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EVANGELICALS IN DEMOCRATIC CHILE: “CLASH OF GENERATIONS”?¹

*Evangelicais no Chile democrático:
“choque de gerações”?*

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Abstract: Various studies point out the “social apathy” and “political indifference” of the Evangelical churches. However, their commitment with society doesn’t necessarily need to be political and develop in broader ways. All the Evangelical communities have the capacity of forming among the believers, civic habits and social responsibility: community sensitivity, organization of campaigns and mobilizations, capacity for having their own opinion. That is to say, each volunteer (religious) organization constitutes an important generator of social capital which establishes trust and reciprocal relationships among its members (Putnam), with the distinct consequences for society. The importance of studying the evangelical creators of social capital consists in the fact that they are the only social actors in Chile who are experiencing the process of a double “de-discrimination”: on the one side, the Evangelicals cease to be discriminated against as the poorest and least cultured of the country. On the other side, after the approval of the Law of Worship, they cease to be discriminated against as the cultural minority lacking in specific rights. Within the process of the pluralization of the Chilean religious field, religious actors – creators of social capital are multiplying. The churches are no longer the only participants in this process. Lately, new phenomena (interdenominational movements, NGOs, debate groups, study centers, publishing houses) are appearing which offer other ways of exercising their civic commitment. We propose that in Chile, the process of formation of an Evangelical intelligentsia is beginning, which could have an important impact on changing the identity of this religious group and on its insertion in civil society.

Keywords: Citizenship. Social Capital. Democracy. Evangelicalism.

■ **Resumo:** Vários estudos apontam para a “apatia social” e a “indiferença política” das igrejas evangélicas. Mas o seu compromisso com a sociedade não precisa ser necessariamente político e desenvolvido de forma mais abrangente. Todas as comunidades

¹ O artigo foi recebido em 13 de abril de 2014 e aprovado em 03 de maio de 2014 com base nas avaliações dos pareceristas *ad hoc*.

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evangélicas têm a capacidade de formar, entre os crentes, hábitos cívicos e responsabilidade social: a sensibilidade comunitária, a organização de campanhas e mobilizações, a capacidade de opinião própria. Isto é, cada organização voluntária (religiosa) constitui uma importante geradora de capital social que elabora relações de confiança e reciprocidade entre os seus integrantes (Putnam), com as distintas consequências para a sociedade. A importância de estudar os criadores de capital social evangélicos consiste no fato de que são os únicos atores sociais do Chile que estão vivenciando o processo de uma dupla “desdiscriminação”: por um lado, os evangélicos deixam de ser a minoria mais pobre e menos culta do país. Por outro lado, depois da aprovação da Lei do Culto, deixam de ser discriminados como a minoria cultural que carecia de direitos específicos. Dentro do processo de pluralização do campo religioso chileno, multiplicaram-se os atores religiosos criadores de capital social. As igrejas já não são as únicas participantes desse processo. Ultimamente apareceram novos fenômenos (movimentos interdenominacionais, ONGs, grupos de debate, centros de estudo e editoras), que oferecem outras formas de exercer o compromisso cívico. Propomos que no Chile está começando o processo de formação da inteligência evangélica, o que poderia ter um impacto importante na mudança de identidade desse grupo religioso e de sua inserção na sociedade civil.

Palavras-chave: Cidadania. Capital social. Democracia. Evangelicalismo.

Introduction

During many years, Chilean Evangelicals constituted a “handicapped citizenship” that had low social recognition. Their religion was associated with poverty, lack of culture, ethical and political conservativeness. Being rejected by the dominant religious society and culture, Evangelicals created an alternative religious and values subculture which, due to the classic study of C. Lalive D’Epinay, became known as the “refuge of the masses”, which through their “social strike” turned them away from political and national issues.

We define this religious sector as a “cultural citizenship”. This concept is related to the increased cultural and religious pluralism after the “fall of the Berlin Wall” and the extension of the debates on the correlation of universal (political, economic) and collective rights (cultural, social) in the context of the growing struggle for status and recognition of various social movements (ethnic groups, women, religious communities, sexual minorities). It became evident that the traditional concepts of citizenship which were aimed mainly at the juridical, economic, political, and social aspects were becoming insufficient and discriminatory by not considering the symbolic identity, and cultural features that could determine a better integration of minorities into society. Developing this idea, P. Stevenson suggests that

these rights go beyond the right for welfare protection, political representation or civil justice and focus on the right to propagate a cultural identity or lifestyle [...] Cultural citizenship need to be able to define new forms of “inclusive” public space so that “minorities” are able to make themselves and their social struggles visible and open

the possibility of dialogic engagement [...] (So), issues of inclusion and exclusion are the heart of notion of cultural citizenship³.

