

CHURCH, STATE, AND POLITICAL CULTURE IN BRAZIL AND COLOMBIA

“The Church’s involvement in politics is both a paradox and a problem.” (Levine, 1980, 273)

The research question that this study seeks to address is “How has traditional Catholicism influenced political culture in Brazil and Colombia?” Both Brazil and Colombia share a common Catholic heritage and complex paths of democratic development.

Although Colombia has a long and continuous tradition of two-party democracy, it also hosts the longest-running civil war in the American hemisphere, and has been prone to endemic political violence. Some commentators attribute this to an exclusionary form of oligarchic democracy. No less than eight civil wars were fought in Colombia in the 19th century, many of them motivated, at least in part, by religious issues. In Colombia, the clash between Catholicism and liberal democracy was violent and pervasive throughout the 19th century.

Brazil has had an equally troubled path to modern democracy in the 20th century. After years of vacillation between democratic populism and authoritarianism, democracy in Brazil was suspended in 1964 in favor of military rule. This period of military dictatorship coincided with one of the most profound periods of change in the Brazilian Catholic Church, which became a primary source of political opposition to the military regime, and for a time provided the only voice for human rights and the rights of the poor in Brazil.

Literature Review

There is abundant literature available on both Catholicism and democracy in Latin America. Although the term *political culture* has been used since 1960, most studies using this concept are recent and somewhat controversial. More study has been done on Catholicism in Brazil than is currently available on Colombia. Most of the literature from the 1970s through the early 1990s dealt with liberation theology and the Christian base community (CEB) movement. Recently, more scholarly attention has been given to Protestant-Pentecostalism and to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

One of the earliest works that addressed the relationship between religion and political culture was *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville (1840), written in the mid-19th century. Tocqueville wrote extensively on the nature of American political culture and how cultural values such as freedom and equality helped shape American democracy. Tocqueville was struck by the high level of religious practice and religious diversity in the United States, and opined that the liberty to choose to participate in voluntary religious associations, among others, contributed to the development of an American civic spirit. Daniel Levine, among other writers, draws from Tocqueville's writings and finds application to contemporary Latin America (Levine, 1992, 11).

The seminal work on the relationship between religion and culture is Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic* (1905) in which Weber posits Puritanism or other forms of what he calls *ascetic Protestantism*¹ (primarily Calvinism) as an influence that

¹ Weber uses the term *ascetic Protestantism* to describe an austere, self-negating form of Christianity that viewed hard work and delayed gratification as spiritual duties, without withdrawing from worldly occupations as was the case with monasticism. See Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958, 154).

contributed to the rise of modern Western capitalism. Despite the similarities that British sociologist David Martin sees between Methodism and Latin American Pentecostalism (Martin, 1990), there is much controversy over the validity of Weber's original thesis, not to mention the complications of trying to apply his analytical framework in a different century and a different global context.

A key text for study of religion and politics in Brazil from a North American point of view is Thomas Bruneau's *The Church in Brazil* (1982). Bruneau provides an in-depth view of the historical roots of the Brazilian Church extending back into Portuguese culture, and traces the process of institutional change in the Church through the 20th century. Scott Mainwaring's *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916–1985* (1986) gives a broad and well-documented context for the historical development of progressive Catholicism in Brazil in the 20th century. W.E. Hewitt has identified three categories of methodological approaches to the study of CEBs: the *institutional theory* approach; the *grassroots* or *liberationist* school and an *intermediate* perspective allowing for a dialectical interplay of both institutional and grassroots factors (Hewitt, 1991, 19–22).²

