with defeated gods sometimes conflated with the divinities of the victors or re-emerging with new vigor.

Emerging issues

Valuable overviews of recent topics and perspectives are available in two collections published by a group of scholars associated with Manuel Marzal's monthly seminars (Marzal *et al.* 2000, 2004). Topics include institutional and political religion, new urban forms of Pentecostalism, religion and human rights, religion and health, the Jehovah's Witnesses, popular Catholic piety in the Amazon region, and religious belief among university students. In a separate book, Paulo Barrera Rivera (2001) analyzes a Brazilian Pentecostal movement (Iglesia Pentecostal Dios es Amor), established in Peru during the 1970s, which is attracting Peru's poor. Emphasizing social and cultural factors, he argues that people from the Andean world, filled with mythical ancestral beings, fit easily into Pentecostal worship with its emphasis on 'demons'. Another recent topic for scholars of religion in Peru is the relationship between evangelical Christians and politics (Barrera Rivera 2005). Hortensia Muñoz (2001) places the study of religion and politics in the context of poverty, violence, and social fragmentation in her study of the difficult but creative coexistence between Protestants (of various types) and Catholics during the consolidation of a lower-class *barrio* on the periphery of Lima.

Studies on gender and religion in Latin America

The initial momentum for work on women (or gender) and religion in Latin America emerged from liberation theologians and biblical scholars and among women committed to working in grassroots base communities. The primary focus was on issues of gender equity and justice. Previous secular feminist analyses on the continent had inspired and prefigured this work, and both trends have been interacting since the early 1980s. Elsa Tamez was a key figure in finding new inspiration through reading the Bible from the perspective of the poor and from that of liberation: 'liberation is taking place in the churches with the growth of the Ecclesial Base communities. In this new mode of being a church, women have found a possibility of a new mode of being a woman' (1983: 41; cf. *La Biblia de los Oprimidos*). Many others, like Coca Trillini in Argentina and Mary Judith Ress in Chile (2004), have also claimed the right of women and the poor to seek in sacred scripture the inspiration for their own liberation. Concrete efforts towards this end started in the 1970s among women working marginal areas, both urban and rural. Their formation as ecumenical theologians, biblical scholars and committed nuns took place within a largely

Catholic context. This stimulated their participation in a discourse that is inevitably constrained by the need to write and publish in a manner accessible to the large majorities of impoverished Latin Americans (Trespaso 1993).

These women's political awareness has produced analyses linking various phases of political struggles in the continent with their own religious and liturgical interpretations. Both Ivone Gevara (1999), a groundbreaking eco-feminist theologian, and Elsa Tamez (2004) speak of three or four large phases, coincident with the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and the beginning of the new millennium, that exemplify the impact of political and social changes on religious and gender justice analyses. Using an anthropological perspective, Rosalva Aída Hernández Castillo (2004) has analyzed the work of 'teología india' (indigenous theology) as it reflects on gender in the pastoral work and social organization of the Coordinadora Diocesana de Mujeres (CODEMUJ) in Chiapas, Mexico.

Going beyond the emergence of socio-political perspectives within theological, biblical, and pastoral work, we find important ethno-historical gender analyses in the anthropological work of Noemi Quezada (1996) and Sylvia Marcos (1975, 2006), including analyses of contemporary movements that emphasize a gendered indigenous spirituality.

In Brazil, sociologists of religion such as Cecilia Mariz (1994) and Maria Das Dores Machado (Machado and Mariz 2002) have done wide ranging comparative gender research and analyses of Pentecostalism, neo-Pentecostalism, base communities, and charismatic Catholic communities. Their work was preceded by other important socio-anthropological analyses (Landes 1947; Birman 1995). Marion Aubrée crowned her long tradition of work in the study of Afro-Brazilian religions with an important paper (2004). Clara Luz Ajo (2004) has analyzed gender and Santería in Cuba.

Conclusion

As this chapter demonstrates, religion and its study in Latin America are extremely vibrant, and significant work is being done by scholars in the region, despite being virtually unnoticed by scholars outside the region. Perhaps the most significant characteristic of Latin American religiosity is the extent to which religious pluralism both transcends and reflects historical, regional, and class boundaries. For example, Chilean sociologist of religion, Cristián Parker Gumucio (1993, 1994), rejects the secularization thesis and places popular religion at the heart of a specifically Latin American modernity. He argues that popular religion in Latin America operates according to a 'different logic.' The dispossessed and marginalized retain their traditional religiosities, remain open to innovative syncretistic developments, and reject mainstream religions that cater to elites. Latin American religion expresses a broad set of 'syncretisms'

that, by virtue of their complex relations to contemporary political, social and economic realities, escape the usual theorizations of such phenomena. For this reason, if for no other, scholars of religion in other parts of the world might find it useful to keep two points in mind. First, Latin America is one of the main laboratories for studying relations between religion and society in the world today, and second, the work of Latin American scholars is a central resource in pursuing this study.

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NOTES

- 1 The chapter was edited by Engler, who also translated the sections on Argentina, Mexico, and Peru from Spanish. Some elements of the section on Brazil appear in a different form in Engler (2005, 2006); for a more extended discussion of Brazil, see Engler (forthcoming). Helpful national overviews include Lehmann (2002) on Brazil, Parker Gumucio (1996) on Chile, García Chiang (2004) on Mexico, Ortmann (2002) on Peru, and Soneira (1996) on the four countries of the cono sur.
- 2 'Aprismo' was a political movement rooted in a party, A.P.R.A. (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana), founded by the Peruvian Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre in 1924. It presented itself as a social democratic and 'indoamerican' nationalist alternative to both capitalism and socialism and was the first Latin American mass movement to achieve some continental impact. [SE]

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300 ENGLER, MOLINA, DE LA TORRE, RIVERA AND MARCOS

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