On the other hand, for R. Rosaldo the main requirement of cultural citizenship is the demand for respect: “Cultural citizenship attends not only to dominant exclusions and marginalizations, but also to subordinate aspirations for and definitions of enfranchisement [...] The universality of cultural citizenship aspirations most probably reflects the historical experience of civil rights and suffrage struggles”. This term has to do with “the needs to be visible, to be heard, and to belong”⁴.

In fact, the Evangelical communities are part of Chilean society, and the problems that matter to Chileans and the divisions that separate Chileans are the same problems and the same differences shared by Evangelicals. Therefore, we affirm that the main changes that marked Chilean society during the last 20 years also affected the Evangelical population. Indeed, the significant improvement in living standards, decreased poverty, generalized acceptance of democracy, changes in consumer patterns, and massive access to cultural goods (movies, book fairs, technological revolution, Internet access, and electronic methods of communication) have changed in an important way the whole Chilean society, regardless of the creed followed by one person or another.

On the other hand an important socio-cultural process is being undertaken in Chile: nearly 70% of undergraduate university students are the first generation of their families to attain this educational level. This means that in a few more years there will be a citizenship whose culture, mentality, and social expectations will be completely different from those that prevail in present day society. This phenomenon can be compared to the period in the 1960s, in developed societies when

the halcyon years of peace and prosperity generated a well educated and post-materially oriented generation. The civic and political aspirations of this generation, and the demands they gave rise to, transcended the materialist values and aspirations of the war generation and proved increasingly difficult to satisfy. The new aspirations concern freedom for choice, personal development and quality of life. They are often articulated in the language of citizen’s rights though they transcend the traditional repertoires of state-guaranteed social welfare rights⁵.

³ STEVENSON, Nick. Cultural Citizenship in the “Cultural” Society: A Cosmopolitan Approach. *Citizenship Studies*, London: Routledge, v. 7, n. 3, p. 331-348, 2003. p. 333-334.

⁴ ROSALDO, R. Cultural Citizenship, Inequality and Multiculturalism. In: TORRES, R. D.; MIRON, L. F.; INDA, J. X. (Eds.). *Race, Identity, and Citizenship: A Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 2006. p. 260.

⁵ PAKULSKY, Jan. Cultural citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, London: Routledge, v. 1, n. 1, p. 73-86, 1997. p. 79.

The subject of study of this article is Chilean Evangelical youth.⁶ We chose this category of the population because in this sector the changes in socio-cultural and educational level take place in parallel with the changes of the Evangelical community in Chile in general, which is improving its juridical-social status and extending its presence in the public sphere. This phenomenon may imply remarkable transformations in the theology of different Evangelical streams as well as the way they relate to society and build the power relationships within the churches. As well through new “post-material expectations”, the new Evangelical generations are reconsidering their concept of citizenship as they become more integrated into the country’s political and social life. Therefore, the objectives of this article are: to establish social, political, and values similarities and differences that may exist between various generations of Evangelicals; to study how changes in education and preferences may affect the traditional power relationships in churches; and finally, to find out to what extent the cultural transformations of Evangelical youth can rearrange this religious segment in Chilean society, giving them greater recognition and inclusion.

New Evangelical generations: cultural changes

The results of the survey in many cases raised more surprises than expected. Contrary to what was predictable, we found that since 1990 there have been no major changes in the financial situation of Evangelicals: this sector of the population remained mostly poor (50.6% of those surveyed claimed having low income, while 46% had medium income, and only 3.7% had high income), which is almost in conformity with the results of surveys from previous decades.⁷ However, it is essential to keep in mind the deep changes in the nature of poverty that took place in this period. Being poor in 1990 is not the same as in 2008, because due to the country’s economic stability and progress, and to the political and social dynamics, the living standards and purchasing power of the poor has been increased and/or changed significantly.