² In addition to Hewitt, Mainwaring, and Bruneau, other academic studies of varying ideological, methodological, and disciplinary paradigms have been carried out by Ivan Vallier (1970), Roberto Romano (1979), Dominique Barbé (1987), Madeleine Adriance (1986, 1991), Johannes P. Van Vugt (1992), John Burdick (1993), Christian Smith (1995), James Cavendish (1995), and Cecilia Mariz (1995). More recent studies include Manuel A. Vasquez (1997); Carol Ann Drogus (1997), who investigates the role and empowerment of women in CEBs; and Kenneth Serbin (2000), who sets the CEB movement in the global context of the Brazilian Church, human rights, and Church-State relations. Burdick, Smith, and Mariz do comparative studies of CEBs with Pentecostalism, and Burdick does a local comparative study of CEBs with both Pentecostalism and *umbanda* from an anthropological disciplinary perspective. Phillip Berryman wrote a comprehensive work on liberation theology and CEBs in 1986 and a

Regarding Colombia, particularly helpful is Daniel Levine's analysis of the political role of the Catholic Church (1981), in which he carries out case studies on Catholicism in Venezuela and Colombia at a national level and at the level of the diocese through interviews with the Bishops and examination of theological documents. Levine advocates a phenomenological and dialectical approach that, in Levine's words, "involves seeing religion and politics as a dynamic system of behavior with a clear (if not always explicit) set of internal rules guiding it" (Levine, 1981, 290).

Levine explains that one must work in a dialectical fashion in order to understand the sociological links between religious and secular themes (Levine, 1981, 13), and that a "phenomenological approach demands that we take religion seriously as a source of guiding concepts and principles, instead of merely subsuming religious phenomena under secular rubrics. Once we take religion seriously, our analysis can then work with religious ideas, exploring their roots, evolution, and impact on society" (Levine, 1981, 12).³

The groundbreaking work that thrust the concept of political culture into a prominent, and at times controversial, place in the social sciences was Almond and

more critical reappraisal in 1996 with comparisons and contrasts with the Pentecostal movement.

³ Additional studies on religion in Colombia are provided by Ana María Bidegain in *Historia del Cristianismo* (2004) and, Juan Diego Demera (2005). Jesuit historian Fernán E. González has written a review of the complicated and conflictive history of Church-State relations in Colombia (1997). Additional works include Frank Safford and Marco Palacios (2002). Mary Roldán (2002). Elizabeth Brusco on family and gender relations in Colombia (1995). Other scholarly works on religion and politics in Colombia include J. L. Mecham (1966), Robert J. Knowlton (1969), Ivan Vallier (1970), Lars Shoultz (1973), Alexander Wilde (1984, 1987), Edward L. Cleary (1992), and Patricia Londoño-Vega (2002).

Verba's case studies of five nations in 1963.⁴ Almond and Verba used survey research to study the political attitudes of citizens of the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and Mexico. Almond and Verba proposed the existence of a *civic culture*, most clearly exemplified in the U.S. and the U.K. as a necessary component of stable, representative democracy.

More recent attempts to analyze political cultures through data analysis utilizing data from such survey efforts as the World Values Survey and Latinobarómetro have been carried out by Ronald Inglehart (1997). Inglehart studies the effects of modernization and postmodernism in changing social values and political cultures. Pippa, Norris, and Inglehart (2004) statistically analyze the connection between increasing secularization, the decrease of the practice of religion, and the perceived level of security in what they call *postmodern* democracies of Europe.⁵

⁴ The basic themes of political culture can be traced back to the classical tradition with Plato and Aristotle. Plato says in the Republic that "governments vary as the dispositions of men vary, and that there must be as many of the one as there are of the other. For we cannot suppose that States are made 'oak' and 'rock' and not of the human natures which are in them" (Almond & Verba, 1989, 2). Aristotle demonstrates a primary concern with ethics and public virtue and how they are related to the development of the appropriate *character type* to complement a particular political constitution (Bodéüs, 1993, 42, 123). Several scholars have attempted to trace a hypothetical authoritarian or corporatist political philosophy in Catholic Iberian culture back to Aristotle through St. Thomas Aquinas (Barker, 1958, lxii; Dealy, 1992, 8, 23; Wiarda, 2001, 22, 39, 344).

⁵ Mitchell Seligson has completed more than 20 national surveys on citizens' attitudes towards democracy in Spanish-speaking countries. In 2004, Seligson and the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) developed a massive research report on democratic political culture in Colombia (2004).⁵ The sample included 1,479 respondents. Although Seligson's study of political attitudes in Colombia are helpful, comparable data for Brazil has not been produced.

Theoretical Framework

Daniel Levine was cited earlier in this paper as advocating a phenomenological and dialectical approach that, in Levine's words, "involves seeing religion and politics as a dynamic system of behavior with a clear (if not always explicit) set of internal rules guiding it" (Levine, 1981, 290). These social rules are the links between social structures and agent choices.

The theoretical framework for analyzing the influence of Catholicism on political culture is taken from rule-oriented constructivism (Onuf, 1989), and further developed by Michael Collier (2005).⁶ Collier applies the constructivist theoretical framework to a synthesis of the primary studies of political culture and finds three primary types of political cultures: *collectivist*, *individualistic* and *egalitarian*, with each type of political culture composed of a dominant mix of either *instruction*, *directive*, or *commitment* social rules (Collier, 2000, 50). Collier describes *collectivist* or traditional societies as existing in States with *hegemonic* forms of rule and primarily governed by *instruction* rules. Collectivist societies are organized around "familial, kinship, tribal, ethnic, religious, class, linguistic, or other social relationships" (Collier, 2005, 32). Groups in collectivist cultures are motivated by the best interests of the family or group and are generally ruled by paternalism. Intergroup social trust and interaction are weak in collectivist cultures. Loyalty to the group is a dominant social rule. Power tends to circulate within a small and

⁶ Daniel J. Elazar studied three distinct subtypes of political culture in American society (1972) that coincide with Nicholas Onuf's three types of *rule* in his constructivist theory (Onuf, 1989, 1994). Rule-oriented constructivism is not in itself a theory, but a theoretical framework that allows for taking into account both agency as well as structure in social analysis and provides the means for analyzing the complex interrelationships of agents and social structures.

self-perpetuating governing elite who inherit power through family ties (Elazar, 1966, 92–93).

Individualistic societies are more integrated and complex than collectivist societies (Collier, 2005, 33). One of the primary governing rules of individualist societies is individual self-interest. Because of the need to interact between various groups in societies, there is a higher level of social trust than in collectivist societies. Costa Rica and some of the stronger democratic states among the Anglophone Caribbean may be classified as individualistic cultures. *Individualist* cultures can be characterized as governed by *hierarchy* with a predominance of *directive* rules.

Finally, Collier describes *egalitarian* cultures as “ruled by heteronomy and dominated by commitment rules” (Collier, 2000, 52). In egalitarian societies there is a wide variety of differentiated groups and a higher level of social trust between groups and among individuals in society. Egalitarian societies are ruled by the public good rather than the good of the ruling elite or individuals as takes place in collectivist and individualistic societies respectively. According to Collier, societies that are characterized by political ideology originating in Northern Europe tend to be egalitarian.

This study proposes that when religion is allied with the coercive power of the State, and when there is an absence of religious tolerance, the political culture of a nation will tend not be democratic. The study further proposes that the pervasive presence of traditional, hegemonic Catholicism will tend to encourage the development of a political culture that is authoritarian rather than democratic. There are four variables associated with this model: (a) Church-State relations, (b) traditional Catholicism, (c) religious

pluralism, and (d) political culture. Church-State relations, traditional Catholicism, and religious pluralism are independent variables. Political culture is the dependent variable.