The data from the survey showed a greater recognition of Evangelicals by society in general. This trend is verified by the replies to the question of whether the faith of Evangelical believers has been the result of “family tradition”, “the grace of the Lord” or “personal experience”. We find it very important that even though 42% replied that they are Evangelicals due to personal experience, and 35.5% were converted “by the grace of the Lord”, more than 22% are Evangelicals “by family tradition”. The number of Evangelicals born to families that follow that creed increases if we break down the replies by age. Among the young people, 31.5% of the believers come from Evangelical family tradition (it is the second or third generation of belie-

⁶ In this category we include all the churches whose origin goes back to the Reformation: historical Protestants, charismatic protestant, evangelic revival, Pentecostal, and neopentecostal. It is believed that between 80 and 90% of Evangelicals in Chile belong to the Pentecostal stream. Therefore, the greater part of this article refers to Pentecostal youth.

⁷ FONTAINE, T.; BEYER, Arturo Harold. Retrato del movimiento evangélico a la luz de las encuestas de opinión pública. *Estudios Públicos*, Santiago: CEP, p. 63-124, 1991.

vers), while a large majority of older adults belong to the first generation (42.6% were converted through personal experience), and for 44.3% their faith is the result “of the grace of the Lord”.

The figures mean that believers due to “family tradition” continue the spiritual legacy of their parents, because they feel inserted in society and do not see any contradiction between the fact of being Evangelical and common Chilean citizens. That is, from being “handicapped citizens”⁸ professional and university Evangelicals can go into the category of citizens with complete fulfillment of their political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

A notable and radical change in terms of socio-cultural evolution has actually occurred in the educational level. To measure the educational transformations we took as reference the research done in 1990/91 by the Center of Public Studies (CEP). We are aware that the studies of the CEP and of IDEA are not quite comparable. The research settings of both studies were different: in 1990/91 the CEP-ADIMARK questionnaire was applied to the population of the main urban centers of Chile, regardless of religion.⁹ On the other hand, the IDEA survey took place among the purely Evangelical population in both urban and rural zones, certainly affecting the results. Therefore, to make possible the comparisons we had to make use of the common denominator of both studies: urban observant Evangelicals.

The comparison of the studies of the CEP 1990 and the 2008 Survey gave the following results. The number of urban observant Evangelicals with high school education increased from 40.4% in 1990 to 49% in 2008, while the number of believers with elementary education decreased from 55.1% to 17.5%. At the same time, the percentage of urban observant Evangelicals who have or had professional or university education increased substantially from 4.5% in 1990 to an important 33.4% in 2008. That is, one third of the urban observant Evangelicals (33.9%) had access to higher education (Table 1). According to the 2008 data, among the nonobservant Evangelicals the percentage of university students/professionals is even higher and reaches almost 40%. Therefore, there is a trend toward an association between a higher educational level and the fact of being nonobservant. This can lead to the following interpretation: as urban Evangelicals increase their socioeconomic status and their educational level they tend to stop being observant and would start turning into less religious and more “cultural” Evangelicals¹⁰.

⁸ OENEN, G. van. Turning on the Citizen: Modern Citizenship and its Cultural Hazards. *Citizenship Studies*, v. 6, n. 2, 2002.

⁹ FONTAINE; BEYER, 1991, p. 75.

¹⁰ We are thankful of Dr. Cristian Parker (2008) for this idea.

Table 1. Educational level of urban observant Evangelicals

	Educational Level					
	Elementary Education		High School Education		Higher Education	
	CEP 1990	2008 Surv.	CEP 1990	2008 Surv.	CEP 1990	2008 Surv.
Observant	55.1%	17.5%	40.4%	49.0%	4.5%	33.4%
Nonobservant	n/d	12.7%	n/a	47.4%	n/a	39.9%
Total	n/d	16.7%	n/a	48.8%	n/a	34.5%

Sources: FONDECYT Project 1060988 survey; and FONTAINE; BEYER, 1991, p. 86

These figures mean that more than one third of students who are observant Evangelicals and forty per cent of who are nonobservant represent the first generation with university or professional education in their families (in agreement with the national trend). Clearly, the process of democratization and massification of access to universities is taking place, opening the possibility for the lower income sectors to increase their social mobility. This trend allows us to visualize the important changes in the process of human capital formation in Chile, and the creation of a new profile, new needs, and high political and socio-cultural expectations for the Evangelical population, whose social status is increasing rapidly and for the first time in their family history.

Another important trend is that of the age/ educational level correspondence: the 2008 survey shows that as the age of Evangelicals decreases, their educational level increases (Table 2). The number of people less than 30 years old with access to university education is significantly greater than that of their parents' or grandparents' generation:

Table 2. Educational Strata by Age

		Educational Level			Total
		Elementary School	High School	Higher education	
Age	Youngsters (15-25)	5.7%	50.3%	44.0%	100.0%
	Adults (26-55)	19.6%	49.0%	31.3%	100.0%
	Older adults (56 and older)	57.9%	32.1%	10.0%	100.0%
Total		18.5%	47.7%	33.8%	100.0%

Source: FONDECYT Project 1060988

These data can be interpreted from a double standpoint. On the one hand, the increasing university population among Evangelicals allows the assumption that in the near future this category of Chileans will have greater labor mobility and better

possibilities for receiving recognition and insertion into society. On the other hand, this optimistic perspective will depend largely on the success of Chile's economy and its political-social modernization. If the Chilean socio-economic model will be unable to correspond to the expectations of new professionals (regardless of their system of beliefs) it would cause frustration, estrangement from society, and questioning of the country's political-social model.

Can this educational leap of Evangelical youth determine the existence of fundamental differences in political behavior and values systems between different generations? Can the different educational levels affect the power structure within the churches? These questions are meaningful in particular if we are dealing with the institutionalized Pentecostal churches, historically very hierarchical, where the pastors not only held unquestionable authority over the faithful, but were also strongly opposed to the introduction of studies and educated culture into their community.

Ethical norms: Is there a generational difference?

The Focus Groups and the interviews showed us that the topics of greatest concern about Evangelicals are those related to values (divorce, abortion, sexual habits of the young people), as well as those that have to do with their quality of life (delinquency, poverty, addictions). Our interviewees expressed their concern for the growing moral relativism of Chilean society, for the extension of the rights of sexual minorities, and for the increasing use of contraceptive measures. For them, the increasing ethical relativism represents a disease of Chilean society and the "negative side" of democracy. However, differentiation of the surveys by age and educational level shows clear differences in the values preference, that shifts from one generation to the next.

As to the general perception of the Law of Divorce, the Evangelicals that reject it are slightly more than those that are in favor of it: 40.7% are in disagreement with this law, while 36.9% agree or fully agree with it. Younger people tend to support the law of divorce: 39.4% are in favor of it, while those that disagree with it are 21%, and the greatest rejection is expressed by "young adults" between 30 and 44 years old. This can be explained by the fact that young people are generally opposed to the "culture of old people" and therefore they support the Law of Divorce as a way of challenging that culture. However, as they get older, the need to establish a family and the expectations associated with it, would lead to increasing rejection of divorce among older Evangelicals.

As to educational level, the highest approval of the Law of Divorce corresponds to the population with high school education (35.1%), followed by Evangelicals with higher/university education (34.5%), and the lowest support comes from people with only elementary education (29.6%). But at the same time, Evangelicals with high school education are more polarized with respect to divorce: 37.1% disagree or strongly disagree with the law, while among those with elementary education 34.4% do not approve it, and 30.8% with higher education disagree with it.

With respect to the right for therapeutic abortion, those that show greater tolerance are young people up to 30 years old (14.7% expressed their support) and people with more than 13 years of schooling (14.8%). At the same time, the main opposers to the measure are the older adults (64.5%) and people with elementary education (72.1% rejection vs. 61.5% among Evangelicals with higher education). However, the “youth/higher education – ethical liberalism” or “elders/lower education – conservatism” correlations are not always automatic or linear. For example, among adult Evangelicals the level of rejection of the right of abortion is lower than that of youngsters (56.6% versus 59%).

The age and education criteria are also important if we analyze the level of ethical liberalism and tolerance of Evangelicals. Even though the level of rejection of equal rights for sexual minorities is very high in all the categories surveyed, it is seen that as age decreases and educational level increases, the percentage of people that would support that right increases. Those younger and more educated Evangelicals are more willing to accept sexual freedom and to respect the diversity of the people. This trend makes us believe that young and university professional Evangelicals are beginning to elaborate their worldview and to issue judgments on other people not based on religious convictions but on more secular postures. In their communication with the world a prevalence of an opening toward others and the availability to build social relationships based on inclusion and respect for diversity is beginning to show up.