Political culture as defined by Turner is “as the subjective perception of history and politics, the fundamental beliefs and values, the foci of identification and loyalty, and the political knowledge and expectations which are the product of the specific historical experience of nations and groups” (Smith, 1995, 196). A political culture that is democratic would be: “A fundamental, shared belief, derived from specific historical experience of a nation or group, in the value of the acquisition of power through institutionalized means, and a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.”⁷

Church-State relations are measured by the presence or absence of constitutional guarantees of the freedom of worship, the existence of an official concordat between the State and Church and the openness of the political process to representatives of minority religions. Defining *religion* presents some unique challenges due to the diversity of views about religion and its significance.⁸ For our analytical purposes is the definition of religion given by Vendulka Kubálková is most useful from a constructivist perspective: “A system of rules (mainly instruction rules) and related practices, which act to explain the meaning of existence, including identity, ideas about self, and one’s position in the

⁷ This definition of democratic political culture is derived from combining Turner’s definition of political culture with Joseph Schumpeter’s definition of democracy: “The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (Mainwaring, 1992).

⁸ Clifford Geertz gave one of the early definitions of religion from an anthropological perspective (Geertz, 1973, 90). Although Geertz’s definition remains a classic definition of religion, it represents an anthropological paradigm that does not easily contribute to a political science analysis using a constructivist theoretical framework.

world, thus motivating and guiding the behavior of those who accept the validity of these rules on faith and to internalize them fully” (Petito, 2003, 93).⁹

Religious pluralism is conceptually defined as “the willingness to allow religious diversity in every sphere of society, including the political process,” and is measured by the percentage of Catholics participating in nontraditional forms of Catholicism such as CEBs, or the CCR (Catholic Charismatic Renewal), and the percentage of nonCatholic forms of Christianity, including historical Protestants, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and neo-Pentecostals. Additional evidence of religious diversity, although not measured in this study include Afro-spiritism and nonChristian forms of religious belief such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

Traditional Catholicism, following Vendulka Kubálková, is defined as “A system of rules (mainly instruction rules) and related practices, derived from historical Roman Catholicism, that act to explain the meaning of existence, including identity, ideas about self, and one’s position in the world, thus motivating and guiding the behavior of those who accept the validity of these rules on faith and to internalize them fully.”

Implicit in this study is recognition of the diversity of forms of Catholicism and Protestantism in Latin America. Several scholars such as Scott Mainwaring have emphasized the diversity of Brazilian Catholicism by identifying traditional, popular, and progressive streams of Catholicism. More recently, “Charismatic” Catholicism can be added to the list of subtypes. Protestantism is even more diverse, including historical Reformation Protestantism, Evangelicals, classical Pentecostals, and neo-Pentecostals.

⁹ The specific emphasis given by this definition to “a system of rules” that motivate and guide behavior is congruent with Onuf’s constructivist theory and Collier’s typology of political cultures.

This study focuses on traditional, institutional Catholicism because of its historical influence on the State, and Protestant Pentecostalism because of its explosive growth.

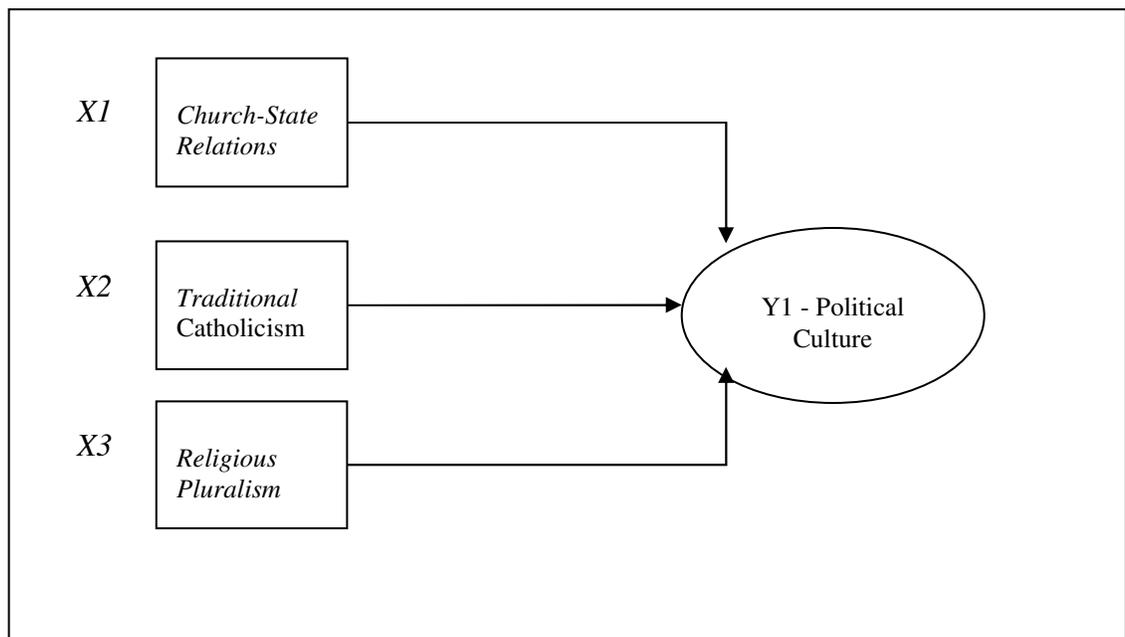
The specific research question can be further expressed through three hypotheses related to our three independent variables:

Hypothesis #1: A political alliance between Church and State encourages the formation of nondemocratic values in a political culture.

Hypothesis #2: Traditional, institutional Catholicism encourages the formation of nondemocratic values in a political culture.

Hypothesis #3: Differentiation and pluralism in religion (both Catholic and Protestant) encourages the formation of democratic values in a political culture.

Causal Diagram



Research Design

Religious pluralism was measured by a percentage of the population in diverse religious expressions other than and exclusive of Catholicism. States that have a

constitutional guarantee of freedom of worship, and that have more than ten percent of the population actively participating in Protestant Pentecostal and other religions, were considered pluralistic. There was no attempt to measure Afro-Brazilian religions. In many cases, practitioners of the Afro-Diasporan religions continue to identify themselves as Catholic, thus making measurement of religious pluralism difficult, whereas Protestants and Pentecostals tend to sharply distinguish themselves from the Catholic Church, facilitating an either/or measurement.

Church-State relations were measured by constitutional guarantees of the freedom of worship, the existence or absence of an official concordat between the State and the Catholic Church, and the presence of Protestants, Evangelicals, or Pentecostals in the political process and government at the national level. The relative strength or weakness of traditional Catholicism was determined by interviews and qualitative data collection from historical and expert sources.

The level and quality of democracy in political culture are difficult to measure. Freedom House, World Audit, and Fitzgibbon country ratings of political rights and civil liberties were utilized as the measure of the relative perception of the level of democracy in the political culture of Brazil and Colombia.

Qualitative data for the case studies were gathered through books, journals, archives, and interviews. This combines both library research and field work in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília, Bogotá, and Cali. The sampling approach included both purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods. Most of the people interviewed were involved in some aspect of academic research regarding the Church and society in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, political science, theology and history. The

data collection instrument consisted of informal, semistructured interviews. In most cases, general questions were asked on the subject of Catholic and Protestant involvement and influence in the political sphere, and the interviewees were allowed to answer at length with minimal interruptions or prompting. Further data collection was done through extensive participant-observation in Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal Churches in Brazil, Colombia, and among Brazilian and Colombian congregations in South Florida. Data analysis utilized deductive pattern matching techniques (Creswell, 2003, 134; Gibbs, 2002, 157; Yin, 2003, 116) through the use of NVivo software. The data collected from the case studies was compared with the predicted outcomes of the original theoretical model in order to confirm or fail to confirm the hypotheses. Specifically, the study sought to find nonequivalent dependent variables (political culture) as a pattern (Yin, 2003, 116).

This thesis argues that there is a dialectical relationship between the Church and political culture; the values and orientations of the political culture are often shaped over time by the values of the Church; and the Church, in turn, is influenced by the dominant political culture.