A more careful analysis of the results of the survey leads us to the conclusion that it is not so much age what is the main cause of the differences in the ethical-social values and attitudes between generations, but rather the wide access to universities that young Chileans from low income sectors are beginning to have. Therefore, we share the opinion of Cristian Parker when he states that “modern and formal education is a determining factor that influences the religious options among the young and middle-aged generations, but not among the older generations”¹¹. Consequently as the educational level of believers increases, their attitudes become more liberal, or secularized. If we assume that as time goes by most present day young university Evangelicals on turning into adults will continue in their churches, that could mean the deepest change in the ethical nature of Chilean Evangelism, decreasing its conservatism. On the other hand, if the churches (particularly the more conservative Pentecostal and Neopentecostal, as well as the Fundamentalist Protestants) are going to oppose to the liberalization of believers, that may cause a major conflict within the communities, increased division, and/or migration of the faithful to more liberal churches, or turning them into nonbelievers.

¹¹ PARKER, C. Pluralismo religioso, educación y ciudadanía. *Sociedade e Estado*, Brasília: Universidade de Brasília, v. 23, n. 2, p. 281-354, 2008. p. 300.

New Evangelical generations and political issues

In our project we also became involved with the problem of to what extent the civic habits acquired within the religious communities can turn into more direct public political participation. We also tried to find out if there are different viewpoints between the various generations of Evangelicals depending on their different educational levels. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Political preferences by age/education

Age	Political preference			Education	Political preference		
	Left	Center	Right		Left	Center	Right
Older adults	10.7%	75.2%	14.1%	Elementary	10.8%	80.8%	8.4%
Adults	9.6%	80.9%	9.4%	High school	7.8%	83.2%	9%
Young	8%	84%	7.7%	Higher	10.8%	77.7%	11.5%

We think that the results of the survey show the disenchantment of young Evangelicals with “great ideological narratives”, coinciding with the national trend. Among those less than 30 years old, a majority of them define themselves politically as “center”, while older adults appear as ideologically more polarized. However, those with more education also have more defined political postures: among them the figures of sympathizers with the center correspond to 77.7%, but the left and the right have quite a large proportional number of followers. We believe that the political positions of older adults are due to the political history of Chile in the twentieth century, marked by ideological conflicts, while the political sympathies of the young are determined by the active public life that takes place in the universities where they study. The less pronounced political inclinations of adult Evangelicals with a medium level of education are possibly explained by the fact that this generation grew up during the political and cultural “blackout” of Chile during the military government, when in most Evangelical communities apoliticism and absorption on spiritual matters increased. The motives for which Evangelicals claim that they do not feel represented by any of the Chilean political forces are the following: they cannot support the right because its main motivations are selfishness and individualism, but they do not feel identified with the left, which “has no God”.

They are younger Evangelicals with a higher educational level who show greater interest in participating in some political activity, talk about politics, and follow political news in the written press or television. At the same time, in terms of political activity, the “education” factor has much more influence than factors like “religion” or “age”:¹²

¹² We believe that other important factors in political activity is the place of residence (metropolitan vs. other regions, urban vs. rural areas), as well as the socioeconomic level. They were not included in the present paper, because of space. Also, see: PARKER, 2008.

Table 4. Degree of interest in political activities

Age	Degree of interest			Education	Degree of interest		
	Nil/low	Middle	High		Nil/low	Middle	High
Older Adults	48.4%	44.8%	7%	Elementary	61.2%	36.3%	7.4%
Younger Adults	48.1%	44.8%	6.8%	High school	50.6%	43.1%	6.2%
Young	52.1%	40%	8%	Higher	46.7%	43.2%	10%

Source: FONDECYT No. 1060988.

That same line is followed in the replies to the question on interest in going into a political party, and even more illustratively, on the availability to participate in a campaign in favor of human rights, an area in which younger people and those with better schooling were noticeably more sensitized than previous generations. Certainly, beside the factors that have been mentioned, this is related to the general democratization atmosphere that pervaded in the country, to the fact that the majority of those younger than 30 years were born under a democratic political regime, and for them the value of human rights is above that of salvation and evangelization.

As we have tried to show, different Evangelical generations also show diverse political positions. The differences in civic behavior between adults and younger people, and between those with less schooling and those with university education are clearly seen. The large majority of young Evangelicals has a very weak electoral commitment and is not registered in the electoral register. Apparently, to the younger people and to those with more schooling the concepts of citizenship and participation are not necessarily related to political elections. They seem to be more interested in following the country's political life through the mass media, participating in public activities in the universities without relating closely to the political parties and to the debates on national affairs. More than in voting, young Evangelicals are interested in publicizing the problems that concern youth in general and religious youth, in organizing solidarity campaigns in agreement with their spirit of service to the community. Again, in the process of training a citizenship that is young, aware, and committed with democracy, professional and university education plays a fundamental role.

How do these trends impact the inner life of the churches? Is there an internal debate on the role of the religious community in Chilean society? Can the young Evangelicals, who are apparently quite different from the previous generations, question the positions of their parents or the authority of their pastors?

Cultural changes and religious authority: Youth rebellion is coming?

The Evangelical churches and, in the first place, the Pentecostals, are characterized by the high authority of the pastors over the faithful. They are the faithful's infallible reference for making decisions related to both everyday and political life. In the Epistle to the Romans 13, 1-7, Saint Paul sets the principles of Christian ethics:

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves (Rom. 13: 1-2).

It is known that this Epistle was interpreted as a foundation for apoliticism and even authoritarianism within Evangelicals, and for that reason they supported any authority regardless of its political nature. The attempts of some pastors to manipulate the electoral expression of believers explicitly in favor of one of the candidates are also known. However, “it must be kept in mind that the text is more extensive and the ideas more profound, so the principle of legitimacy and of respect for authority is established here, as well as the judgment criteria that theologians and ecclesial leaders have mentioned in order to lay the foundations of the right to resistance to an iniquitous authority”¹³. It would be difficult to talk about the democratic Evangelical citizenship and the contribution of this religious community to the development of civil society if we were dealing only with a passive population completely obedient to its spiritual leaders.

The interviews and opinions expressed in Focus Groups evidenced some unhappiness felt by the younger Evangelicals for the way in which some of their pastors exert their leadership, and their intention to change authority relationships. The main themes that caused major questioning were social inequality between the faithful and their leaders, lack of transparency in decision making, and probity in the management of money. Thus, for example, some expressions of participants in Focus Groups make us believe that there may be a tendency to question the infallibility of the pastors’ authority and intend to create their own opinion:

“I do not agree with the fact that in the church there are people who are in great need of money, that there are children who cannot go to school, but the pastor lives in a well-to-do neighborhood and has two cars. [...] To me, that is a fault of the Evangelical Church” (Sandra, 21 years, university student, Santiago).

If previously the older generations felt obliged to follow strictly the instructions of their pastors, even if that caused them internal conflicts, now the situation is beginning to change. Although young Evangelicals continue to consider the opinion of their spiritual leader, they also feel that they are independent individuals that do not have to think the same as their pastors. With greater literacy, the experience of participating in debates, and used to face diverse points of view, university Evangelicals stop seeing in their pastors absolute models to be followed. By developing the habit of their own biblical discernment, the young Evangelicals respect the pastors as leaders of their community, but the top ethical authority to them is no longer the pastor but Jesus Christ. As stated by one of our interviewees,

¹³ PARKER, 2008, p. 34.

“I believe that Evangelicals have an intrinsic culture of accepting the words of their leader as absolutist [...] I think that our parents were taught that they were not able to criticize the pastor. But we as a generation have realized that it is possible, that it is necessary and we must do it” (Gonzalo, 23 years, university student, Santiago).

Representatives of new generations are aware of the cultural differences that exist between them and their pastors, most of whom have no professional training. There are multiple cases in which believers, after confronting their pastor, broke up with their community and went into political or solidarity activities turning into Christians without a church. To be certain, in this case we are not talking about conflicts of a personal nature and the struggle for power, but about matters that have to do with citizen's issues and with a greater participation of the church in civil society.

However, the critical view of the pastors is neither linear nor generalized. Although some communities are still concentrated strictly on spiritual matters, more and more Evangelical Churches are trying to increase their presence in Chilean society. This is due not only to the need to compete with the Catholic Church, but also to the increased self-esteem of the Evangelicals themselves, the awareness that their churches have much to contribute to the country, and that they are an important socio-political force that is increasingly considered by Chilean political forces. The churches are also trying to modernize and adapt to changing national scenarios, technological changes, and new expectations of their believers, so the religious authorities themselves promote increasing education of the faithful by means of different programs of study, establishing contacts with the secular academic world, and stimulating the development of their own Evangelical opinion on various matters of national interest. In these communities the “social strike” is broken and an active religious citizenship committed with society and democracy is educated.