Analysis

The subjective perception of history and politics of many Colombians and Brazilians has been heavily influenced by the Catholic Church. The specific historical experience of both Colombians and Brazilians has been inextricably linked with traditional Catholicism for more than five centuries. Colombian and Brazilian political cultures during the colonial period were affected by the ongoing presence of a religious monopoly. During the early stages of independence and nationhood, Colombian and

Brazilian political cultures were differently affected by the undertone of conflict between the values of premodern Catholicism and modern Enlightenment liberalism.

In Colombia, the conflict between Catholicism and liberalism was more violent than Brazil. Radical Liberals in Colombia attacked the Church and drove it into the protective arms of the Conservative party in the second half of the 19th century. The anticlerical attacks of the Liberals and the defensive embrace of the Conservative party set in motion a religious polarization that would plague Colombian society through numerous civil wars culminating in 1948 in the destructive upheaval of *La Violencia*. Premodern Catholicism was stronger and more successful in imposing its values on society in Colombia than in Brazil. Compared to the Churches of other Catholic societies, the Colombian Church has been more successful in establishing its cultural domination, although at a cost of a certain amount of loss of moral influence (Wilde, 1984, 23).

The relative absence of secularization and differentiation in Colombia through a large part of the 20th century is characteristic of traditional or collectivist societies. Premodern societies have not generally developed the rule of law. The weakness of the traditional Colombian regime can be traced to the syndrome of political radicalism of the theocratic party system, and the incompatibility between the requirements of a formal democratic regime and the collectivist social system over which it was superimposed (Albert et al., 1980, 38). Competitive democracy could not be peacefully institutionalized in Colombia's theocratic political system (Albert et al., 1980, 41).

Because the Colombian Church was strong in clerical vocations among Colombians, it consequently imported less European priests who might have brought liberal, Enlightenment values (Wilde, 1987, 18). On the other hand, the Church in Brazil

has been institutionally weak, with little influence on the State. The early separation of Church and State in Brazil in 1891 left the Brazilian Church without the social power and privileges of partnership with the State. This separation from the State gave the Brazilian Church a greater relative amount of independence (Bidegain, 1979, 185).

The difference in the Church-State relationship between Brazil and Colombia led to a significant difference in the level of autonomy from hierarchical control in the experience of the specialized Catholic Action in the respective countries. The Colombian Church did not feel the need to mobilize special lay organizations in order to demonstrate its presence. The Church already had a recognized presence before the State and participated directly in power and government through the State, even to the point of imposing Conservative candidates for president (Bidegain, 1979, 190).

The Colombian Church of this period may be viewed as conforming to the model of “Christendom” (*crisitianidad*) and the Brazilian Church as fitting a model of “*semicristianidad*” (Bidegain, 1979, 193). This corresponds with Alexander Wilde’s thesis that the Colombian Church transitioned from traditional Christendom to neo-Christendom by the 1970s whereas Brazil’s experiment with neo-Christendom under Cardinal Leme definitively ended in the 1960s with the rupture between Church and State under the military regime (Bidegain, 1979, 194).

The consequence of the contrasting structural positions of the Catholic Church hierarchies in Brazil and Colombia with regard to the State resulted in a radically different experience for Catholic lay movements in each country. The kind of specialized Catholic Action developed in liberal democracies was also able to establish itself in Brazil in a manner that allowed sufficient liberty to offer moral criticism of Brazilian

reality. Nationalism and economic development became primary themes for Catholic Action in Brazil. On the other hand, students and members of Catholic Action in Colombia were unable to find sufficient space to organize themselves in opposition to the oligarchic state, supported as it was by the Church (Bidegain, 1979, 195).

The greater autonomy of the Brazilian branch of Catholic Action allowed lay people a role in the Church and in society, thus creating the conditions for some sectors of the clergy to promote a vision of a Church that is born from the people and allows lay people on the front lines (Bidegain, 1979, 196).

During the military dictatorship, a significant number of Brazilian clergy gave moral support to those lay social movements that were caught up in confrontation with the State from a position of moral conviction. The Colombian clergy, however, largely marginalized the militant lay movements and remained focused on power relations with the oligarchic state. The Colombian Church was primarily interested in maintaining its religious and social monopoly (Bidegain, 1979, 195).

The response of the Colombian and Brazilian Churches to Vatican II and the rise of liberation theology also offers a study in contrasts. Despite the initial enthusiasm of some sectors of the Colombian clergy to the opening to modernity in Vatican II, the Church hierarchy responded cautiously and even reluctantly with few exceptions (Wilde, 1987, 20).

On the other hand, the Brazilian Church had sufficient independence from the military regime to be innovative in its response to the progressive trends within Catholicism. Liberation theology was prominent and influential among the Brazilian theologians and bishops. Perhaps because the political elite and the Church hierarchy

more successfully resisted liberation theology in Colombia, the few clergy sympathetic to it found themselves forced to become more militant, as in the case of Father Camilio Torres (Stafford & Palacios, 2002, 325).

Both in Brazil and in Colombia, Catholic Action attempted to engage the social mission of the Church in order to respond to social crisis. These socially progressive trends within Catholicism expressed an essentially democratizing impulse. Nevertheless, Colombia's hierarchy resisted this impulse to the detriment of both the Church and Colombian democracy.

The result of the Colombian Church's resistance to progressive Catholicism was a major divergence in the trajectories of the Colombian and Brazilian Churches. Whereas broad sectors of the Brazilian Church were influenced by pastoral practice and theology of European nations, the Colombian elite maintained an unchanged status quo in its ideology and continued to conserve its privileged place as ally of the State (Bidegain, 1979, 194).

Brazil became known as the most progressive national Catholic Church in the world, whereas the Colombian Church was known for its orthodoxy and commitment to traditional conservatism. In the 1980s, the two national Churches may be viewed as opposite ends of a political spectrum, with the Colombian Church functioning with the neo-Christendom model contrasting with the more liberationist and pluralist Brazilian Church (Wilde, 1987, 3).

The Colombian hierarchy's support for the Liberal-Conservative oligarchy has dearly cost Colombian democracy. The price has been the increasing irrelevance of the Church and the loss of moral influence in the midst of the country's traumatic social

crisis. Many scholars see the Church as having lost credibility by identifying so closely with the regime and consequently sharing in its decline (Wilde, 1984, 26).

The national Churches of Colombia and Brazil are not only facing major social crises, but at the same time they are facing competitive pressure from the explosive growth of Protestant Pentecostalism, as well as a certain loss of public authority in the face of rapidly encroaching secularism. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal has spread rapidly within the Catholic Church at least in part as a competitive strategy to stem the exodus of Catholics to Pentecostal Churches.

There were approximately six million Brazilians participating in the CCR in 1994 (Chesnut, 2003, 79), or only a little over three percent of the current Brazilian population. The estimates of the current numbers of Brazilian Catholic charismatics are between eight and ten million (Chesnut, 2003, 66). Kenneth Serbin estimates that the CCR in Brazil may represent double the number of CEB members (Power & Kingstone, 2000, 159).

Secularization is creating pressure for further differentiation in the religious field in Brazil and Colombia, and specifically within Catholicism itself. Padre Mario de França, in a personal interview, agreed that Colombia is less secularized than Brazil and is more religiously conservative (França, July 19, 2005). Secularization and modern democracy requires differentiation in the religious sphere within the Church, as well as differentiation between the Church and State.

In addition, there was more institutional space created within the Church for autonomous political engagement in Brazil than in Colombia. This study argues that the Brazilian society and the Brazilian Church have journeyed further down the road of

secularization and differentiation than Colombian society and Church. This has in part been facilitated by the longer period of separation of Church and State in Brazil, the greater relative institutional weakness of the Brazilian Church, and a lower historic level of religious polarization between traditional Catholicism and liberalism, resulting in greater tolerance for religious pluralism. Colombia's elitist, exclusive, and neo-Christendom political culture has retarded the process of differentiation in Colombian society.