So, we hold up that the postures and opinions of young Evangelicals does not permit us to talk about a “clash of generations” in the churches. The young can be quite critical about the points of view of their parents or the life style of the pastors, but belonging to a traditionalist, morally conservative culture that teaches to respect order and higher authority does not allow talking about a possible “revolution” of youngsters against the “culture of the elder”. The Gospel to the Romans interpreted more widely allows them to debate with authorities or disobey their suggestions, but not to disrupt the power structures. They are conscientious, autonomous citizens, but respectful of order, of hierarchy, of age.

Therefore, slow but important changes can be perceived that will affect the nature itself of Chilean Evangelism due to the increase in the number of university professionals, the consolidation of family tradition with an Evangelical religious formation, and the improvement of the living standards of the population. We are not dealing with a “clash of generations” but rather with a “silent revolution”. It is possible that the majority of the Evangelical Churches (particularly the Pentecostals) will increasingly share the experience of the Protestant Churches which, as we have said, were historically associated with a high educational culture and the relatively well-to-do social sectors. Or maybe, the believers that are more highly committed politically

and with social opening will decrease their degree of observance and practice their faith outside the religious institutions. In this sense, a greater opening and insertion of evangelical community in Chilean society and its greater availability for dialoguing with the political and secular world does not depend on the origin or doctrine of that community, but rather on the educational level of its believers.

Conclusions

As we have attempted to show, two parallel processes are taking place within Evangelical churches. On the one hand, like any voluntary organization, they promote the acquisition of civic habits that implicitly prepare the members of the church for greater political and social participation. On the other hand, the Evangelical churches are trying to increase their presence in Chilean society in the search for greater recognition of their rights and status as a cultural minority. Closely linked with the latter process are the changes that we tried to show in this article – increased educational level of Evangelicals, increasing cultural gap between different generations, and the questioning of the coherence of the pastors and the traditional inner power structures by young Evangelicals. These processes allow us to refer to Evangelicals as “cultural citizenship”, that is, as a discriminated minority identity which, starting from its access to knowledge and the capacity to produce new senses, in the context of a multicultural society, has equal rights and social status together with other minorities in a dominant culture. This does not mean granting Evangelicals special cultural rights, which would turn them into a cultural enclave within Chilean society, increasing segregation and discrimination. It has to do with the gradual overcoming of Evangelicals of their “otherness” and their transformation into Chilean citizens with fully recognition and insertion in civil society.

It was found that there are different moral and political perceptions that separate the young generation from the older one; that Evangelical people feel that they have the right to give opinions and act independently from their pastors. In the case of major conflict with the more conservative authorities there can be greater division or divisions with believers that are in search for changes. However, the internal transformation of the Evangelical churches will be rather silent, subjected to natural changes, as the new generations, now with higher socioeconomic and cultural levels, start replacing their predecessors. On the other hand, we must consider that the process of democratization touched the whole spectrum of Chilean society, from the military and political to the academic and cultural settings. The Evangelical churches as well lived or are living through this process, overcoming the paternalistic practices and turning more open, tolerant, inclusive, and attentive to the different opinions within themselves.

Furthermore the changes that marked Chilean society in general (market reforms, dismantling of the welfare state, increased quality of life, and extended access to sources of knowledge and information) also promoted the process of forming a citizenship that is autonomous, responsible, competitive, and free from authoritarian

expressions. So in the Evangelical communities as well as in other segments of the Chilean civil society the development of new forms of citizenship that transcend the political settings is taking place.

Finally, we believe that it is important to stress that the increasing levels of participation are not determined completely by the doctrine of a given Evangelical Church or by the historical trajectory of its relationships with the outer world. The fundamental factor that stimulates the increase of the social commitment of the churches is education: the higher the educational level of the parishioners, the greater are the fields of collaboration between the church and the socio-political world. The higher the educational level, the higher is the presence and participation of the church in the public debate, its social visibility, and its constructive dialog with the political, academic, and religious world. Precisely these generational and educational changes in various Evangelical sectors make us suppose that in the next decades the evidence of integration of Evangelicals in Chilean society will increase through less enclosed religious forms or more open and “secular” forms.

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