Although Catholicism in the Americas has always been more diverse than a superficial reading might suggest, in the second half of the twentieth century the Brazilian Catholic Church has permitted greater levels of internal differentiation than the Colombian Church. Traditional, popular, and progressive Catholicism, and more recently the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have all flourished in Brazil, along with a variety of syncretistic Afro-spiritist movements. Certainly traditional, popular, and pneumacentric Catholicism also exists in Colombia, but as has already been noted, progressive Catholicism was discouraged.

Findings

Scholars have estimated the overall numbers of Protestant Pentecostal participation in Brazil anywhere from ten percent (Beozzo, 2003, 55) to thirteen percent of the Brazilian population in the early 1990s (Garrand-Burnett, 1993, 67). In Colombia, on the other hand, the level of Protestant Pentecostal participation was slightly over five percent in 1990 (Bidegain, 2005, 18). I found that religious pluralism and tolerance is clearly greater in Brazil than in Colombia.

Protestants have been present in the Brazilian Congress dating from the early part of the 20th century and culminating in the election in 2003 of Protestant Vice President José Alencar of the Liberal party as Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva’s running mate (Beozzo, 2003, 14). Protestants and Pentecostals were entirely excluded from the political process in Colombia until the Constitutional Assembly in 1991.

Table 1

CASE STUDY	SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE	STRENGTH OF TRADITIONAL CATHOLICISM	LEVEL OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM	WORLD AUDIT LEVEL OF DEMOCRACY
Brazil	1891	Low	High	48
Colombia	1991	High	Low	68

Source: Holbrook, Joseph. “Church, State and Political Culture in Brazil and Colombia.” Masters thesis. Green Library: Florida International University, 2006.

World Audit monitors and ranks 150 nation-states with populations in excess of 1 million based on a combination of Freedom House rankings and Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The World Audit Index for March 2006 ranks Brazil as 48 and Colombia as the 68th most democratic nation. This finding is consistent with similar findings from Freedom House (Freedom House, 2003) and the Fitzgibbon democracy index (Kelly, 1998, 4).

In both Brazil and Colombia, Protestant Pentecostals have demonstrated authoritarian and paternalistic characteristics, undermining the wishful thinking of those scholars who attempt to read into the Protestant growth a Weberian 'Protestant Work Ethic' scenario leading to greater democracy. Rather, the evidence seems to be that Protestant Pentecostals tend to reproduce both traditional Catholic values and the political cultures of their home countries. If Protestant Pentecostalism represents social transformation, it is only incrementally and generationally, through secularization and increasing religious differentiation at the grassroots.

Conclusion

I have argued in this study that weak traditional Catholicism, a longer separation of Church and State, and greater tolerance for religious pluralism have all influenced Brazil toward a political culture more supportive of democratic values. In contrast, a hegemonic Church in Colombia successfully resisted separation of Church and State. Additionally, the politicization of Catholicism by the Conservative party has led to generations of intolerance for religious or political opposition, complicating the possibility of religious pluralism in Colombia. Colombian political culture remains clearly collectivist. Brazil, on the other hand, may be considered at an intermediate transition point from collectivist to individualist political culture.

Religion is a vital part of the public sphere. It is essential to study the historical development of religious belief at both the institutional and the popular levels to better understand political cultures,. As the world moves into the twenty-first century the study

of religion must take a more prominent place among the social sciences as central element for the understanding of democracy and political culture.

Having begun this thesis with a quote from Daniel Levine, his insightful comment on the complex relationship between religion and politics concludes this thesis:

Religious belief and action are not derivative; they are paradigmatic, reaching out to shape the thought and action in all areas of life....Religion and politics, society and Church, move and change together, calling believers and activists, leaders and rank and file alike to a life in which Heaven and earth are joined, faith and hope made real (Levine, 1981, 315).

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